

THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 245

JULY 1995

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Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Club or the Editor.

club notes

Wessex People

New Members : Welcome to:

Alan Oberman, 28 Church Road, Chavey Down, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 8RR, 01344 884477.

Caroline Allen, 60 Queens Road, Caversham, Berkshire, 01734 463564.

Trevor Moore, 5 Highbury Cottages, Coleford, Nr. Bath, BA3 5NW, 01373 812153.

David Barnett, Laurel Farm House, 89 Frome Road, Malden Bradley, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 7JA, 01985 844541.

Shane Fry, 17 Glebelands, Nunney, Nr. Frome, Somerset, 01373 836800.

Andrew Buchanan, Haydon House, Middle Street, East Harptree, Bristol, BS18 6BB, 01761 221462.

Milton Fenton, 33 Westway, Charminster, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH9 3DT, 01202 526071.

Neil Fay, 42 Nutwood Avenue, Brockham, Nr Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7LT, 01737 843694

Martin Cross, Windyridge, 54 Liskeard Road, Callington, Cornwall, PL17 7JE, 01579 382663

Douglas and Clare Boomer have moved to 432 MainCentre, Northville, MI 48167 United States of America.

Paul, Fiona and Jack Lambert have moved to 14 Priory Close, Castle Cary, BA7 7DH (tel. 01963 350605)

Library

Club Librarian, Mike Dewdney-York has written to express his thanks to **Bob Scammell** for the books and photographs which he has donated to the library over the last year. Mike would also like to draw members' attention to some of the recently received publications.

White Rose Pothole Club Newsletter Vol. 13 No. 1: Articles on Old Providence mine in Kettlewell, Hagg Gill Pot, Langstrothdale, diving and dye testing at Middlesmoor, Upper Wharfedale.

National Speleological Society News, March 1995: Under the Kalahari - new cave exploration with bad, bad air, Rabies in insectivorous bats and some historic information on the Gouffre Berger.

Pholeos (Wittenberg University Speleological Society, Ohio) March 1995: Caves of Adams and Ross counties Ohio - minor but interesting. Also a thought provoking letter from a local landowner who has closed his land to cavers.

Belfrey Bulletin 478: Cover is a (sadly rather poorly reproduced) pastel drawing of St Alactites Hall, White

Pit, by Mark Lumley. The discovery and exploration of this new section of the cave is described, and a survey included. Also articles on Sulawesi and Jamaica.

Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin, Vol. 3 March 1995: Articles on caving at Luxor (Egypt), New Zealand and at Bowdne Hill Limestone mines which sound like Box mines but without the goodies left behind.

Speleo Dordogne. Bulletin 3rd quarter 1993.

Some articles of interest to Wessex Members: Tourist trip to the Grotte des Bouderies, and diving at the Font de la Doux.

Tackle Store

Dominic Sealy had to resign as Gear Curator back in January after he was offered a job in Norfolk. Andy Morse has agreed to take Dominic's place, but also asked that the notes that Dominic wrote about tackle for publication in the Journal be published anyway:

As the new Gear Curator for the club I hope to maintain and improve the club's equipment for the benefit of everyone. New equipment shall hopefully be introduced to allow the adoption of more sophisticated ladder and lifeline operations. Whilst for many small Mendip pitches traditional lifelining techniques are more than adequate when used by individuals skilled in these techniques, the

TACKLE GUIDELINES

- 1) Book all equipment out and in in the log book provided.
- 2) Powerhose ladders before returning them to the store.
- 3) Store ladders with the C links unfastened in a band.
- 4) Wash lifelines and handlines after every trip using the rope washer not the powerhose.
- 5) Clean all hardware such as Mallions, Krabs etc. before returning to the store. Lubricate with WD 40 if necessary.
- 6) Notify the Gear Curator of any equipment that has received a major shock loading, and remove from service by placing in the grey sack marked equipment to be tested - THIS IS ESSENTIAL.
- 7) If using the drill ensure that it is carried in a waterproof container, should the drill become wet or damp it must be immediately dried.
- 8) None of the ropes etc provided in the store are for S.R.T. use.

larger pitches such as those in Rhino Rift, Thrupe Lane and the Caves of the Yorkshire Dales require more sophisticated techniques. Whilst at the moment the club's store is adequate for most Mendip trips it would not allow parties to tackle the more vertical systems safely.

However it is essential if the club is to introduce more equipment that it is looked after and maintained by everyone who uses it. The logging out of equipment in the booking out book is essential for the safety of everyone who uses the kit **please ensure you do this every time you take tackle from the store**. Equally when returning tackle ensure that you have power hosed ladders and washed the ropes. It is hoped to provide a wall mounted rope washer in the near future to make this a less arduous task but in the meantime we shall have to battle on with the hand held gizzmo.

In the past the club has 'lost' equipment from the store which is obviously of great concern as it costs us all money. I hope that this has been purely for legitimate reasons and no doubt some has been lost as permanent fixed tackle in places such as Eastwater. This seems a perfectly reasonable use but any ladders used as such must be signed out as being permanently rigged. It is of course preferable that prior arrangements for permanent tackle are made and as such it may be possible to manufacture 'made to measure ladders' with Mallion Rapide Links rather than C links.

Anyone who presently has any kit at home is asked if they could either return it or let the gear curator know so that all the club's kit can be accounted for.

When replacing ladders back on the racks they should be stored with the C links **unfastened in a rubber band** as this creates less stress on the end wires. Whilst I admit this may create a slight inconvenience in that ladders may need recoiling before a trip, if it prolongs the life of the ladders and prevents but one ladder from breaking then it is surely time well spent!

Please also remember that the tackle store is for the storage of club equipment and that neither the club or the gear curator can be responsible for personal equipment. To conclude, inset is a set of equipment use and maintenance guidelines that I hope we can all maintain. Remember in the final analysis it is our tackle store and will only be as good as we allow.

p.s. Any comments or suggestions you may have on how the store is organised and the equipment available will be much appreciated.

Happy Caving
Dominic

Continued on page 32

caving notes

*This is a much foreshortened edition of **caving notes**. Instead I have chosen to reproduce in full the latest Issue of **SpeleoScene** (see pages 23 - 26), the NCA's bulletin on cave access information. Not only does this serve the purpose of getting **SpeleoScene** in front of a wider audience, it saves me from having to re-type the access information which it contains. It also helps fill some space since, for the first time in quite a while, I find we are short of articles and material for the Journal.*

NJW.

"With the long duration cave dives now being routinely done by CDG members the problem of staying warm has become increasingly important" writes *John Cordingley*. "One option is buy a baggy drysuit and wear loads of underclothing, but this exacerbates back pain and buoyancy control problems together with the need to carry extra lead. Some of us have been working on an alternative approach to try to find a source of cheap but durable **electrically heated clothing** which will run from portable batteries."

