

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Editorial	159
Club News	159
The President's Address to the 1980 AGM F.W. Frost.....	161
Club Sales – A Pictorial History of Swildon's Hole	161
Diary Dates	162
Photographic and Art Competition.....	162
The Caves of the Isle of Portland (concluded) N. Graham.....	163
Gully Cave – a brief description P.G. Hendy	170
Bogibbs Ropewalkers R.A. Websell	172
From the Log	174

CLUB OFFICERS

<u>Chairman / Editor</u>	P. G. Hendy, 10 Silver Street, Wells, Somerset
<u>Secretary</u>	Mrs S. Deal, 5 St. Catherine's Ave., Luton, Beds.
<u>Asst. Secretary /</u>	R. Drake, Axeover House, Yarley, Wells, Somerset
<u>Journal Distribution /</u>	
<u>MRO Team Co-ordinator</u>	
<u>Caving Secretary</u>	J.R. Price, 18 Hurston Road, Inns Court, Bristol
<u>Asst. Caving Secretary</u>	K.A. Sanderson, 11 Pye Busk Close, High Bentham, via Lancaster
	(Northern caves only)
<u>Treasurer</u>	J. Deal, 5 St. Catherine's Ave., Luton, Beds.
<u>Gear Curator</u>	D. Morrison, 27 Maurice Walk, London NW 11
<u>Hut Warden</u>	J.R. Felstead, 47 Columbine Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
<u>Hut. Admin. Officer</u>	W. J. Ham, 'The Laurels', East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.
<u>Hut Booking Officer</u>	A.L. Vanderplank, 51 Cambridge Road, Clevedon, Avon
<u>General Sales Officer</u>	B.C. Davies, 2 North Bank, Wookey Hole, Wells, Som.
<u>Survey Sales Officer</u>	M. Hewins, 31 Badshot Park, Badshot Lea, Farnham, Surrey
<u>Librarians</u>	P. & A. Moody, 12 Cork Street, Lower Weston, Bath, Avon
 <u>HEADQUARTERS</u>	 Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3AX

FRANCIS WILLIAM FROST

It is my sad duty to inform you all of the unexpected death of our President, Frank Frost, on Tuesday 21st April, 1981. Frank was the second President of the Wessex Cave Club, and had held office since 1961. Members of the Club attended the funeral service on April 28th. Frank's perceptive insight into Club affairs, and his presence at Annual Meetings, will be greatly missed.

P.G.H.

EDITORIAL

Whilst an unexpected flood of contributed articles has enabled a steady flow of Journals, prompting at least one member to comment that he had hardly had time to read the last one, it does cause one problem - the need for inspiration for these Editorials. Fortunately the word 'flood' acts in this instance as a mental springboard, because early March saw a prolonged period of heavy rain which caused widespread flooding on Mendip, and indeed much of the southwest.

'The worst since 1968', the management of Gough's Caves called it, and they should know. Luckily, the rain fell over several days, not in the torrential downpour of 13 years ago. Even so, Gough's Gave became a resurgence, sending a stream out into the road. An attempt was made by CDG to find where the water was entering the cave, but they were foiled by poor visibility. Wookey Hole became impassable to tourists beyond the Second Chamber.

Elsewhere on Mendip, the water rose in the expected, places. G.B. water came up to the foot of the waterfall, St. Cuthbert's entrance rift was of course impassable; Sludge Pit sump rose a few feet. Swildon's Hole took a lot more water, and foam was seen high on the walls in several places. The cessation of pumping on a Saturday afternoon caused the level of the entrance pool to rise by nearly two feet, which made the cave very sporting indeed. One of the most spectacular areas was the Minneries, where streams formed all over the place. Waldegrave Swallet took a very large stream, but Wheel Pit, which always struck me as a promising dig site, backed up to a depth of around 15ft, nearly level with the top of the depression, and it stayed like that for over a week!

A warm dry spell is now allowing things to return to normal, and even the hut maintenance group is beginning to flex its muscles - a sure sign of Spring.

Good caving, and good reading to you all.

CLUB NEWS

(Based on the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on March 15th)

Club Insurance Members of State pensionable age are reminded that they are entitled to apply to the Treasurer for a reduced subscription, if they have ceased active caving. By so doing, they enable the Club to reduce its third party insurance premium. No other rights to Club facilities are affected.

Tackle Dave Morrison has kindly donated £10 towards the cost of building the new tackle store. He is still concerned that tackle is not being booked out or in, and it is also not being returned promptly after use. If you still have a ladder in your car boot, you may be preventing another member from doing a chosen trip.

Members who use Club tackle for trips which include non-members are asked for a goodwill fee of 10p per guest, to help towards building more tackle. No guests or visitors may use Club tackle unless their party includes at least one Club member, who will be responsible for the safe use and prompt return of it.

Telephones and Radios A consensus of opinion was taken recently to find out if members would like a payphone installed at Upper Pitts. It appears that the majority would not. Communication during cave rescues has now been assured as MRO has provided the Wessex with a mobile, car-mounted radio, in addition to the wall-mounted receiver. It can either be used at the HQ, or taken to the location of a rescue. The unit is stored upstairs at Upper Pitts and can be issued by any Committee member, or by Brian Prewer.

Operating instructions are given on the set; our call sign is HUNTER 12 (one two). A point to note is that when transmitting, it draws 8 amps; thus the car engine must be run periodically to charge the battery. It requires a 12v supply, thus Volkswagens, which run on 6v, are not suitable. As the set is tuned to the Search and Rescue frequency, it is only to be used during rescues.

During the Read's Cavern rescue on March 13th, it was found, as expected, that Burrington Combe presented difficulties in communicating from there to the Belfry. Until a 30ft aerial was set up near the UBSS hut, messages had to be relayed via a set stationed at the head of the Combe near Ellick Farm. An aerial is to be fitted to the chimney of Upper Pitts in order to extend the working range of our set.

Boiler and Showers The 5p slot meters for electricity at Upper Pitts are causing a substantial loss on income to pay for the electricity bill, and so 10p (or even 20p) meters are to be installed. The time switching system on the boiler is still causing problems, and a central heating engineer is to be called in to rationalise this, and thereby reduce our oil consumption. Roger Robinson has kindly donated £30 towards the cost of this conversion. A 6kw instant heat electric shower unit, plus all fittings, has been obtained, and work on installing the long-awaited third shower is to commence soon.

Keys Two spare hut keys, for temporary use by members and guests, have now gone missing without being booked out or with a deposit left on them. The Committee has decided not to provide any more. Anyone borrowing a key, whether for a cave or the HQ, MUST book the key out and leave a £5 deposit. This applies to members as well as guests.

Lamb Leer In view of the rental paid by the CSCC to Avon County Council for access to Lamb Leer, all parties visiting this cave should pay a donation of 25p per head.

1981 AGM and Dinner The Committee is already organising the next AGM and Dinner, to be held on October 17th. The Dinner will again be held at the Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar. The programme is yet to be finalised, but there should be music, and possibly a trip round Gough's Cave. The possibility of having real ale at the bar is being investigated.

Handbook A new edition of the Club Handbook, which has been adapted to make it less likely to go out of date, will shortly be available. It will be sent to all new members, plus anyone else who wants a copy. Applications please to Phil Hendy, enclosing 25p post and packing.

Ammunition Boxes These are selling well, so if you want one, see a Committee member or the Sales Officer soon, or you may be disappointed.

Club Trundles The first trundle, an easy trip down Swildon's Hole, did not exactly go according to plan. At least four separate parties went down the cave, plus another to Sludge Pit. The next, on May 9th, will be to Tynings Barrows Cave, not Longwood Swallet as previously advertised, in view of Phil Hendy's discovery that for him, squeezes are getting smaller!

MRO Demonstration After the March Committee Meeting, Brian Prewer demonstrated the MRO's Little Dragon warm air breathing apparatus. Powered by soda lime and CO₂, it enables a rescue victim to breathe warmed air, thus raising his body temperature. It is robust, and proved invaluable in the recent Aggy rescue.

Brian also demonstrated the mobile radio set. The whole session was well attended, and enthusiastically received.

