



THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 255

JUNE 1997

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

Caving News

Devon and Cornwall

Keys for **Baker's Pit** and **Afton Red Rift** may be obtained from Keith Pearson, the new Devon CRO Secretary/Treasurer (01626 54507) or write, enclosing an SAE to:

Keith Pearson, 33 Devon Square, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2HH

Dog Hole has recently undergone a clean up as part of the Pridhamsleigh Management and Conservation Plan. This has involved removing rubbish, cleaning formations and taping the areas around formations. As part of the ongoing conservation, a section of the cave (beyond the Dog Leg extension) is now gated and locked.

Yorkshire

Be warned that there has been a recent report of a caver having contracted Weil's Disease after a trip in **Easegill** (Wretched Rabbit entrance). The disease is caught from the urine of rats and these could be present wherever food scraps may be dropped or there is animal fodder, possibly around Bull Pot Farm itself or the roadside changing areas.

Derbyshire

The gate on **Ricklow Cave**, Lathkill Dale, is now bolted. It needs a 24mm spanner or a large adjustable for entry. Please ensure the gate is fastened behind you when you enter and after you leave. (The same arrangement as at Mandale Mine).

Access has now been restored to **Perryfoot** and **Dr Jackson's cave**. Call at Torr Top Farm to ask permission and pay a small fee. The farm is now owned by a registered charity looking after stray dogs so, if you ask permission to park in the yard, you will be asked for a donation - you are assured that the dogs may bark but won't bite!

A "pollution log book" has now been installed at the foot of the climbing shaft in **Knotlow**. It's in a clearly marked white ammo, box with instructions, log book and pens inside. Even a "nil return" will be helpful to DCA in trying the crack this intractable problem since the pollution varies according to weather, time of year, etc and DCA hopes to correlate report with local weather records.

General

Don't forget the **NAMHO Conference** being held at Darley Dale, Matlock from 11th-14th July. However, if you fancy a trip further afield, why not go the the inaugural independent field meeting of the **Cave Surveying Group** on 12-13th July. The weekend is based in the Yorkshire Dales at Bull Pot Farm, home of the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club. It is open to anyone with an interest in cave surveying from beginner to expert. For details of these two events see the last WCC Journal No 254.

Mendip

DMMs have now been placed at: Swildon's Hole (3 on Twenty Foot Pitch), Priddy Green Sink (2 on 12' Pitch above Shit Sump, 2 on El Krapitan, 2 on Bladder Pot, 2 on Boss Pot, 2 on Little Pot and 4 on Cowsh Aven), Thrupe Lane Swallet (5 on Entrance Pitch and 7 on High Atlas) and at Blacknor Hole (Portland) - 6 on Entrance.

All anchors in **Priddy Green Sink** are placed for pull through or Ladder and Lifeline. SRT requires some extra deviations, not yet placed.

Anchor placements pending are Blue Pencil Passage and a new chain for Swildon's Hole, the Main Pitch & Traverse in Pinetree Pot, Rhino's Left Hand Route, Ladder Dig in GB and the rest of Thrupe Lane Swallet.

The Mud Sump drain hole in **Swildon's** is seriously blocked and a recent application of Dr Nobel's remote sledgehammer did not resolve it! A return is planned but it would appear to be a long job. The dam is currently underwater and the sump cannot be bailed. Free diving mud sump is not recommended.

The landowner at **Nettle Pot** expressed some concerns over the gate to the cave which he considered to be a hazard to lambs. CSCC C&A Officer visited the site and a modification to the gate is to be carried out.

There have been problems with the lock at **Tyning's Barrow Swallet** and it has had to be removed. The key will now be with the landowner, so call at Pine Tree Farm for permission.

For details of news from **Wales** see

»

Club News

Wessex People

Please note that **Paul Callister** can now be found at:

241 Church Lane, Whitwick, Coalville,
Leicestershire, LE67 5DP 01530 811692

Sue Bonar, over from Australia for a year is living at:

44 Newbridge Rd., St. Annes, Bristol, BS4 4DJ
0117 977 4210

Congratulations are also due to Sue who is getting married in July.

Club Events

Don't forget the forthcoming annual **cricket match** between the Wessex and the BEC on Saturday 19th July. Afterwards there will be a beer for approx £1 a pint and a BBQ at the Wessex - please bring your own food.

Basic SRT training has been organised for the weekend of 12-13th July. Anyone going to Slovenia is advised to attend. Contact the Caving Secretary for further details.

The Annual Dinner this year will be held at Coxley Vineyard on Saturday 18th October. The AGM will be held in the morning with an event to be planned on the Sunday.

New Member

Stephen Standing:

North Harton Farm, Lustleigh, Devon.
01647 277206

Rosemary Lunn:

Flat D, 23 Priory Park Rd., London, NW6 7UP
0171 328 4817

Ian Ellis Chandler:

21 Stubbs Rd., Sholing, Southampton, SO19 0ST
01703 442635

Wales

For access rules for **Ogof Ffynnon Ddu** see SPELEOScene No 28, Mar/April 1997.

For information about **Ogof Draenen** and the Pwll Du Land Purchase Appeal, see page page 67.

The **NAMHO Conference** is being held this year at St. Elphins School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire from 11th-14th July - the theme being "*Mud and Water*". The provisional programme includes: Lectures, Seminars, Industrial Visits, Surface Field Trips and Underground Field Trips.

There is a fixed Conference Fee of £20. There is camping and parking space for caravans on the site at £3 per person per night. Accommodation is also available in single, twin or multiple-bedded rooms. Breakfast, lunch and evening meals can be arranged on site.