"Gerbing Heat Apparel" of Honiton in Devon recently supplied John with one of their 12V heated waistcoats which they import from America for the motorcycling market. John's report continues "Nick Williams then kindly helped me get the necessary wiring built into one of my drysuits. So far I've used it on dives of up to four hours duration in cold northern water and it has performed brilliantly. Incidentally, it's also a first class motorcycling accessory. They are relatively inexpensive and have many potential uses for us 'outdoor types', not the least of which is for rescue applications. I'll shortly be reviewing this item more fully in Descent but if there are any Wessex members who would like more information in the meantime, give me a call on 01254 774336"

April 8 saw the first meeting of **Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd**, the body established to take over responsibility for access to caves on the Gruffy Field from the Charterhouse Caving Committee. The company has purchased a 150 year lease on the features below ground on the property for a nominal sum. For the present there are no changes to the access arrangements to GB and Charterhouse caves - the only difference that most cavers will notice is the change in the appearance of the permits for visiting the caves. For the sake of minimising administration, CCC Ltd will also take over dealing with the access arrangements for the other caves formerly within the Charterhouse Committee remit. Dave Cooke represents the Wessex as one of the four directors of the company.

The Club is currently without any listed Cuthbert's leaders. Leaders are appointed by the BEC following a series of trips by the candidate (usually a minimum of 12 - 15) - please would anyone interested in being appointed as a leader contact the Caving Secretary.

ELVIS FOUND
BY
ALIEN DIVERS
IN WORLDS DEEPEST CHASM ... IS THAT SO ?

by Rob Taviner

*Don't Believe I'm Taken In
By What I've Seen and Heard
I Just Read the Daily News
And Swear By Every Word*
(STEELY DAN)

Following successive trouncings in the annual competition with the diggers Sutherland 1994 proved to be the year the divers bit back in style. Discoveries beyond the downstream sump in Cnoc Nan Uamh were to more than double the amount of new stuff found since the inception of the expeditions in 1990, raising our overall tally to close on 1 km - and producing some bizarre side-effects.

In contrast to previous years, the normally well-oiled Sutherland machine stuttered rather disjointedly into life. Whilst everybody else booked the first week in May, Pete Glanvill, for reasons known only to himself, booked the previous week and as a consequence the normally cohesive team rather dribbled and drabbed their way the long haul north. Those regulars able to hastily rearrange dates decided to make a fortnight of it, leaving Gadge and I to arrive last - and only one day before Pete was due to leave. In the event this proved to be something of a blessing in disguise for whilst the departees had been forced to endure some familiar atrocious weather we were trailing behind us the first glimmers of a minor heatwave.

In the wake of the previous years discoveries in the

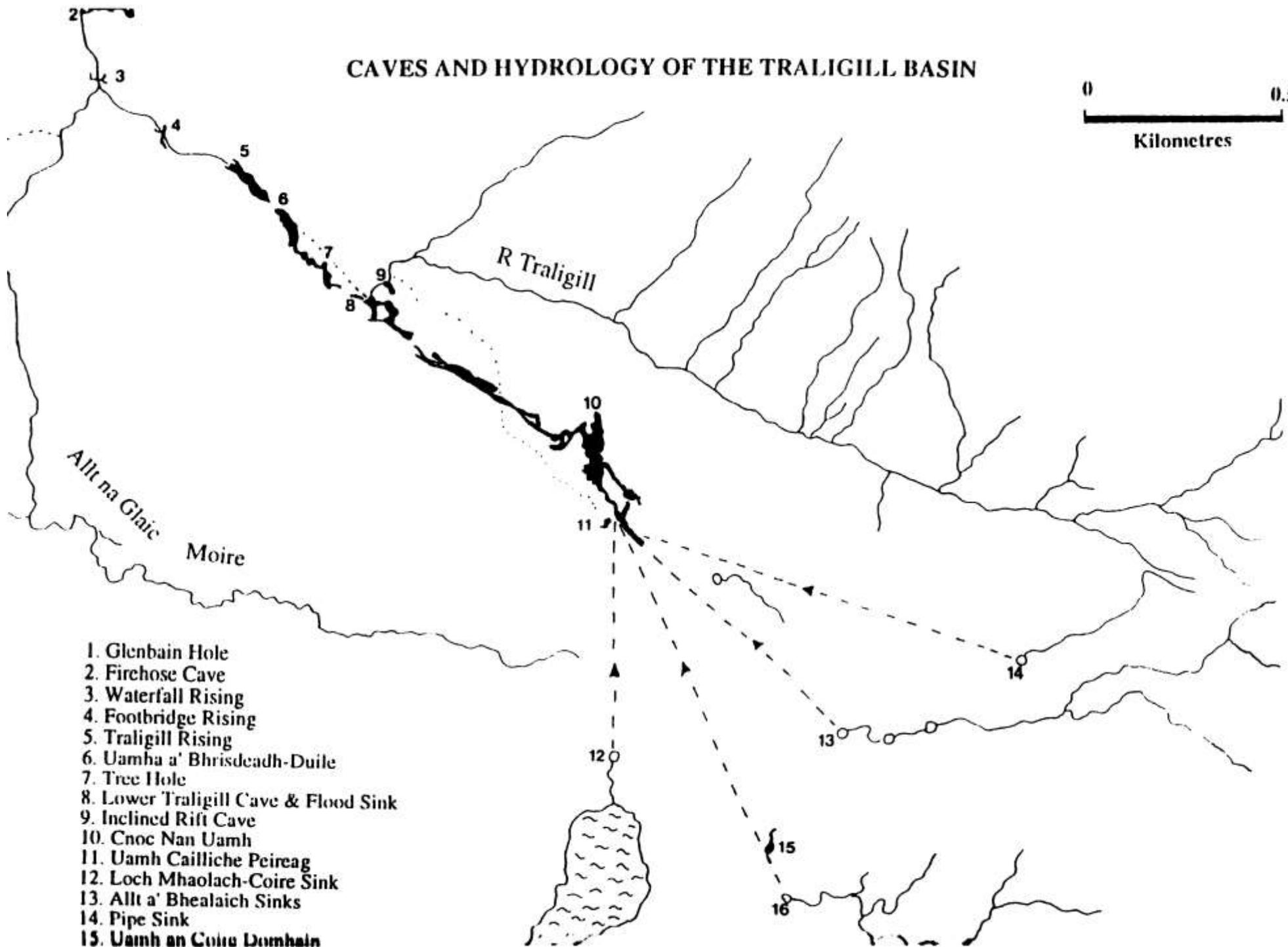
Lower Traligill Basin - which promised to establish a single major system - the main thrust of the expedition was aimed not surprisingly toward closing the few remaining gaps, most notably between Cnoc Nan Uamh and Lower Traligill Cave and the short but difficult section between Lower Traligill Cave and Tree Hole. Despite the forbidding prospect of half a kilometre separating the sump at the base of *'The Waterslide'* in Cnoc Nan Uamh from the upstream limit in Lower Traligill Cave, we had always been confident of a major extension if only the divers could find a way through the terminal boulder choke, frustrating progress 25m in. To this end, by squeezing over and beyond some fallen slabs, Pete Mulholland - who earlier in the week had already achieved probably the furthest penetration of upstream ANUS Sump 4 - and Malcolm Stewart had finally succeeded in passing this obstacle to enter a spacious tunnel, which was still going some 50m from base.

Tree Hole, which terminated upstream in a tiny sump and appeared to all intents and purposes a hopeless proposition had also been forthcoming, where J-Rat, Julian Walford and Tony Boycott had excavated a squalid 10m tunnel through a seemingly blank wall to intersect a small cross passage containing an inlet stream. Although an apparently bleak prospect - *'Water Torture'* as it had been fittingly named - was draughting, and heading in roughly the right direction, upstream toward Lower Traligill Cave.