Cutlery There is a shortage of cutlery at Upper Pitts. Anyone with a few old eating irons is asked to donate them to a good cause.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

TO THE 1980 A.G.M

F.W. Frost

(This is an extract only; the full address will be published in the AGM handbook, which will be circulated before the next Annual General Meeting.)

I have to ask you to accept my apologies for prefacing this address on a sober note in referring to the loss suffered by the Club during the past year by the death of three of its members, each of whom, in differing ways, made a major contribution to the sporting, organisation, or scientific aspect of caving.

Brigadier A.E. Glennie's interest in the biology of caves made him a leading authority on the subject. The last time I caved with him was at Pen Park Hole, Bristol, where he, together with L.S. Palmer and E.K. Tratman, proved the practical worth of the earth resistivity measurements method for locating caves. Aubrey Glennie was nearing 90 years of age.

Jack Duck was a founder member of the Club, but never an empire builder. He was always willing to introduce young people to caving, at the same time insisting on a disciplined approach to the sport. Undoubtedly, this contributed in no small measure to the high respect in which the Club was held by the caving fraternity.

We were all deeply shocked, if not altogether surprised, at the news of the sudden death of Howard Kenney at what, for most people, would have been the prime of life. His dynamic personality caused him to cram an incredible number of interests into his life, and this, with an intensity which may have contributed to his early death. Although his history of heart problems had been steadily building up, he was still keen and eager to help the Club by acting as its auditor. His outstanding personality often created a love/hate complex in some of us, but his contribution to the Club's organisation over many years was almost without parallel. I commend to all members Jim Harwell's appreciation of Howard's caving life. On the day of Howard's funeral service in Wells Cathedral, a small party of us held what surely must have been a caving 'Irish Wake', by visiting Wookey Hole Cave. I am certain Howard would have approved of that.

CLUB SALES

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SWILDON'S HOLE

We still have a number of copies of this collector's item for sale, bound in both leather and rexine. The price remains unaltered at £12 and £9 respectively.

The book was published by the Wessex Cave Club in 1974 and is dedicated to Albert Maine, of Manor Farm, Priddy.

It contains a collection of about 60 historical photographs depicting the cave and its exploration from 1901 to the present day, together with a commentary, drawings, surveys and notes.

Available from Upper Pitts - contact the Sales Officer or any member of the Committee.

DIARY DATES

May	18th	F	Eastwater Cavern	Sept.	4th	F	Stone Mines
May	16th	C	Tynings Barrows	Sept.	13-14th	O	BCRA national Caving Conf. Notts. Univ.
May	17th		WCC Committee Meeting				
May	22nd	F	G.B. Cavern	Sept.	12th	C	G.B. cavern
May	31st	O	Magnetometer Pot	Sept.	13th		WCC Committee Meeting
June	6th		BCRA Summer meeting & AGM Mendip (provisional)	Sept.	18th	F	Manor Farm Swallet
June	12th	F	Longwood Swallet	Sept.	27th	O	Hammer Pot
June	26th	F	Burrington	Oct.	2nd	F	St. Cuthbert's
July	10th	F	Bleadon Cave	Oct.	16th	F	Rhino Rift
July	11th	C	Eastwater Cavern	Oct.	17th		WCC AGM & Dinner
July	12th		WCC Committee Meeting	Oct.	30th	F	Thrupe Lane Swallet
July	18th		I.S.C Kentucky, USA	Nov.	7th	C	Burrington
July	24th	F	Cow Hole	Nov.	8th		WCC Committee meeting
Aug.	7th	F	South Wales	Nov.	14th	F	South Wales
Aug.	21st	F	Swildon's Hole	Nov.	27th	F	Longwood Swallet
				Dec.	11th	F	Tynings Barrows

F: Friday Night Trips Contact Brian Prewer, Wells 75757. Meet at cave at 7.30pm.

C: Club Trundles All welcome, these trips will not be severe, and are therefore suitable for novices or prospective members. Contact Phil Hendy, Wells 76134. Meet at Upper Pitts, 2.45pm.

O: Off Mendip Meets Contact Steve Gough, Flat 3, 5 Lawson Road, Broomhill, Sheffield or Jeff Price

ANNOUNCING THE SECOND WESSEX CAVE CLUB

PHOTOGRAPIC AND ART COMPETITION

Theme: CAVES, CAVERS OR CAVING **Open:** To all club members

Classes: 1. PHOTOGRAPH – Black and White or Colour, prints preferred.
2. SKETCH OR DRAWING – Any Medium, preferably no large than A3

Prizes: Thanks to the generosity of Frank Frost, there will be a £5 prize for the winner of each section. The two winning entries will be displayed at Upper Pitts.

Entries should be sent to: Mrs Alison Moody, 12 Cork Street, Lower Weston, Bath, Avon, or c/o Upper Pitts, to arrive not later than September 4th 1981. Please place your name, address, and title of the composition on the back. Enclose SAE for the return of your entries if required, otherwise they can be collected from Upper Pitts. The prizes will be awarded at the Annual Dinner.

**WHY NOT HAVE A GO? IT COULD BE AN EXCUSE TO GO CAVING! SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL
AND LOAD YOUR CAMERA NOW !!!**

THE CAVES OF THE ISLE OF PORTLAND

Concluded

N. Graham

WESTCLIFF AREA

This is Portland's main caving area. Road access is more difficult than hitherto as the new owner of the old Blacknor Fort has erected two concrete posts outside the original gates, making parking and turning at the end of the lane extraordinarily difficult. The barrier giving access for vehicles onto the cliff top meadow is still easily accessible however; the Coastguards hold keys to this. Otherwise, eg. for tourist trips or practice rescues, cavers will have to park either right back on the main road or in the housing estate, the latter needing a knowledge of the estate and the current state of the fences around it.

The lane to the cliff starts as the cemetery entrance, just past a concrete bus shelter on the right-hand side of Weston Street about a quarter of a mile south of St. George's church (the church has a distinctive roof, shaped like an inverted boat, and is quite conspicuous). The lane is neglected, and extremely rough in parts, possibly enough to damage cars with limited ground clearance. Watch out for children; the back gardens of a row of houses have direct access to the lane.

St. George's Rift

From the second sharp left turn in the lane, walk north across the field to a disused quarry (round the west, seaward end, if the field is under cultivation). Follow the quarry edge right (east), to find the scramble down. The cave is in the SE corner, above the usual illicit rubbish heap.

St. George's Rift consists of a single, fairly difficult fissure entered at roof level. Immediately, the floor drops away to nearly 40ft depth in two stages broken by a ledge with a handy scaffold pole on it. The initial stage is free-climbable, though possibly not by inexperienced cavers. The lower, deeper, section was free-climbable, but is now so greasy that a ladder is almost necessary - a hand line for better climbers. It is quite common now to ladder the whole lot for convenience.

Beyond the pitch, the cave is moderately strenuous with small greasy climbs and constrictions. The rift narrows at the far end, and the floor drops away again; possibly a trap for the unwary. The end of the cave is a boulder choke in a narrow section.

THE CLIFFS AND THEIR CAVES

Blacknor Point, on which the fort stands, is an overhanging 100ft cliff above a high, very steep undercliff; a mass of slippery grass slopes, jumbled boulders and scree runs, sprinkled with the odd tangles of discarded barbed wire etc. A 'path' runs along the top of the undercliff, providing a route to or from most of the Westcliff caves. The path can be considered as starting at Sharbutts Quarry, south of the fort, and continuing round Blacknor Point to ascend a debris cone back to the top a short distance north of the fort.

Proceed south from Blacknor Fort to an old quarry - Sharbutts - cut back into the top of the cliff. An 8ft drop in the NE corner is the way in. A narrow rift will be seen in the corner at the bottom of the drop. This is the Sharbutts Rift entrance to Sandy Hole.

Go to the far end of the quarry, where a second drop lands on a grassy debris fan with obvious paths worn in it. Descending this, following the cliff bottom back north, a small entrance is soon reached; a crawling-size tunnel about 4ft above the ground outside: Sandy Hole.

The next cave is some distance away in fact it is easy to assume one has passed it. After a lot of very rough going, and passing a 'showerbath' falling from the top of the cliff, the trail gently ascends then

crosses a scree run below a very steep earth-floored gully with a crumbling bluff some 15ft high immediately above the path. The gully leads up the Steve's Endeavour Rift. A notable feature, when approached from this direction (the south) is the edge of the cliff on the north corner of the gully; it forms a great curve up towards the top.

Further north, near a slipped block, is Gemini Rift, its entrance about 25ft up in the cliff face, reached by a normal face climb developing into a climb up inside an open portion of the rift itself.

Continuing north, the path passes beneath Blacknor Hole, marked by a narrow, relatively even, grassy stretch with an elder bush growing on the outer edge of the path. Finally, after more rough stuff, the path climbs a grassy debris cone to a short scramble onto the footpath on the top of the cliff, in a quarried area a short distance north of Blacknor Fort. Steve's Endeavour and Gemini Rift are closer to this end of the path.

Sandy Hole and Sharbutte Rift

Sandy Hole is a network of low boulder-strewn crawls with very few places where anything approaching a vertical stance is possible. The flat-out entrance crawl ends at a crossroads, the main passages extending right and left. To the left, a constriction up onto a stalagmite bank opens below the base of Sharbutts Rift, crossing the passage at a shallow angle. At the far end of the passage are entrances into two small side rifts, both with loose boulder chokes.

Sharbutts Rift is virtually impossible to climb up without tackle, but it does provide a sporting entrance to Sandy Hole, for reasonably slim cavers anyway. It is very narrow, deep, and linked to the cave below by an awkward dug squeeze. This is not vertically below the rift entrance. This entrance is best negotiated in the company of someone who knows the way down.

Steve's Endeavour

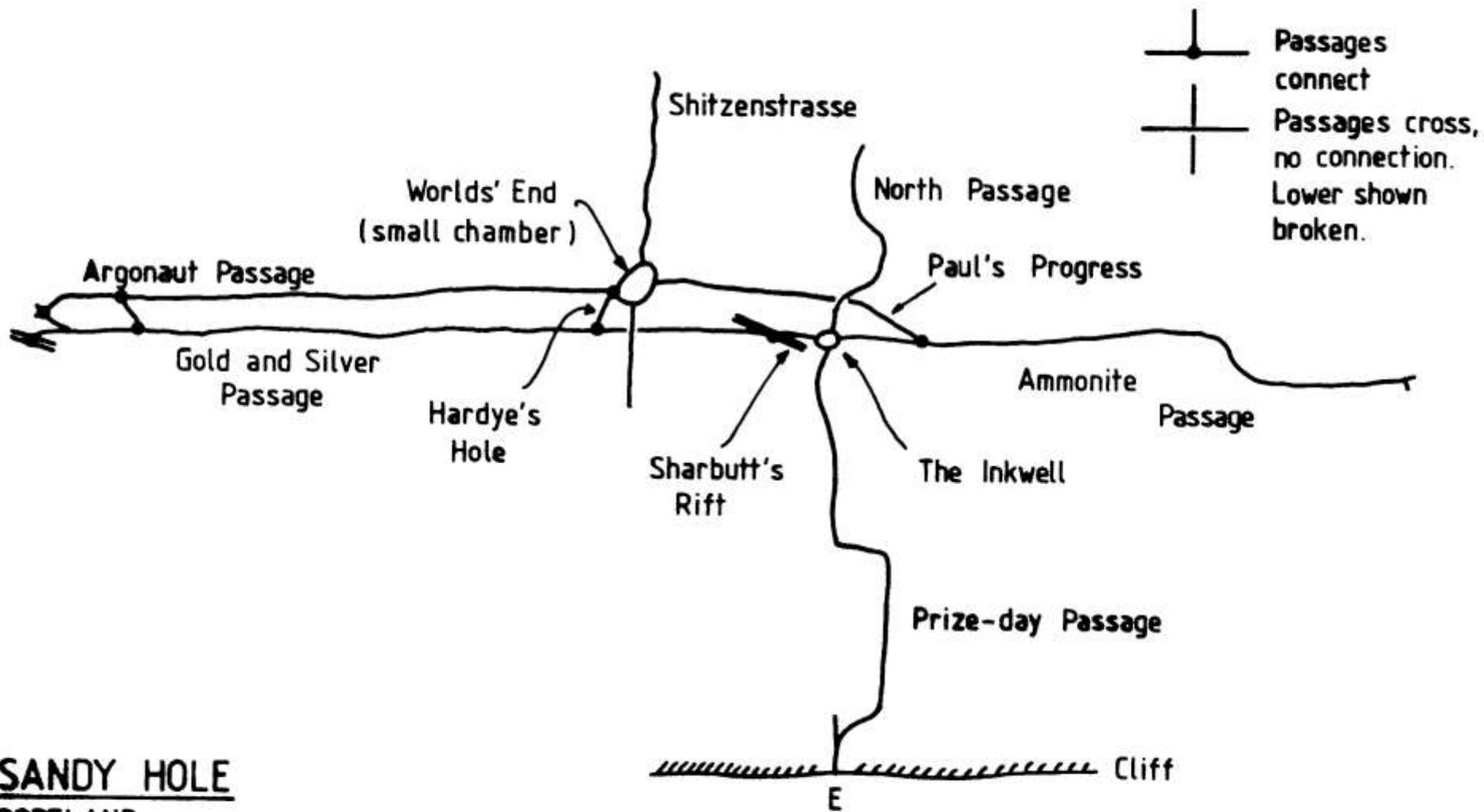
One of the island's harder rift caves, the far reaches of which provides very strenuous high-level route along a wide passage. The entrance is a hole among boulders at the head of a very steep gully; 100ft handline for less able climbers. Below the boulders there is a 10ft drop, chimneyable, to easy going to the base of a high, steep, climb up boulders, with a fairly awkward move at the top. Above the climb is a fine rift chamber (The Cathedral), descending and narrowing steadily to an area of false floors and deep holes. Beyond an eyehole the floor ends completely save for the odd jammed boulder, traversing along there leads to a window high in the cliff.

Gemini Rift

Steve's Endeavour forms a shallow loop in the cliffs where a massive bloc is starting to move away from the rest of Portland. Gemini Rift lies within this separate block.

More easily reached from the north end of the path under Blacknor Fort. The path leaves the cliff top just past a quarried area, by the entrance to a cutting going back inland to quarries. Follow the base of the cliff (along top of the undercliff slopes) back south past the fort to a gap between the cliff and a slipped stack. A little further past this a slope of earth and guano and a vertical crack in a corner marks the entrance, just visible some 20ft above. Some climbing ability is required. The cave is one, fairly long, (for its type - about 200ft) rift; progress along which requires a lot of chimneying up and down pitches of various heights.

Just past the largest descent (going in) and holes in the floor below, is a tight cross-rift leading out to the cliff face, whence a slope regains the path.



SANDY HOLE
PORTLAND

Guide to passage names. Purely diagrammatic and not to scale.
 Much of the cave was surveyed, but the incomplete survey has mostly been lost.

Blacknor Hole

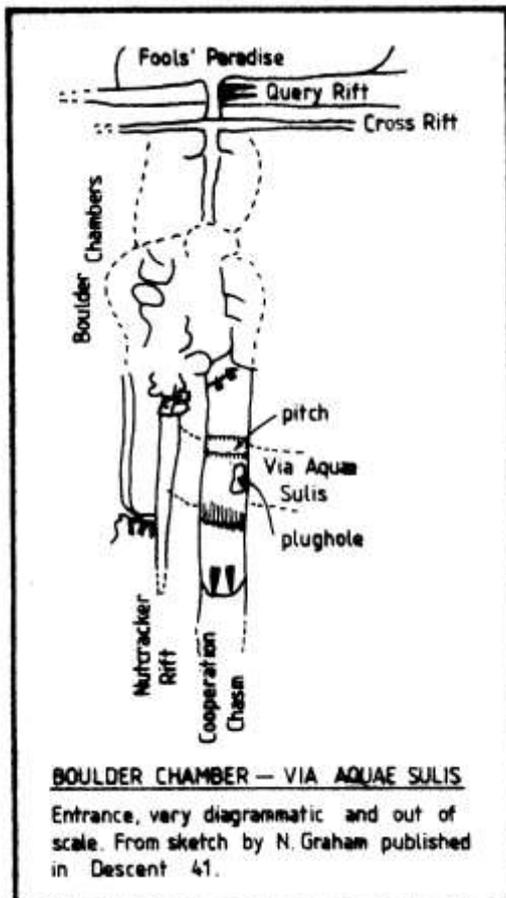
NGR 67903 71666 Length 1200ft plus. S.C.