Tony Jarrat in the snow covered entrance of Damoclean Dig



CAVES AND HYDROLOGY OF THE TRALIGILL BASIN



1. Glenbain Hole
2. Firehose Cave
3. Waterfall Rising
4. Footbridge Rising
5. Traligill Rising
6. Uamha a' Bhrisdeadh-Duile
7. Tree Hole
8. Lower Traligill Cave & Flood Sink
9. Inclined Rift Cave
10. Cnoc Nan Uamh
11. Uamh Cailliche Peireag
12. Loch Mhaolach-Coire Sink
13. Allt a' Bhealaich Sinks
14. Pipe Sink
15. Uamh an Cuirn Domhain

16. Scan cannot read behind binding

Tony Jarratt in the (highly unstable) entrance of Umah an Coire Domhain (Cave of the Deep Depression)

Knackered from recent work commitments, best intentions to crack on with digging straight away came to nought, so after paying a quick visit to the local caving store - Lochinver beach - to collect the traditional supply of digging gloves, plus a crowbar and a full tin of hammerite, Nick and I wiled away a mellow afternoon in the Summer Isles Bar in Achiltibuie before following the scenic road back beneath Stac Polly and Cul Beag to help out at the new Grampian hut, now nearing completion. With Pete and Malcolm gone, the following day saw us following the glaringly new but admittedly beautifully laid footpath cut alongside the Allt Nan Uamh stream. Passing below another branch, spiralling like a tourist magnet towards the Creag Nan Uamh Bone Caves, we decided to verify reported changes in the vicinity of ANUS Cave, where the whole stream now plunged into Uamh Nan Leanabh Neochiontach (Cave of The Innocent Child), discovered in 1980 by Julian's son Corin but blocked for some years until forced open by recent winter floods. A new cave had also appeared in a promising position some 5m above on the left bank, but proved to be short and not so sweet. After a half-hearted clearance of Upper ANUS Cave 4, prime candidate for a dry route into the ANUS divers cave, but now blocked by the downside of the same winter floods, we wandered up to Damoclean Dig - complete with a beautifully scalloped snow tunnel perched against the entrance cliff-face.

Leaving J-Rat to play with his toys (using snow as tamp) Julian and I wiled away an hour or two pursuing a couple of hopeless holes in a neighbouring valley before wandering over the Claonaite moor in search of a reported new collapse. After a quick look in Tonys' dig above Uamh an Claonaite we called it a day, wandering back to the road via the Lyne Valley (lots of limestone, no caves), picking up a couple of fine sets of antlers en route, where judging by the number of remains in evidence, must have suffered a severe winter. Then back to the hut to lay concrete foundations.

Pete Mulholland was elated. 50m in, and 5m beyond where poor old Malcolm Stewart had tied off, he had surfaced in Cnoc Nan Uamh 2, 50m of thrust passage with a convenient round hole drilled through the middle of it. At the end of 'Straight Flush' lay another sump. On the same day, Robbie Roberts, a diver from RAF Kinloss - and the man responsible for stirring the more primitive emotions of the Grampian by placing bolts on the easily free-climbed first cascade in Uamh an Claonaite - proved he was not a complete prat by laying 50m of line upstream from 'Landslip Chamber', where the waters



from the plateau sinks emerge. This sump has since proved to be Scotlands longest, surfacing 130m from base in two small chambers. The sump continues but sadly becomes too-tight after a short distance.

Whilst Petes' tales of caverns measureless persuaded Tony Boycott out of his diving retirement, J-Rat and I continued with the Tree Hole dig. Reaching the cross-rift we found the more promising downstream lead sumped so we cautiously continued up to the left in a small and unpleasant tube, ever mindful to avoid breaching the base of the surface river located somewhere directly above, and hampered by an annoying ear-traversing trickle of water. With the skip-man having to reverse out each time some 10m in a flat-out crawl, progress was tediously slow and after a knackered 15 loads we retired hurt, heading up the valley to help out with the divers. A quick trip down 'The Waterslide' showed no sign of them so after hanging around on the surface for a while we headed for The Inch, standing cold and hungry on the bridge outside until 6 p.m. only to find that they'd opened at 5.

The divers had met with spectacular success. A further 50m sump had led to 'Northern Lights', 350m of

Continued on page 27



Free - but how about a donation to the local Cave Rescue Service?

Equipment and Safety

NCA ROPE TESTING

The NCA Rope Test Rig will be at the BCRA Conference in Southport so you are welcome to bring your ropes along to be tested. The rate of testing is around 3 or 4 samples per hour and your sample should be a length of about 2.5m and should include any damaged section of the rope. Owen Clarke would welcome offers of help on the day, either winding the handle or recording. If you can help, his address is on page 4. Remember you can post ropes to him for testing but in this case it's a help if you fill in beforehand a form giving details of the rope to be tested - the form is available from Owen if you send him S AE.

Owen has now produced a 5-page document "Cumulative Results of the NCA Rope Tests, 1993 to June 1995". Again, send SAE if you'd like a copy of this. Some specific points which have become apparent are:

1. That age is a minor factor in strength reduction, cumulative usage being much more important.
2. That rust damage can be more serious than the visual message, whilst chemical damage can give a very apparent visual indication that is more serious than the actual effect on rope strength.
3. In nearly every case, the rope breaks at the knot, even if there was serious damage to the sheath in the zone between the knots. Hence rope damaged during a trip or expedition could still be usable provided the damaged section is not included in a knot
4. There are some indications that ropes can be weakened by overscrubbing. The best cleaning method for long rope life is by washing in cold water without detergents, either in a stream or a washing machine.
5. The surface appearance of the rope gives some guidance to its residual strength, but the only sure fire way of finding out is to test it to destruction!

ECO ANCHORS

"ANCHOR PLACEMENT PROGRAMME"

NCA POLICY: The policy document covering the placement of Eco-anchors under the NCA programme has now been agreed by representatives from CNCC, DCA, CCC and

CSCC who are currently involved in placing anchors in their regions. This final draft covers objectives of the programme, selection of the anchor system, installation, training, testing and maintenance, documentation, insurance, promotion, participation, etc. This will be put forward in the near future for adoption. Copies are available in return for SAE to the CNCC Secretary. (Address on p. 2)

NEW RESIN FROM HILTI: At present Hilti c50 resin is used for the installation of Eco-anchors. Hilti are to replace this towards the end of the year with a new resin, cy50. On 1 July Les Sykes of CNCC, Mark Lowe of DCA and a representative from Hilti tested some anchors placed earlier in the week using the new resin. The results were not encouraging, with the anchors pulling out of the resin at relatively low loads. This presents a problem with future installations and maintenance so further tests are planned with other resins from other manufacturers until we have a new system.

CRO CALLOUT PROBLEM

On Sunday, 9 July at 00.30 approx., the CRO was contacted about a group of cavers overdue from Blea Gill Cave in Dentdale. They were given details of the party and their vehicle.

An investigation party checked the car parks and lanes leading up to Flintergill, and whilst spotting a similar vehicle to that of the missing party, the registration was incorrect. CRO were about to call off the check when a caver was spotted in a phone box - it was the missing party.

After a short discussion they returned to their vehicle - the one spotted earlier. The callout information had been given the wrong car registration number, it transpired a new but similar car had been purchased that week. If the cavers had (still) been in trouble underground, it may well have been several hours later before a full callout - an unpredictable outcome.

Cavers should note the need for accurate callout information - every piece of information given is important, but wrong information is arguably worse than no information.

1995 NCA CAVERS FAIR

This was a great success this year with over 150 cavers attending to take advantage of the events arranged. The whole thing was "masterminded" by Jopo and South Wales Caving Club who provided the venue and the excellent food. Special thanks to the SWCC "Soup Dragons" for some smashing nosh!

The weather was more than kind and, since everything was outdoors in the old brickworks quarry (except for the caving trips) there were no problems and everything could take place as planned, with the additional bonus of giving the spectators a chance to laze in the sun whilst watching incredible demonstrations on the rope tower: 8 stone ladies hauling 15 stone blokes into the air with fiendish combinations of ropes, pulleys, jammers, etc. Seriously, though, think of the problem with a casualty in a caving situation ... Thanks are due to the team of professional caving instructors who gave their time free of charge and spent 2 days showing people the ropes: John Cliffe, Juliette Parker-Smith, Dena Proctor and Eric Hoole.

Thanks too, to all the other cavers who gave up their time to organise and run events from surveying to explosives plus caving trips and slide/sound sequences. The profit made is split between SWCRO and NCA.



John Cliffe on the rope tower

Access and Conservation Round the Regions

THE NORTH

Regional Council - COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

For queries about access in the region, please contact CNCC's Conservation & Access Officer: Phil Parker, 11 Manston Gardens, Cross Gates, Leeds, LE15 8EY. Tel. 0113-2933852. (Note new number.)

For information on CNCC, send S.A.E. to: Hon. Secretary, Les Sykes, 49 Manfield, Ashurst, Skelmersdale, Lancs. WN8 6SU. Tel. 01695-728673. (Note new number.)

CNCC ECO-RESIN RIGGING GUIDE, NO.1: Price £3.00 from Inglesport, Bernies, Penyghent Cafe and Over & Under. Profits will finance the next stage of the bolting programme.

CNCC HANDBOOK - NORTHERN CAVING:

Price £2.00 plus 40p post & packing. Available from CNCC Secretary. Also from Inglesport, Bernies, Over & Under and Penyghent Cafe.

PERMANENT RESIN BONDED ANCHORS

"The Cavers' Guide to the Eco-anchor" by Les Sykes; now published by CNCC. A4, 11-page booklet, spiral bound, available from Bernies and Inglesport, price 50p. All you ever needed to know about the P-anchor system!

UPDATES TO CNCC HANDBOOK

Just published are update sheets to insert in your copy of CNCC Handbook. Available free of charge from Inglesport or Bernies or send A5-sized SAE to CNCC Secretary. The pages are: 2:9/10, 2:17/8, 2:25/6, 3:7/8, 3:9/10, 3:19/20, 3:23/4, 3:25/6.

THEFTS FROM CARS

The problem is on the increase in the Dales, affecting cavers, climbers and walkers. CNCC Secretary wants to hear from anyone whose car has been "got at" as he intends to collate information to ascertain the most vulnerable areas and areas where there are regular occurrences. CNCC then hopes to take suitable action to catch those responsible.

FOUNTAINS FELL FIND

Fountains Fell is an access sensitive area so please respect the wishes of the exploration team and the farmer and stay away from the dig sites. Failure to do so will ensure tighter access restrictions being imposed. When requested to do so by the exploration team, CNCC will negotiate access to the site.

CNCC SUBSCRIPTIONS

Correct address for the Treasurer is now: G. Jones, 8 Elworth Road, Elworth, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 9HQ. To obtain a receipt for your £10.00 sub. you must enclose SAE. Photocopies of the receipt should be sent with your booking request for CNCC-controlled caves.

DERBYSHIRE

Regional Council - DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION.

For queries about access in the region, please contact DCA's Conservation & Access Officer: Pete Mellors, "Fairview", Station Road, Edingley, Newark, Notts. NG22 8BX. Tel. 01623-882515

For information on DCA, send S.A.E. to: Hon. Secretary, Jenny Potts, 3 Greenway, Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3FE. Tel. 01335-370629

PUBLICATIONS FROM DCA

Currently available from DCA Secretary: **PEAK RIGGING GUIDE** - £3.95 + 45p. Also from Hitch 'n' Hike. Profits help finance the DCA Bolting Programme. **DCA NEWSLETTER** - Subscription £4.50 for 4 copies of the quarterly publication.

OLD ASH MINE, NORTHERN DALE

The mine is now gated and you should collect a key from Lobby Farm, Oker, Nr. Matlock. Mr. Greatorex has asked that you phone him on 01629-733575 in advance to check that someone will be in to give you the key. Note that there is NO public footpath down Northern Dale; use the Lobby Farm track to reach the Wensley/Snitterton public footpath which passes the foot of Northern Dale. The shaft entrance to Old Ash Mine is temporarily blocked but will shortly be capped with a locked lid, key available from Mr. Greatorex at Lobby Farm.

BRIGHTGATE & TEARSALL MINES

There is NO direct route down the hill side from Brightgate or Tearsall to Old Ash Mine. Please don't cut across walls and down through the fields if you are visiting Old Ash as well as the others, go via Lobby Farm with permission from Mr. Greatorex.

JUG HOLES

The climb down into the Upper Series has now been temporarily stabilised but still requires care. The ginging may need further attention.

LONG TOR GROTTO

DESCENT reports that a section of false floor has fallen through about 80m into the Long Tor Grotto Level, the area should therefore be treated with respect!

LONG RAKE MINE

You need to telephone Mr. Hadfield of Oakhouse Farm, Smalldale for permission to visit. The number is 01298-22139 and he would prefer to have about 2 weeks notice of your intention to visit the mine. Please be aware that this is a "sensitive" site.

WINNATTS HEAD

The boulder chokes are reported to be increasingly unstable - yes, even worse! Treat this place with extreme caution.

WALES

Regional Council - CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL.

For queries about access in the region, please contact CCC's Conservation & Access Officer: Mrs. E. Little, Hennoyadd Villa, Hennoyadd Road, Abercrave, Swansea, SA9 1UR. Tel. 01639-730331
For information on CCC send SAE to the Hon. Secretary: Frank Baguley, White Lion House, Ynys Uchaf, Ystradgynlais, Swansea, SA9 1RW. Tel. 01639-849519.

CCC PUBLICATIONS

Currently available from the CCC Secretary: **CCC HANDBOOK** - £1.00 plus 52p postage. **RED DRAGON** No. 21, 1994-95 - £2.00 + 79p **INDEX TO RED DRAGON**, 1 - 20 - £3.00 + 29p

OFD / CWM DWR ACCESS CHANGE

There is now a new Permit Secretary for the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Management Committee who will deal with requests from clubs for access to OFD I, II and Cwm Dwr. Send SAE at least 2 weeks in advance of your visit to Sue Mabbett, 2 Wyndham St., Tongwynlais, Cardiff, CF4 7LN. (Letters only please, no phone calls.) Sue will also be dealing with other SWCC access arrangements: Pant Mawr, Llethrid, Tooth Cave. etc.