"There is, probably, no open cave entrance on the surface of this country which is unknown, unless situated in the face of some vertical cliff."

H.E. Balch

Portland's most extensive and varied cave, being two fossil stream ways linked by, and modified by, various tectonic rifts. High winds make the entry more difficult and rather unpleasant, and can be hazardous. The system provides several sporting and fairly strenuous trips with interesting climbs etc, but beware of unstable rock in some places.

Approach and Entrance: From the Portland Heights Hotel, turn right down Wide Street then bear right down Weston Road. Before reaching the housing estate, the lane to the cliffs leads off on the right, at the entrance to the cemetery. Find a suitable parking place, off the main road preferably but reasonably discreet for changing, and walk along the lane to the fort. (The lane is private, in regular use, and the owner jealously guards his rights if you try driving along it.) Alternatively, take the next turning into the housing estate on the right (W), then follow Courtlands Road and Blacknor Road to Blindmere Road, a cul-de-sac ending at a high fence in front of the clifftop field. With luck, the unofficial gap in the fence, at the side of a lock-up garage, will be open (it is occasionally repaired but soon becomes re-opened by Persons Unknown among the residents). Middle of a housing estate - usual discretion.



Blacknor Fort is difficult to miss - a collection of low, brick and corrugated-iron buildings on the clifftop. Walk round to the seaward side of the fort, to a widening in the path. The top of the pitch may be marked by odd stakes left in place, as well as a slight scoop about three feet across in the lip.

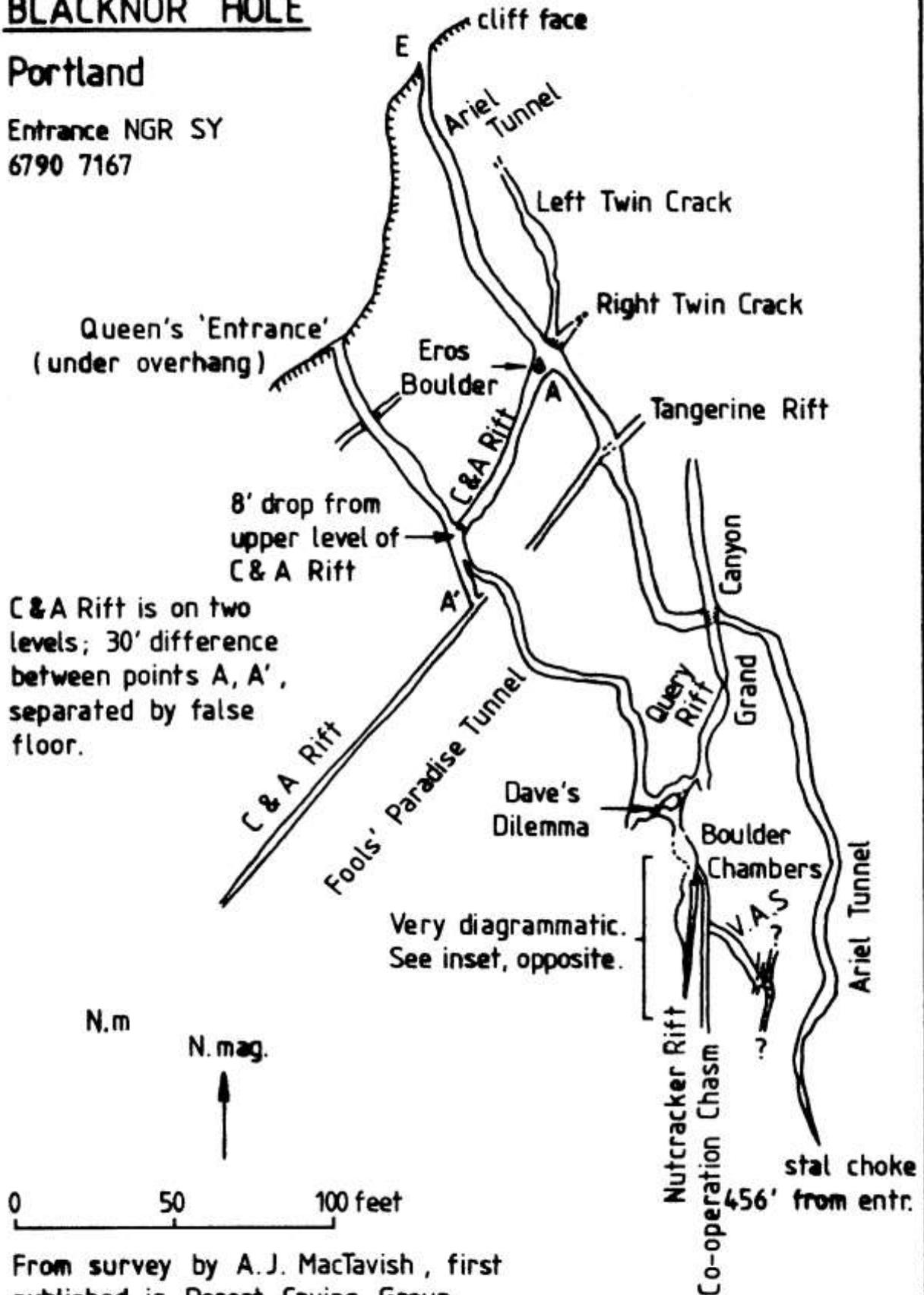
The most popular - and easiest - technique is abseiling in and Belay the rope to at least two heavy stakes so that the prusiking out of the cave. Belay the rope to at least two heavy stakes so that the rope runs down the centre of the scoop. There is plenty of room for this between the cliff and the path. If a strong wind is blowing, weight the end of the rope to lessen the risk of its being blown sideways and catching on a projection with awkward results. First man down is the acrobat, swinging in the entrance 35ft down with an overhang of about 18 inches. If he then ties on to a thread belay at roof level about 3ft in, on the right facing out, he can assist any non-acrobats.

TACKLE: 120ft abseil rope, two heavy-duty stakes, thimbles, rope protector, heavy hammer. In the entrance: 10ft tether and krab and thimble for securing rope and acting as pull-in line on exit. Five foot tether for first man's protection. Whistles or telephone for communication.

BLACKNOR HOLE

Portland

Entrance NGR SY
6790 7167



From survey by A.J. MacTavish, first published in Dorset Caving Group Journal III (4). 1975

See also Descent 32 p4, & 41 p21

Grade 3 except C & A Rift and Fools' Paradise: 1-2.

Ariel Tunnel and its cross-rifts

After ensuring the rope is safely tied in, harnesses and descendeurs are best left by the entrance. Ariel Tunnel is first 120ft of low stony crawl with dusty guano and various wildlife (no mice, though). It passes a narrow day lit fissure at one point, and eventually enters a cross-rift chamber (keep right on entering). This is Piccadilly Circus. Left are the Twin Cracks; Right Twin Crack soon chokes. Left Twin Crack heads back close to the cliff and has a visual connection with the day lit rift. Hand line advised for the return. The right-hand side of Piccadilly is dominated by the great cube of Eros Boulder; C & A Rift starts to the left of it. Ariel continues ahead, still low but slightly easier. It crosses the narrow, short Tangerine Rift (orange flowstone) and widens. At a left turn, Ariel suddenly changes form to become a canyon passage, with the chert roof and associated features (see introduction) well displayed. A few feet further, it is split by the large Grand Canyon Rift, continuing beyond at a low stooping height to a stalagmited boulder choke 460ft from the entrance. Grand Canyon is wide, and some 10ft deep at the crossing; care needed. It can be followed either way to chokes, one has been passed.