Elsie Little will continue to deal with the current annual OFD permit holders.

DAN-YR-OGOF ACCESS

Access is to be administered by SWCC for the time being so, again, Sue Mabbett is the person to write to with your SAE.

LLETHRID SWALLET

The cave has now been re-locked, hence access is via a key-holder, as before.

LLANGATTOCK AREA

Bill Gascoine does not intend to stand for the post of Secretary of the Mynydd Llangattock Cave Management Advisory Committee in May 1996. Doreen Gascoine will be resigning as Permit Secretary from January 1996. Both have served for a number of years in their respective posts and cavers will wish them well in their retirement. The draft terms for the plans for climbers' access to the escarpment proposed by the Committee at its meeting on 12th May have not, after all, been agreed as some of those concerned objected to the terms. Presumably this means climbing is still banned until agreement is reached.

Thefts from and damage to cavers' cars continue at various points in the area, despite all efforts. This includes the Daren Cilau car park, which is particularly bad. Be warned and, if possible, leave someone with your car. If you are unlucky, please report the loss or damage to the police.

Access and Conservation Round the Regions

MENDIP

Regional Council - COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS.

For queries about access in the region, please contact CSCC's Conservation & Access Officer: Jon Roberts, 1 Vauxhall Walk, London, SE11 5JT. Tel. 0171-7350331.

For information on CSCC, send S.A.E. to: Hon. Secretary, Dave Bell, 2 Grosvenor Ave., Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3EW. Tel. 0181-395-2379.

CSCC HANDBOOK & ACCESS GUIDE:

Updated to 1994. Price £1.00 plus A5-sized, 19p SAE. Available from CSCC Hon. Secretary.

SWILDONS FLOOD RISK

Bristol Water have decommissioned the pumps so no more water will be drained from Swildons. This could increase the flood risk in wet weather.

ECO HANGERS COME TO MENDIP

The dodgy bolt at the head of the 20ft. in Swildons has now been replaced by 3 ECO Hangers placed by CSCC under the NCA Resin Anchor scheme. The stal. column belay here is almost worn through due to the use of wire tethers and pull-through ropes. If you have to use this belay, it is suggested that you use rope or tape slings to avoid further damage.

Other ECO hangers have been installed by the team working under the direction of CSCC Equipment Officer: Les Williams, 51 Churchill Road East, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3HU. Tel. 01749-679839.

MENDIP CAVE REGISTRY

The Mendip Cave Registry has been reformed as an independent group to update references to caves in Somerset, Wiltshire and the Bristol area. A database is being used, with registrars covering different regions. If anyone has any information that should appear in the register, or is interested in helping, please contact the secretary/treasurer. Tony Boycott, 14 Walton Rise. Westbury-on-Trym. Bristol. BS9 3EW. Tel. 0117-950 7336.

CHARTERHOUSE CHANGES

Charterhouse Caving Committee has now been re-formed as the Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd. This was necessary because of legal changes so that it could negotiate access rights to caves in the Charterhouse area after the land was sold by Bristol Water to the Somerset Wildlife Trust. The Company now has a 150 year lease so that it can maintain access to G.B., Charterhouse. Longwood/August, Rhino Rift and Longwood Valley Sink. Access to the area still requires a permit and new permits will be issued to member clubs for distribution to their members.

Money is available to BCRA members or to members of BCRA SIG's. For details send SAE to BCRA Administrator:

Bryan Ellis, 20 Woodland Avenue, Westonzoyland, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA7 0LQ.

FUTURE BCRA SYMPOSIA, ETC.

BCRA is setting up a programme of Cave Science Symposia, beginning with one on 24 February 1996 at the Octagon Computer Centre, Stafford University. Bona fide students will be admitted to all future Cave Science Symposia at half the rate for BCRA personal members.

Other meetings planned by BCRA are a Spring 1996 South Wales (Eastern Valley Phreas) meeting at Big Pit Mining Museum, Blaenavon; an Autumn 1996 Derbyshire meeting; the 1996 Conference east of the Pennines and the 1997 Conference in the Bristol/Bath area. BCRA are also sponsoring the Devon & Cornwall Underground Conference on 14th. October.

BCRA CAVE STUDIES SERIES

No. 6 in the BCRA Cave Studies Series, "A glossary of cave geomorphology" will appear soon. Nos. 1 to 5 and other BCRA publications from the BCRA stand at the Conference.

DEVON & CORNWALL

Regional Council - DEVON & CORNWALL UNDERGROUND COUNCIL

For queries about access in the region, please contact DCUC's Conservation & Access Officer direct: A. Neill, 25 Lipsom Road, St. Judes, Plymouth, PL4 8PL.

For information on DCUC send SAE to: Hon. Secretary, Mike Hunting, Old Farmhouse, Kelly, Lifton, Devon, PL13 0HJ. 0182-287453.

THE 1995 DEVON & CORNWALL UNDERGROUND CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the British Cave Research Association. 14th. October 1995 at the River Dart Country Park. Ashburton. 9.45am to 4.30pm.

Facilities will include a fully licensed bar + Light lunches and snacks.

The 1995 BCRA Regional Conference presents live and direct a set of lectures and presentations from local and international cavers:

- Gavin Newman - Caves of the Dragon, an Audiovisual Experience.
- Andy Sparrow - Practical Ropework Demonstration for Lightweight Rescue.
- Brian Johnson - Abode of the Clouds.
- Pete Glanville - Devon Slide Quiz. How well do you know your local caves'?

This Conference is being organised by Devon & Cornwall Underground Council.

For further information please contact: John Whiteley. Tel. 01626-834623.

MINING

Specialist body - NATIONAL ASSN. OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS.

For information on NAMHO send S.A.E. to Hon. Sec. Adrian Pearce, 72 Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford, Shropshire. TF5 0LZ. Tel. 01952-405362.

"MINING IN SHROPSHIRE"

Edited by Adrian Pearce of Shropshire Mining Club. Price £7.95 + £1 p&p from Shropshire Books. Winston Churchill Buildings. Radbrook Centre, Radbrook Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 9BJ. This is an excellent publication for those interested in mining history and is probably of general interest to most cavers. It is nearly 100 pages long, well-presented with plenty of diagrams, maps, drawings and photos, both new and "vintage". It covers metalliferous mines, such as copper, lead, zinc, etc., coal mines and limestone mines. There is a glossary of mining terms and a comprehensive bibliography.



**BCRA
NEWS
CONFERENCE
1995**

Brochures for this year's Conference are enclosed with this issue of SPELEOScene. Members of member clubs will be allowed a £1.00 discount on the non-members entrance fee provided a block booking is made by the club and the money paid in advance by 25th. September. To get your individual member's discounts, the deadline is the same: 25 September. Booking manager is Pete Cousins, 8 Gifford Croft, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 7HG. Tel. .453-251791.

BCRA have now been told that the Sunday Evening Lecture by Doug Scott, which had been organised by another group, will not now take place and no alternative speaker has been organised. Sorry folks, there's nothing BCRA can do.

JEFFERSON RESEARCH FUND

John Hunt has been appointed as the Convenor of the Jefferson Research Fund which aims to promote research into all aspects of speleology in Britain and abroad.

Dates for Your Diary

COURSES, CONFERENCES, ETC.

Bank Holiday Sundays. OFD II Columns visits. 10.30am from South Wales C.C. Cottages.

Sept. 28/Oct. 1 - BCRA National Conference: Floral Hall Complex, Southport, Lancs. (Near the seafront).

Brochure & booking form enclosed. Note that the Doug Scott lecture will NOT now take place.

Oct. 14 - Devon & Cornwall Underground Conference (sponsored by BCRA). River Dart Country Park, Ashburton. Details see page 3.

Oct. 28/29 - BCRA Cave Radio & Electronics Group. Field Meeting. Details from David Gibson at 12 Well House Drive, Leeds, LS8 4BX. Tel. 0113-248-1218. Internet <gibson@micosolv.demon.co.uk>

Nov. 4/5 - DCA / NCA Cavers' Workshop. Booking forms now available from Nigel Atkins, Wharfedale House, Springfield Road, Midway, Derbyshire. DE11 0DB. or from DCA Secretary.

1996

Sat. 24 Feb. 1996 - BCRA Science Symposium, Octagon Computer Centre, Staffordshire University. Full details in a later SPELEOScene.

MEETINGS

Sept. 2 (Sat.) - NCA Training Committee Meeting. 10.30am, Stafford C.C. Social Club, Eastgate St., Stafford.

Sept. 3 (Sun.) - BCRA Council Meeting.

Sept. 3 (Sun.) - Cambrian Caving Council Meeting: 10.30am, Gwesty Bach, Brynmawr

W/E Sept. 9/10 - NCA Structure Committee Meeting.

Sept. 22 (Fri.) - CNCC Meeting: 8pm. Community Hall, Hellifield. (Venue to be confirmed.)

Sept. 23 (Sat) - NCA Equipment Committee Meeting: 1 lam, Shrewsbury Arms, Eastgate St., Stafford.

Oct. 7 (Sat.) - NCA National Council Meeting: 10.30am Stafford C. C. Social Club, Eastgate St., Stafford.

Oct. 28 (Sat) - DCA Council Meeting: 10am, Monyash Village Hall, Derbyshire.

Nov. 12 (Sun.) - BCRA Council Meeting.

Nov. 18 (Sat.) - NCA Training Committee Meeting. Possibly NCA Equipment Committee Meeting?

1996

Jan. 6 (Sat.) - NCA National Council Meeting: 10.30am, Stafford C. C. Social Club, Eastgate St.. Stafford

Jan. 21 (Sun.) - BCRA Council Meeting.

Feb. 3 (Sat) - DCA AGM: 10am. Monyash Village Hall, Derbyshire.

Feb. 10 (Sat.) - NCA Training Committee Meeting.

Mar. 3 (Sun.) - Cambrian Caving Council AGM.

Mar. 16 (Sat) - NCA AGM: 10.30am, Stafford C. C. Social Club, Eastgate St., Stafford

April 21 (Sun.) - British Cave Rescue Council AGM: Derbyshire Police Headquarters, Ripley, Derbys.

May 11 (Sat) - Cave Diving Group AGM

DEADLINES FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Ghar Parau Foundation & Sport Council Expedition Grants: 31 August and 31 January. Contact the Secretary, Hurst Farm Barn, Cuder's Lane, Castlemorton Common, Malvern, Worcs., WR13 6LF. Tel. 01684-311057.

DCA Cave Discovery Fund: (For DCA members only) 1 September and 1 March. Contact DCA Treasurer, 3 Greenway, Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3FE. Tel. 01335-370629.

We aim to make this Diary section as comprehensive as possible and would welcome news of events you would like all cavers to hear about. Send or phone details to the Editorial Address below.

NCA CAVE CONSERVATION PUBLICATIONS

Just published is the National Caving Association's "Cave Conservation Policy", produced by Graham Price with contributions from cavers throughout the country. This is the definitive publication for those interested in cave conservation in Britain and has been supported by English Nature. Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish National Heritage, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, English Heritage, Welsh Historic Monuments and Historic Scotland. Copies of the 'Policy', the 'Handbook', and other NCA publications are available from: National Caving Association, 3 The Acorns, Oakhill, Bath, Somerset. BA3 5BT. Tel. 01749-840795. (Cheques payable to N.C.A. please.)

| | |
|---|--------|
| Cave Conservation Policy | £5.00 |
| Cave Conservation Handbook ^(1,2) | £10.00 |
| Cave Conservation Handbook ^(1,3) | £20.00 |
| Lost Caves of Britain video | £10.00 |
| Legal Aspects of Access | £ 1.30 |
| Leaflets | |
| Conservation Policy Summary | Free |
| 'Protect our Caves' | Free |
| 'Bats Underground - a conservation code' | Free |

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ to be published September 1995, orders by 31st. July

⁽²⁾ Discounted price applies to clubs, cavers and others actively involved in cave conservation.

⁽³⁾ Full price applies to Institutions, public companies & others

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO SPELEOScene

If you'd like it posted direct to your door, send a cheque for £3.00 for the next 6 issues. Cheques (payable to N.C.A.) should be sent to the SPELEOScene Editor at the address in the next column.

Note that all correspondence for NCA Member Clubs will be enclosed with the Club copy of SPELEOScene, which is posted free of charge to all NCA Member Clubs.

N.C.A. OFFICERS FOR 1995-96

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Legal & Insurance Off.

Post vacant at present.

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Tel. 01335-370629

Deadline No. 19 -

31 August 1995

ANY PART OF SPELEOScene MAY BE COPIED AND DISTRIBUTED WITHIN CAVING BUT WE'D WELCOME ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Elvis.....

Continued from page 22

exceptionally decorated passage terminating in yet another sump, but with potential dry leads over the top. Easily the longest single discovery of our expeditions to date, a quick calculation revealed that at nearly 2km, Cnoc Nan Uamh had reclaimed from Uamh an Claonaite its' position as Scotlands' longest cave . This was a long overdue reward not only for Pete, who had uncomplainingly dived just about every sump in Scotland we'd pushed him into, but also for Tony, the first ever person to pass a sump in Sutherland when pushing upstream Cnoc Nan Uamh in 1975, and now after some 19 years, pioneer of a second.

J-Rat decided that such a find was worthy of more than just passing interest and encouraged by the landlord George Morrison - trying his best to act cool and aloof despite the £ signs flashing in his eyes - persuaded Pete to outline a brief description to the local rag, who were interested (desperate) enough to propose sending a photographer round to the hut the following day. To celebrate, we descended on Metropolis, i.e. the Ullapool chippy, followed by a long session of relaxation in The Ferryboat, watching J-Rat reach a particularly advanced level of relaxation. Much to the amusement of a curious but puzzled Japanese tourist, Pete and Tony buried the bar beneath a rough survey of the extensions. Enlightenment came with the arrival of a copy Caves of Assynt but only after various ridiculous attempts to explain what was going on in sign language had failed (Well, you try). Later we learned he was on a surveying lecture tour! Avoiding some wickedly popular alternatives, one particularly fine formation was named '*Angies Apple Cake*', in honour of Angle Glanvill's annual culinary creations.