C & A Rift

This is the link to the second water worn passage. From Piccadilly two routes in the same rift meet on a greasy boulder pile then it continues for some distance to become too tight. Lower level: via a climb down past Eros Boulder, then a constricted section to a narrow chimney up onto the boulder pile. Continue by descending the boulders ahead: to the right a further short climb meets the high level route. High level: traverse round Eros Boulder to a short climb up a stalled jam. The rift up here, 30ft above the lower level is wider, with some climbing over obstacles. Be careful on descending a stal slope a short way along: it ends over a hole to the series below. Finally a short drop on a sharp-left turn meets the climb up from the lower level

Fool's Paradise

(The discoverer came rushing back to tell his companions back in Piccadilly of his wonderful find - then couldn't remember where it was !) This is a deserted stream way crossing C & A Rift at the meeting of the two levels. From the high level route, just below the short drop and on the right, the crawl leads to a window in the cliff - Queen's Entrance. It cannot be used as a way in as it is protected by an overhang.

Left from the rift, the passage slowly enlarges, a low canyon ending in a rubbly chamber dominated by Query Rift. A small crawl leads off left, soon impassable.

Query Rift

This can be followed to a stalagmite choke. A strenuous chimney may be made to view a finely decorated high-level grotto. Ahead, at floor level, a small hole is a very awkward squeeze into Grand Canyon.

Boulder Chamber Series

On entering the Query Rift chamber from Fool's Paradise, bear right and cross the rift on boulders. **WARNING:** from this point (Dave's Dilemma) on, instability rules. A short climb up into a narrow cross-rift (mind the perched boulder) is followed immediately by a short flat-out crawl (Grasshopper Squeeze) into the first of two indefinite boulder chambers. Bearing right, Nutcracker Rift is found, narrow and short. Traces of the older stream passage can be seen above the rift.

Following the left wall of the boulder chambers leads to a short climb up into Co-operation Chasm, a large rift. A few feet along it the climb is matched by a drop to the lip of a 'plughole', across which is a muddy slope up a massive false floor. Beyond the floor slopes steeply away to drop into the Chasm. This is free-climbable but is tricky and strenuous. Immediately right of the Chasm's entrance climb a crawl on dropped slabs loops round to the lip of the plughole.

Via Aquae Sulis

Belay a 25ft ladder to the jammed boulders above the climb into Co-operation Chasm with a 20ft tether. Descend through the plughole; immediately below it, Via Aquae Sulis (found by Bath University C.C.) opens in the right wall of the rift (facing the ladder). Care is needed on the move off the ladder, due to the mud and loose stuff about. A lifeline is advisable.

Via Aquae Sulis is a sculpted vadose canyon whose chert roof has collapsed, reducing the headroom and generally getting in the way. After about 100ft a shattered cross rift caused a choke. This has recently been penetrated, producing a short crawl over a mound of choke and digging debris into a T-junction. (Care: the dig roof is unstable).

Left is an awkward wriggle into a short length of rift, soon blocked by lovely orange stal. Right, the stream way becomes a deserted passage: a low tight crawl beyond two pots. This has not yet been pushed conclusively as not only is it cramped and cluttered with rocks, but it contains a shattered area of wall.

Immediately below the crawl as one enters the junction is a narrow rift, Chisel Pit, about 12ft deep (Tackle: 40ft rope for return). About 50ft long between chokes this is part of the same rift as just described. The floor of the stream way is visible up in its walls, and it contains some 'cornflake' stal. The Chisel Pit bisects the first of the two potholes, joined to the second by a tube at the bottom. The pot is only about 3ft deep, but the whereabouts of the stream way continuation from it is still unknown at the time of writing (January 1981). No doubt a lot of rockfall will have to be cleared to find it, caves being what they are.

GENERAL NOTES

As the above descriptions indicate, Portland caves fall into two categories. The first type are the fossil stream ways. Generally these are crawls with few specific hazards, though bad air may be a problem in some odd places (no record of this, though).

The second, larger category, is that of the rift caves. These are purely mechanical in origin, related to the structure of Portland in a way which is not clear. Recently slight movements widened some rifts enough to bring down loose boulders or loosen others. Loose rock is a built-in hazard in places in many of the rifts.

Another characteristic of these caves, related to their formation, is the smoothness of their walls. With some exceptions, eg, Flagpole Rift with its plentiful footholds, the rifts present great areas of smooth rock with sparse holds, often with a film of mud to lubricate them. The risk of descending a rift and then being unable to climb out without tackle is real, especially with the narrower ones where back-and-footing is not possible. This has happened.

The mud was always there, but with no water flow to clean the walls, many of the climbs in the rifts are increasing in difficulty with use, while in places holds are disappearing.

Indigenous to most of the caves, which lie in the deep Portlandian Cherty Series, is broken chert. In this area, chert occurs not only as discrete nodules but also as seams a few inches thick. The roof of the Blacknor Hole stream passages is such a seam, most of it being shattered. The broken chert edges are of course very sharp; anyone slipping down a rift may stop himself falling calamitously but could collect some nasty cuts on the way.

Not all the Island's caves have been listed, only the main caves and places of interest. The road map was traced from a street plan and is somewhat diagrammatic, being intended as a general guide to supplement this article. Grid references have not been given as they are of little value in identifying caves on the Island. Similarly cave lengths and passage dimensions are not given, partly because the source

information does not include such details fully. Depths and heights are approximate, many being estimated against a person's height.

NOTE: Flagpole Rift The Letterbox is passable with great care; a hand line may be of assistance on the return.

The second boulder choke is greasy and rather loose, a hand line is advised for the awkward 10ft drop into the chamber beyond. This chamber is an odd structure, looking vaguely artificial. Its stability is not to be trusted (7th February 1981).

REFERENCES

J. Dorset Caving Group. III (3) Blacknor Hole : Description.

Ibid. (4) Blacknor Hole : Rescue Report and Survey.

Graham, N. (1979) Descent 41, p.2 1. Blacknor Hole : Co-operation Chasm find.

Mactavish, A. (1975) Descent 32, pp. 4 - 9 . Blacknor Hole : History, Survey, Photos.

O'Connor, M.R. (1973) WCC 12 146. pp 234-238. The Larger Caves of Portland.

Perkins, J.W. (1977) in 'Geology Explained in Dorset' pub. David & Charles, Newton Abbot.

GULLY CAVE - A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

P.G. Hendy

It is now ten years since John Vanderplank's chance discovery of this magnificent fossil resurgence, and so the delay in publishing the survey cannot be excused any longer. This brief description can only give an outline of the nature of the cave, but I trust that this will be sufficient to explain the survey.

The Canal del Embudo is a steep, rocky chasm formed by glacial drainage from the Vega de Liordes, centre of much of the Wessex activity in the Picos de Europa in northern Spain. It is, during the summer at least, dry. Sheer rock walls at the head of the gorge prevent it from being a route to the Vega, though a disused miner's track runs on precarious ledges along the north walls. At one point the track runs very close to the boulder-strewn floor of the gully, just before it steepens and the rock walls close in. In 1971, John Vanderplank was walking up to the Vega, but by mistake entered the gully instead of continuing up the track. His progress for a few hundred yards was a steep ascent over large boulders, until he reached an almost vertical rock face, about 10m high, with a small stream trickling down over a mass of moss and slime. Upon climbing this, he found a small level area, with the large keyhole-shaped entrance of the Cueva de la Canal del Embudo running into the south wall of the gully. The narrowness of the gorge at this point meant that it was completely invisible from below.

The Gully Cave, as it is known for convenience, was explored during that year's expedition, and surveyed the following year. As far as could be ascertained, the cave had not been entered before 1971, yet, curiously, fragments of a recent human skeleton were found at the entrance. There were no associated artefacts, and so it is impossible to determine how anyone could come to an untimely end in such a remote place.

The cave is entered by a short climb into an ascending phreatic tube about 3m in diameter, with a well-developed vadose trench in the floor. The trench dips down to a small static pool before rising again, to a sharp left hand bend into a high, inclined rift. After 15m or so the passage turns right, past a boulder pile, and for the next 55m it is basically a high rift, with local wide sections and low crawls to break the monotony. Small clusters of gypsum flowers begin to appear on the walls, until Green's Dilemma is reached. This is a blind 8m shaft which can be crossed either by a bold step involving a frantic grab for a hidden handhold, or by back-and-footing along a narrower part of the rift at a higher level. The rift here is

of indeterminate height. It has been climbed a long way to reach a discrete passage at roof level, but the possibilities at height are still to be ascertained.