With the divers committed to another full days pushing and surveying, the rest of us decided to forego the delights of Tree Hole, and festered the following day away in Ullapool. During an epic 9 hour trip (unheard of in Sutherland), Pete and Tony successfully bypassed the terminal sump to discover '*Royal Flush*' - a further 100m of familiar slanting thrust passage - but this time ending in a definite conclusion - an extensive bedding all of 6-7 inches wide above a tiny hole swallowing the whole subterranean river and a mirror image of the terminal point of upstream Lower Traligill Cave, theoretically only a short distance beyond. The new finds tipped the length of the new extension over the 500m mark, taking the total length of Cnoc Nan Uamh beyond a very respectable 2km. Potential to link Cnoc Nan Uamh and Lower Traligill Cave remains excellent, the bad news being that unless an ultra thin-man is able to force a connection during low water conditions progress would appear to involve an extensive blasting operation - beyond 50m sumps at either end. Celebrating in The Inch that night, events began to take a somewhat unexpected turn.

The local rag, obviously feeling that the discovery of Scotland's longest natural tunnel deserved wider recognition than his lowly but esteemed publication, had clearly done the rounds, and by the end of a night of phonecalls, interviews had been arranged with, amongst others, Radio Scotland, The Scotsman and The Daily Express!. This came as something of a shock to a bunch of cavers hardened to the normally less than benevolent excesses of the press and although J-Rats local news story was beginning to get a little out of hand it was a pleasure to discover that at least here in the far north there still existed a breed of newsmen genuinely interested in what was going on - a stark contrast to their degenerate English counterparts whose sole interest in caving only appears when there's a body involved.

Everyone was up early the next morning to hear Pete Mulholland broadcast live to the nation on Radio Scotland, direct from the public callbox in Elphin. Not an easy thing to do - but Pete proved to be both eloquent, and for a diver, remarkably restrained, but I bet he wished he'd never proffered that '*On a scale of difficulty of 1 to 10, this was a 12!*' Later, whilst the divers fled the attentions of the Paparazzi to spend a day climbing the Munroes, Conival and Ben More Assynt - the totally uninteresting digging section headed off for a hard days damage limitation in the more unpleasant reaches of Traligill. First stop was the recently discovered Uamh an Coire Domhain (Cave of the Deep Depression), for Gadge to try and do something about the hideously unstable entrance, whilst the rest of us attempted to regain access to the main streamway, lost beyond a large collapse. Earlier in the week J-Rat had engineered a new route through, discovering the new '*Off Our Butts Chamber*' en route - in reference to one of Alan 'Goon' Jeffreys more excessive pleadings - and the streamway beneath lay wide open. Although never seen, in dry weather this large stream apparently dries up and there was some hope that the sump a short distance downstream may dry up also. Unfortunately, conditions were far from dry and the sump looked deep and ominous. This has recently received the attention of Goon but has so far proved to be small and awkward. It is undoubtedly one of the best potential leads anywhere.

After a futile hour-long dig in a small choked inlet passage we headed down valley for another solid session in Tree Hole, gaining, over 2 hours, another 5m, finally breaking out into a wide choked bedding plane with a visible way on and an incredibly powerful draught. After a hard days digging, followed a hard nights drinking, much to the chagrin of the long-suffering divers who, whilst attempting to give a serious and sober account of their exploits to the rapt press, suffered heckling of more and more outrageous Sunday Sport headlines from the rapidly degenerating diggers.

The final day saw the weather conditions deteriorate to something akin to normal. After yet another radio interview - this time with Radio Cromarty Firth - the

divers assumed a more familiar guise, posing for a host of damp and less than enthusiastic photographers at the head of the now stonking Waterslide. Back at Tree Hole, excavations were proceeding apace - a snail's pace! This entrance is located in the side of a normally dry section of the Traligill River. In wet weather however, the sinks upstream overflow and rapidly flood the narrow valley. 6ft of progress had been made when J-Rat and I nipped out for a smoke, just in time to witness the beginning of the flood pulse coming down-valley. This was the second time I'd witnessed this peculiar phenomenon in Sutherland, and it was fascinating to follow the progress of the waters downstream looking for sink-points into the passages below. Meanwhile, the long-forgotten Matt Tuck (BEC, Chokebuster and Small Chalet in the Swiss Alps with outstanding panoramic views) was merrily scrabbling away at the dig face blissfully unaware of the flow of water seeping from the river directly above and sumping the passages behind!

The flooding of the dig effectively foiled any hopes of a breakthrough for that year - any chance of a further session disappearing when poor old Matt, who'd considered himself safely hidden here in the middle of nowhere, discovered that the sudden nationwide interest in caving was not conducive to ones anonymity and was urgently whisked off to the North Sea. We weren't in all honesty too disappointed - it just sends Tree Hole straight to the top of the ever-increasing list of priorities for 1995.

The discovery of Cnoc Nan Uamh 2 almost filled the last major gap in the traverse of the central portion of the subterranean River Traligill. Objectives for '95 will, for both diggers and divers, doubtless concentrate on finalising the known connections before switching attention to the enormously promising plateau region above, where potential for new cave is excellent.

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20. **Assault On Anus** (R.M.Taviner) *W.C.C Journal* Vol.22 No.240 p.68 (1994)
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THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Annual General Meeting

will be held at the Hunter's Lodge Inn commencing at

10:30am, Saturday 21 October
1995

followed by the

Annual Dinner

to be held at

The Wells way Inn

West Harptree

7:30 for 8.00pm

Tickets and information from

Marion Batten, 17 The Park Towngate, Southowram, HX3 9QY

Sunday 22 October 1995

Club trip to Box Stone Mines

Guided tour and barbecue

Coach transport from Upper Pitts

Details in next Journal.

Somewhere Quite Different

Bob Lewis

I used to buy the latest guide-books. At 10/6d. each, you had British caves covered for £2 and two shillings, with Furness an optional speciality. Any cave not in the book was potentially new.

I'm not sure the proliferation of Pennine guides, with split authorship and subjective assessment of things like tightness, is necessarily an advance on what came before, in some respects. Thornber may have been vague but at least you knew where you were.

A selling-point that recently struck me is the hitching of a "special offer" to some object. This may well hint at a deficiency, either in the product or in regard to the retail price thereof. I don't know the price of the latest Dalesman guide because I didn't purchase it. Inglesport seem too embarrassed to mark the price openly, but they're offering something extra: "Buy it here and get half a cheese toastie in Bernie's Caf up the road" (that isn't the offer, which I've forgotten, but it is something equally absurd).

The solution is to sneak a glance at the index, get the grid-reference you're after and slip out of the shop un-noticed. Write it down as soon as you're in the street, in case there's a public bingo nearby. It probably saves me a small fortune complete with irrelevant free item. 720307 - one digit less than an "improved" 'phone-number.

You may wonder where this is leading. I'm not really out to cheat. I've nothing against Inglesport - it's a place you go if you need to - and Dalesman guides have been very good, when the pages stayed-put. It just gets a bit expensive doubling-up on detail I've already got, at a time the official inflation figures seem divorced from reality. Anyway, the next job is to find the cave and a suitable base.