Beyond Green's Dilemma the walls and floor of the rift are richly encrusted with gypsum flowers to a depth of several inches. They were pure white when discovered, but the passage of cavers has stirred up the dust and they are slowly being discoloured. Nevertheless, this section fully deserves the title of Mithril Passage (Ref. *The Lord of the Kings*, J.R.R. Tolkien). The crystals are easily dislodged, and cause intense irritation when they fall down one's neck!

Mithril Passage soon gives up its crystals, and reverts to a brown, dusty passage, where progress is eased by traversing a few feet above the floor. A low crawl to the left leads to a short oxbow with a hard mud floor. A little further along, again on the left, is Rescue Passage, a steeply ascending tortuous passage ending in a deep pit with a short rising continuation at the bottom. Rescue Passage has a sandy floor, and small knobby gnome-like stalagmites clustered on the walls. It is so called because on its discovery the first part of the passage was climbed into by a caver who then found himself unable to descend without assistance.

The main passage continues round a corner to a dead-end with a large window about 1½m up the left wall. From here on, the cave descends as a series of pitches, beginning with one of 30m down a wide shaft to a sloping boulder ledge. Here the cave divides, the Left Hand Series starting as a 45m pitch. The shaft is wide, in brown rock with patches of white crystals. It has been likened to climbing down the inside of a Christmas cake! Further pitches of 50, 25 and 60m lead to a large, boulder floored chamber with a small stream passage exiting to the northwest. It is fed in wet weather from an aven which has not so far been climbed. The stream flows down to the inevitable too-tight fissure. Mud deposits on the walls indicate that the chamber can flood to a height of 10 - 12m.

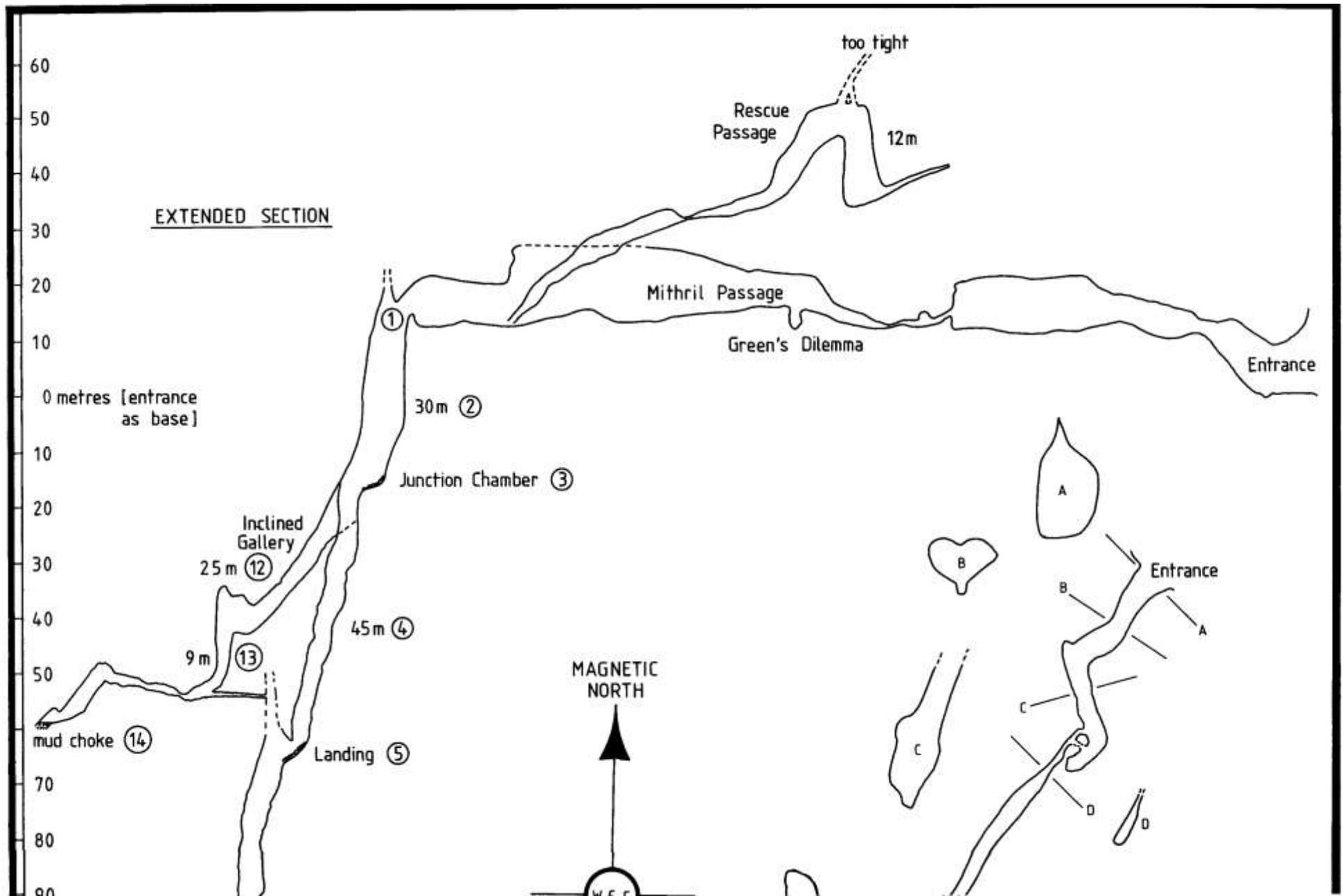
The Right Hand Series was explored in 1971 past a rope drop and a 25m pitch of which only the first part is vertical, to a 9m pitch. The presence of a fill of sand at the foot of this caused some seemingly dramatic results to stone dropping tests. Allied to the feeble lighting in use these suggested a depth of 70 - 80m. It has since been claimed that these tests indicate a major gravitational anomaly in the Picos de Europa.

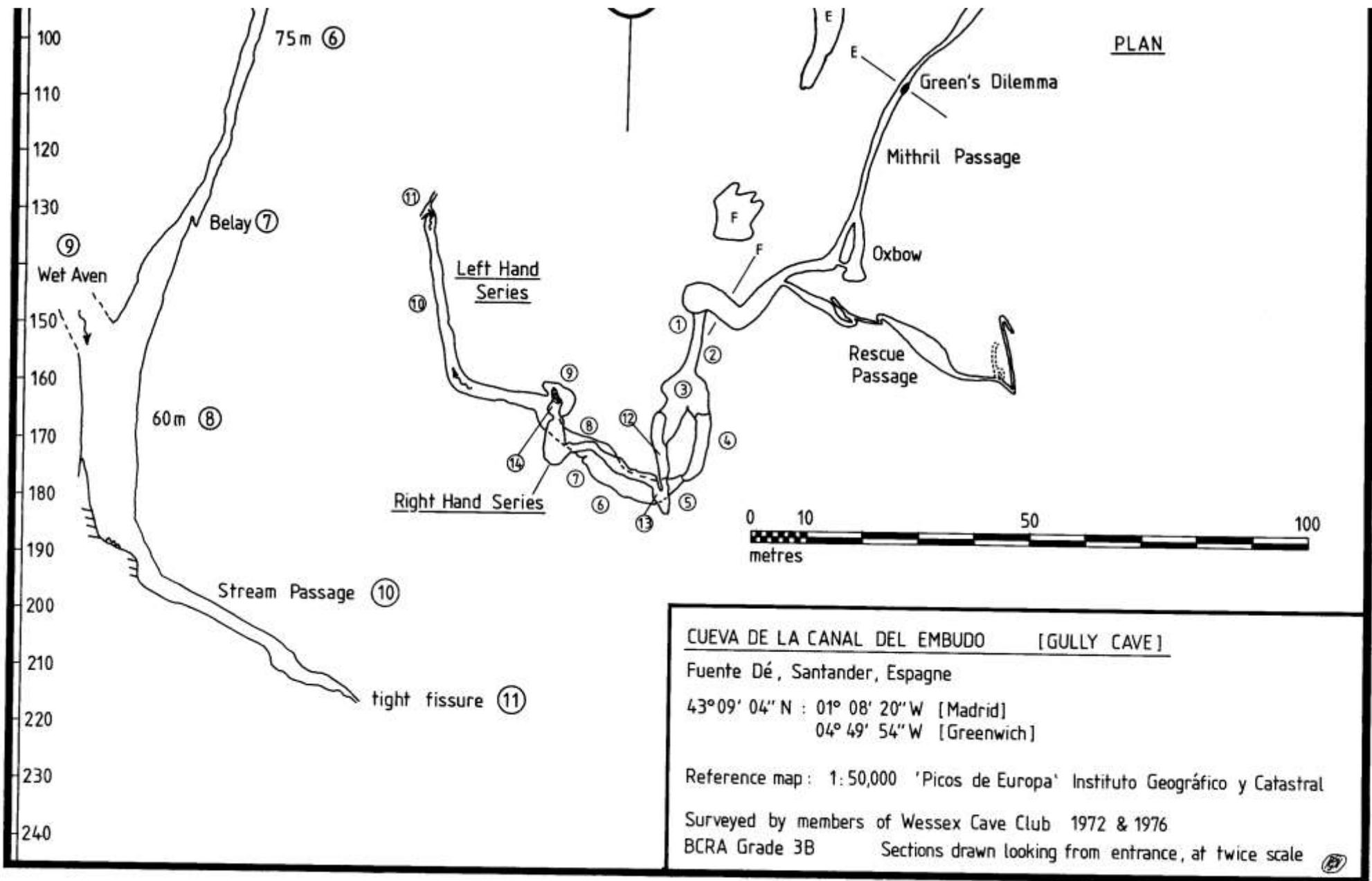
From halfway down the 25m pitch, a tight rift in the true left wall leads to the foot of the 45m pitch in the Left Hand Series. Another, small, passage at the foot of the 9m pitch joins the Left Hand Series as a window in the wall of the 45m pitch. The main route continues from the 9m pitch to a large-bore phreatic passage which rises and then descends (hand line required) to a mud choke.

The Cueva de la Canal del Embudo is approximately 220m long, and is as deep. In spite of its depth, its position and various features suggest that it was originally formed as a resurgence cave, probably before the glaciation developed the Canal del Embudo as the main outflow for the Vega de Liordes. So somewhere there should exist the upstream end of this gigantic U-tube, though attempts to find it have so far failed. The stream in the Left Hand Series is a later capture. Similarly, its point of resurgence has yet to be identified.

The Lower Series were surveyed in 1972, as was the Upper Series. Unfortunately, the survey notes for the latter were lost, and so this was re-surveyed in 1974, when the opportunity was also taken to survey Rescue Passage. The passage sections were drawn from photographs.

REF. Hanwell, J.D. (1972) *The Picos de Europa and the Vega de Liordes*.
J. WCC 12 142, pp 139 – 14





BOGIBBS ROPEWALKERS

R.A. Websell

Bogibbs are a rope walker type ascendeur based in the original Gibbs design but varying primarily from this in that it is a one piece item and does not need to be taken apart and reassembled around the rope as does the original. Bogibbs were developed in Czechoslovakia between 1976-77 by cavers from the Societe Speleologique Slovaque in Boznava and have only recently been introduced to western cavers. The devices are specifically manufactured by Gustave Stibranyi, although political restraints restrict him from large scale production. Two types are made, the universal, as illustrated (Fig. 1.) and the chest Bogibbs which is specifically designed for central chest mounting. They are designed to take a maximum load of 120kg and to take ropes of between 5 - 12mm. Bogibbs can only be used for ropewalking and are not designed for shock loading.

The Bogibbs has three basic components, but these are designed to stay as one unit and not to be taken apart in use. The sheath is made from 3mm aluminium sheet which has been folded around a 7.5mm radius to make two parallel faces. On one face is a hole to take the pin and on the opposing face, a semi-circular section has been cut out. The cam is made from 10mm aluminium with two holes drilled, one to take the pin and the other for attachment. A few teeth are notched in the bottom face. The pin is approximately 30mm in length and locates the cam to the sheath and is secured with a lock-nut; a washer is located between the cam and the sheath. Full details are available from Fig. 1. Manufacture would be relatively simple with the use of engineering facilities although the bending of the sheath would have to be experimented with.

The Bogibbs is loaded onto the rope as shown in Fig. 2. In the first position the rope is placed into the top of the semi-circular cut out with the cam teeth locked against the sheath. In the second position the cam is turned round onto the rope thus opening the lower half of the cut out. The rope is then loaded into the ascendeur and ascent can commence. It must be pointed out that this operation can only be carried out on a slack unloaded rope.

The Bogibbs can now be used as normal ropewalkers and can be used in a 3-point rig with foot and knee ascendeurs with the third either shoulder or chest mounted. The device in its present design is a bit restrictive in that the attachment hole leaves little room for straps and loops. Due to the fact that the Bogibbs can only be taken off or put on an unloaded rope they have to be put on in sequence, ie. top ascendeur first, followed by knee, then foot; this sequence is reversed to remove them from the rope. This necessitates the use of a spare ascendeur to take the load when changeovers etc. are to be undertaken. Thus the spare ascendeur has to be highest for changing from ascent to descent without leaving the rope, and in this respect it makes the operation slightly slower than with normal Gibbs, which can be removed from a loaded rope. Illustrated in Fig. 3. is a recommended changeover procedure when using Bogibbs. In 1., the caver ascends towards the bolt. In 2., the spare ascendeur (4) goes onto the higher rope; shoulder (1), knee (2) and foot (3) ascendeurs are disengaged. In 3., shoulder (1) is located below spare (4) followed by knee (2) and foot (3) ascendeurs. The spare ascendeur can then be removed and ascent can continue. It is important that the spare ascendeur is of a type that can be removed from a loaded rope.

The Bogibbs has many advantages over a normal Gibbs. It is more sturdy and its one-piece design eliminates the embarrassing or dangerous loss of components underground. The cam profile gives a more positive bite, eliminating 'misses', and thus gives a far quicker and more efficient ascent. The main disadvantage is that the device can only be removed in sequence and not removed from a loaded rope, thus necessitating the use of a fourth ascendeur; though with practice and the correct procedure this would cause the minimum of problems. In fact this characteristic is a positive safety feature as the Bogibbs cannot accidentally come off the rope.

BOGIBBS ROPEWALKER

FIG. 1.