The signs at Moor House NNR, straddling the Cross Fell range (a bit north of where most cavers go) say: "Welcome to Moor House". Ever since the Planning Inspectorate began using the slogan: "Welcome to Information Technology", I've had my doubts. The trouble with being welcome to something is you don't know whether it presages some kind of compulsion or is allied to Inglesport's idea for shifting unsaleable assets. The Inspectorate is certainly welcome to its computer. One thing I reckon English Nature don't intend is a welcome to stay overnight, so I don't bother with the rest of the detail on the sign. I'm not even sure you're entitled to drive as far as this, since the road is a bit special. It goes to the radar on Great Dun Fell and the warnings get more specific as you rise, in a kind of graded succession. The first, near the bottom, invites visitors to call at nearby premises, though there seems to be no obligation. After about a mile comes the statement that your motor-insurance is not valid beyond. Above that, you enter the NNR and those who go on eventually meet a junction with the track to Silverband and the end of the

journey for "unauthorised vehicles". I suppose it is possible to get authorised. Parties dropped at this top sign would be ten minutes from the cave.

Knock, the nearest village, has few facilities; the next-nearest is Dufton, with pub (The Stag) and camp-site by the public toilets. This is cheap (£2) and payment is at Dufton Hall Farm over the road. The shower is just outside the main door of this B&B establishment, so it's a good job wet-suits aren't involved here, given the usual bodily contortions and mess. The camp-site benefits from a nature-reserve accessed via the land, owned by the Woodland Trust, a group not obsessed with hyper-management and felling. The Pennine Way leads from Dufton to near the cave but this adds two miles to the total distance from Knock. Dufton's nice, but I didn't see any shops there. The nearest are probably in Appleby.

Finding a cave using the N.G.R. is usually easy - but not in this case.

Parking at the NNR sign appears to cause no recriminations. The cloud is down and rain is falling, so the walk is dry-suited. Ascent to the "Unauthorised Vehicles" sign is 800' in just over a mile. Progression eastwards from that gains the Pennine Way on the soggy crest of Knock Fell, followed by the Dalesman N.G. R.. Unfortunately, no entrance is present at this location, cloud or no cloud. I checked very thoroughly. About this time the rain, increasing in ferocity, began to make its presence felt inside the "best" TSA dry-suit. Two thoughts on this arose, first, that the hood attached to this garment is worthless in its current form. The second was a sort of regret at not having perused the guide from cover to cover seeking the errata-page. Glencoe climbing-guides often had one - a necessity for editors mistaking "left" for "right" in route- descriptions, as they sometimes did. Notwithstanding the rain and false N.G.R. all was not lost. It took me ten years of devious search and receipt of a good deal of what "Spycatcher" would call disinformation to find *Cypripedium calceolus* in its wild habitat, all of it fully justified. Might an arbitrary spot somewhere above the system have been chosen? A grovel in predicted dolines (without reference to Dalesman) revealed recently-turned stones covering a grille adorned with lock and chain. Since the latter was not passed around any other object, it presumably possessed a deterrent capacity all its own, for the grille (and lid beneath) lifted simply when the rocks intended to conceal them had been rolled aside. Descent was accomplished using a 20' ladder and sling, dispensing with what is becoming a risible accumulation of ditched belay-stakes in the doline. These are borne perhaps by those who know 720307 to be featureless moorland and who stumble by chance on the right place after hours of searching; that is, unless the timber, symbolic lock and fanciful co-ordinates represent devil-worship or other mysticism. Makes as much sense as anything else.

The vertical is in fact a free-climb and the best tackle is probably a short doubled rope. Orienteering continues at the base, a 4-way junction with two ways choked. The open passages run N and S respectively. The correct one is also the smaller of the two, a 10' creep going S to a loose-looking corner. Turn L into solid rift and then R after a further 20' where the way is larger and heads S again. After a short distance, where the obvious passage becomes a narrow traverse, a crawl diverges L at floor-level. This branch is the main route, a low passage via a dirty stal.-cemented block that seems to obstruct the way. This emerges uphill after some 50' at another characteristic 4-way. Turn L and proceed across another intersection to a 4-way with a nice shelved rift running back L (north). Turn and follow it, passing more junctions, until a small boulder-choke interrupts it. Go R between the blocks and the wall here, to enter a cross-passage running eastwards right through the system. It is worth becoming familiar with the access to and detail of this cross-passage for it is roughly central to the network. It intersects most of the N-S passages at 4-way junctions some 30' apart (as in certain stone-mines). Failure to recognise this passage or the way out from it will lead to delay and confusion.

Continuation N or S from the cross-passage is possible at

most of the junctions, though some are choked and others look barely touched. There are several well-decorated areas but few are adequately taped and great care should be exercised (there's always another way around).

Towards the entrance is a zone marked by widespread growth of lichens, perhaps *Lepraria*, on the walls. This is a useful indicator, but it doesn't get you all the way out.

The system is supposed to be 4km. long but I doubt if every cul-de-sac has been surveyed. Chances of getting lost are reasonable. The only natural feature like it that I've seen is the much smaller complex of Devis Hole Mine Cave. This is something quite different (with a beginning, if you can find it, a middle and a variety of endings) and so is the view, on a good day. It's the ideal place for a non-caving driver - the party gets taken to the top signboard and finds its own way back on foot to Dufton - all downhill - after the trip. Owing to the distance, it doesn't really qualify as a Sunday "extra" (especially if you have the grid-reference).

Bob (Lewis)

6.6.1995

Gouffre Berger Tee-Skirts

To commemorate the successful trip this summer.

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club notes

continued from page 19

In Committee

After repeated problems with the **Bosch Drill**, (people taking it without booking or paying, and returning it dirty or full of water) the Committee has decided that in order to prevent it from being completely knackered it should be looked after by an individual who can book it out and check it upon its return. Living locally as he now does, Max Midlen has volunteered to take on this task - if you wish to use the drill, therefore, please call him on 01749 670755 and he will ensure that it is available, working and with properly charged batteries, when you need it.

By the time this Journal appears all windows at **Upper Pitts** will have been fitted with bars to prevent them from being opened far enough to allow anyone through them. This is a condition of the insurance on the building. Other work which needs doing is the fitting of a door between the kitchen and the lounge. Is this the end of the traditional cry of 'silence in the kitchen' on dinner nights?

Recent visitors to Upper Pitts will no doubt be aware of the less than entirely sound state of both the **wooden shed** and the old **caravan** in the car park. Neither is for this world much longer! This raises the question of secure storage outside the Hut - something will be needed to replace them (even if only to keep people from parking on top of the septic tank, which was the reason for the wooden shed in the first place. The committee would welcome ideas and offers of assistance.

club diary

August

- 5-6th: Hut working weekend
- 6th: Committee meeting, Upper Pitts
- 28th: OFD Columns open day. Meet Penwyllt 10:30am

September

- 10th: Yorkshire Booking: Birks Fell
- 17th: Committee meeting, Upper Pitts
- 30th: Portland Weekend

October

- 14th: Yorkshire Booking: Penyghent Pot
- 15th: Yorkshire Booking: Little Hull Pot
- 21st: AGM and Annual Dinner

November

- 18th: Yorkshire Booking: Lost Johns
- 19th: Yorkshire Booking: Rumbling Hole
- 26th: MRO Wardens Meeting, 8.00pm, Hunter's Lodge

December

- 30th: Yorkshire Booking: Notts Pot
- 31st: Yorkshire Booking: Lost Johns

1996

August

- 3rd - 9th: 1996 NSS Convention, Salida, Colorado

1997

August

- 6th-20th: UIS International Congress of Speleology, La Chau de Fonds, Switzerland.