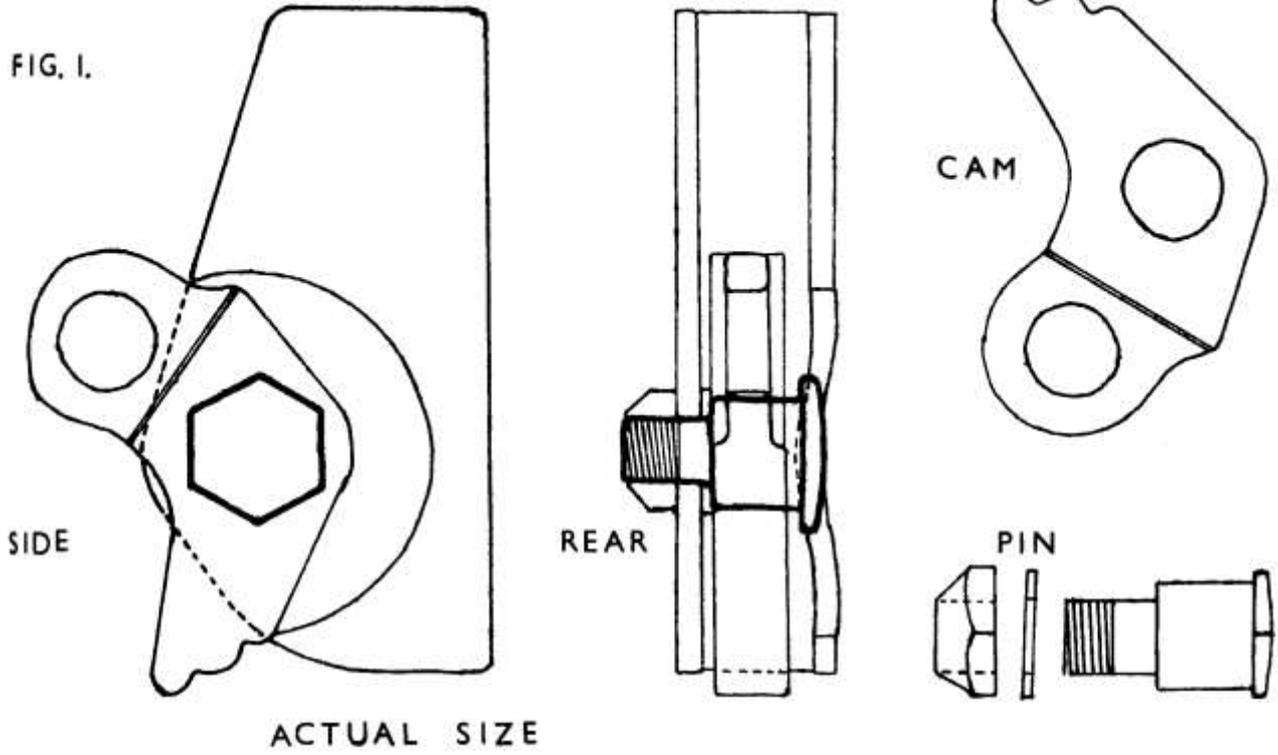


FIG. 2. LOADING SEQUENCE

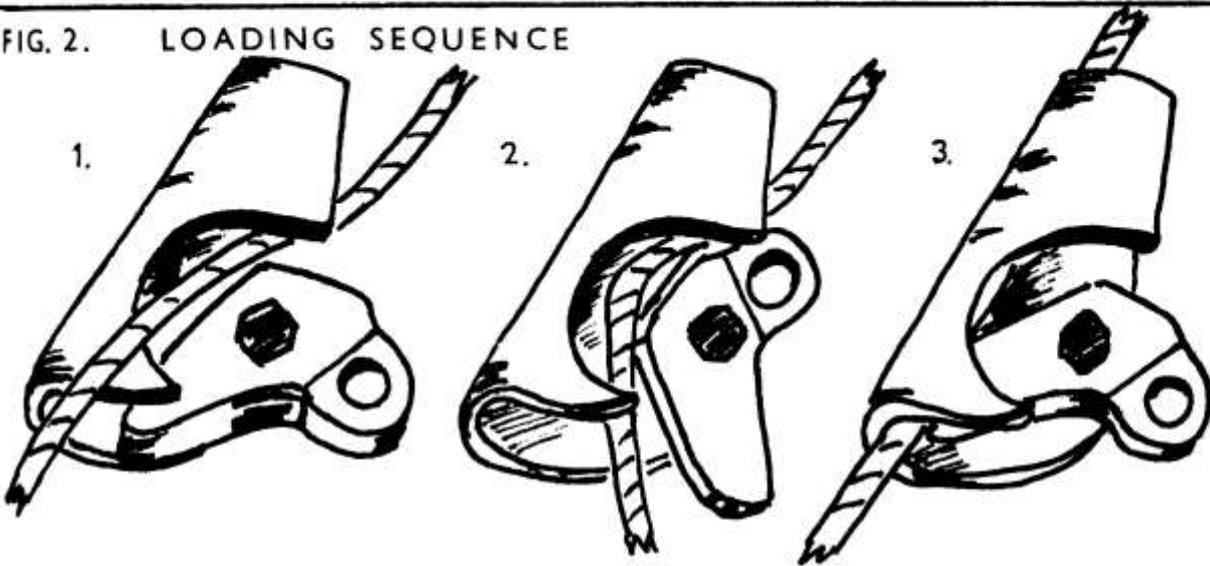
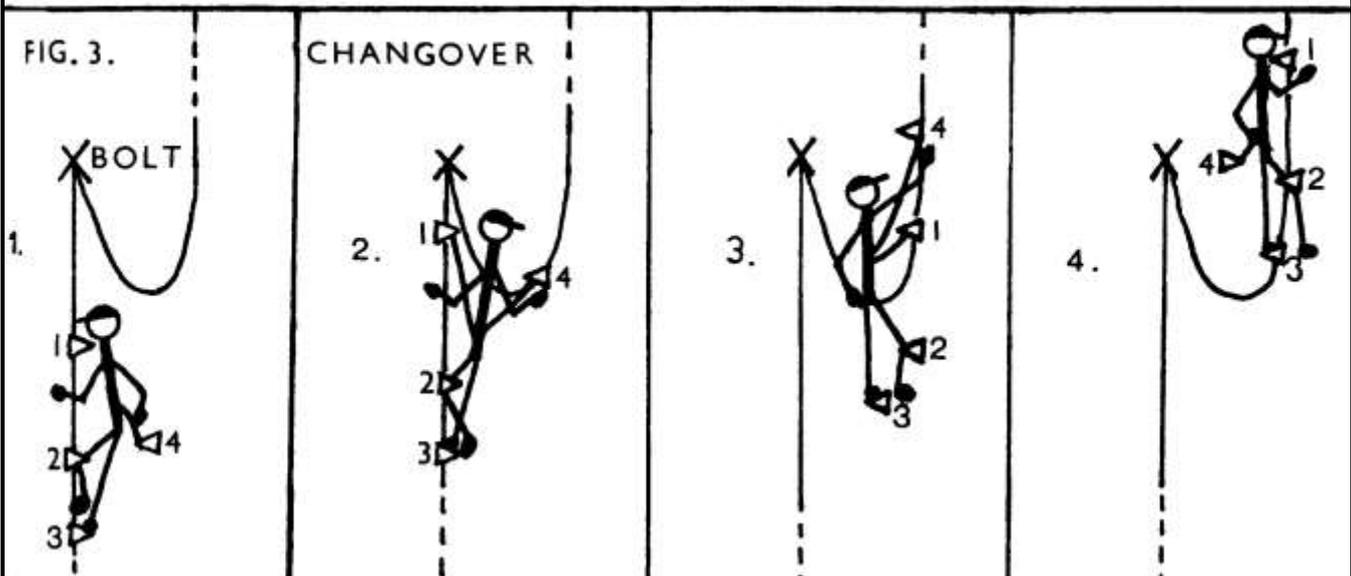


FIG. 3.

CHANGOVER



In its present form the Bogibbs is difficult to load onto large diameter rope (eg. 11mm Bluewater), and the cam teeth do not bite on the rope but the top cam face bites instead. Thus different cam profiles need to be investigated. Also, the cam attachment hole needs to be larger.

Despite these problems the Bogibbs is a definite improvement on the Gibbs design; the best ideas are the simplest and this is true of the Bogibbs. Personally I find ropewalking the most efficient ascending system; after six years of using my rig in varying conditions and situations I would not contemplate using any other system. The Bogibbs could supersede the Gibbs, with some development.

I hope that any engineers in the Wessex will give this device some thought and attention; if anyone would like more information or a look at the actual thing, please get in touch. I would also like to hear from anyone who has used Bogibbs, and their opinions of them.

I would like to thank Walter Albrecht for lending me the Bogibbs and for his article adapted from Gustave Stibranyi.

REFERENCES: Albrecht W. Nachtrag zum Bogibbs. Journal of the Arbeitsgemein-schaft Hohle und Karst. Stuttgart No. 21.
Spelunca No. 4. 1980,,
Goulbourne A. ULSA Review No. 12. pp. 16 - 17.

Bogibbs are made by Gustave Stibranyi
04402 Turnianske Podhradie 328/10
okr. Kosice-vidiek
Czechoslovakia.

FROM THE LOG

22nd November 1980 Manor Farm Swallet - Sarum Inlet C. Milne, P. Moody. Banged the end again but the way on is up through the boulders. Still too wet to assess the possibilities.

29th Nov. Longwood Swallet Renolds Passage. P. & A. Moody. Banged the end - its looking good.

6th December Longwood Swallet - Renolds Passage. P. & A. Moody. Put another charge at the end. We can now see the river (?) up ahead, yet cannot see what the passage does; all one can see is a wall of water coming in from the roof some 20ft. further on.