The person to contact for a booking form or other information is *John Thorpe*:

The Old Bakehouse, Cobden Rd., Matlock,
Derbyshire, DE4 3JR Tel: 01629 582521

Thanks to.....

All those people who have donated items to the Club, including: Dave Morrison and Paul Lambert for their donations of books and journals, Brian Hansford and Vern Freeman for the donation of kitchen utensils and Brian Prewer for many Caving Club Journals as shown

Cave Science early numbers
Transactions CRG Vol 6 No 2

Newsletters CRG misc

CPC News No 25-40

CPC Record

Belfry Bulletins

Descents

The Speleologist No 4 1956

Derbyshire Northern Caving Group

London Uni Caving Club Journal no 1

Cerberus Newsletters

WCC Journals

British Caver Vol 54 - Gerald Platten Memorial

Edition

Also thanks to the few that are doing all the good work on the hut and grounds - the drying room, car park, new water and power supply to the garage, refurbishing bunks and mowing the lawn. There is also a great deal more going on behind the scenes that nobody sees or may be aware of. To run a Club of our size and to upkeep a building that has now been built for a quarter of a century needs as many people to help out as possible, so if you feel able to offer your services, please see Max.

Ruth Alice Murrell

Tony Audsley

Ruth, often known as Pudge, was born on 8th April 1914 at Orsett in Essex to Evelyn and Dr Harry Johnston. Her parents originally came from Ireland, where, many years ago, her grandfather, Dr Henry Johnston had his car commandeered by the I.R.A., an incident immortalised by the folk song "Dr Johnston's Motor Car".

Some of Ruth's undoubted but endearing eccentricity may be traced to this same grandfather who apparently often served tea to his family by throwing the (full) cup and saucer across the table at them, children and grandchildren alike having learned to catch the missile without spillage. Ruth said that as a child she often tried without success to master the knack of the throwing.

Ruth's earliest years were spent in Billericay, in Essex, but then the family moved to Wellington, Somerset where she developed into a lively and adventurous child. Amongst other happenings, she primed a cannon by the Wellington Monument with powder and ball. The resulting explosion blew the cannon off its mount, the ball finally coming to earth in a greenhouse a considerable distance away.

It was at Wellington that her love for art first manifested itself and she began to draw on every piece of paper that she could get her hands on, from loo paper to her father's medical forms. She delayed the inevitable retribution by never using the top sheets. It became very obvious, however, that Ruth had a considerable talent and she left home to attend Bolt Court, the London County Council School of Photo-engraving.

It was while Ruth was in London that she achieved one of her ambitions - to drive a tram. Ruth was a very keen motorist and in those days driving licences contained very specific lists of vehicles one could drive. Ruth was determined to drive everything on the list at least once (and she eventually did!). At a local tram depot she exercised her charm and persuasiveness with such persistence that she was allowed to take a tram out of the depot for a short drive. Many years later she was very proud of the fact that while she had also driven a steam roller, Hywel hadn't.

Some time before she left home for London, Ruth had found an old map of Mendip which had marked on it "Lamb Leer - Unexplored Cavern". This fascinated her and she decided to try to explore

Mendip with a friend, Peter. Once on Mendip, the pair were advised to see Digger Harris, and he introduced them to caving.

Caving appealed very much to Ruth, but not to Peter and so Ruth persuaded her sister Babs to go with her on future trips. It was on Mendip that she met Hywel Murrell and very sensibly she also joined the Wessex, the new caving club which Hywel and others had founded. As a caver Ruth had a lot of advantages; she was determined, bold, remarkably strong and above all very small. She must have been an invaluable ferret and in this role, she was the first person through the squeeze on the approach to Primrose Pot in Eastwater. For many years this was referred to as Miss Johnston's squeeze but it was enlarged considerably during the final assault on the entrance to the pot in the late 1940's. Ruth was the second woman to pass sump 1 in Swildon's; the honour of first place having gone to Margaret Powell.

As time passed, she became increasingly involved with Mendip caving and, as these things happen, with Hywel. She said that, in the first instance, her interest in him was kindled because of his ability to take apricots out of a tin using only his toes! Be that as it may, she accompanied Hywel on many photographic expeditions, standing for long periods in deep pools and other photogenic spots.

Ruth and Hywel were also very keen diggers and spent a lot of time excavating underground and surface sites. One such site was Cow Hole, from where a couple of incidents are perhaps worthy of mention. In the early stages of the dig the depression contained the remains of a cow in an advanced state of decomposition and at the end of a day's digging, in the gathering dusk they decided to blow the remains of the cow out of the dig. This was duly done and they set off in Hywel's car; only to become aware of an appalling smell. A portion of the carcass had landed on the roof of the car and was having its revenge on them in the only way it could. On another occasion, while digging underground they had heard odd rumblings from below and thought that there might be a collapse. With a most uncharacteristic display of prudence, Hywel was digging in the passage roped to Ruth, who was in turn belayed to a massive boulder. All was well, but the next weekend, when they returned to the dig they found in place of the passage and the boulder there was a gaping hole. They had

been digging through a boulder choke across the top of an open rift and during their absence, the whole choke had collapsed into the void.

On 17 September 1938, Ruth married Hywel and thus began their long and very happy marriage. During the following few years, Hywel's war service took them first to the New Forest and later to

Surrey. It was at this time that Jenny, Jessica-jil and Sally were born; all three being delivered by Dr Harry Johnston. After the war, the family lived in the Midlands but they were now free to drive to Mendip at weekends and start digging again. The chosen site was Whitsun Hole and on one banging mission Ruth had an interesting experience. She was carrying the gelignite in her pocket and she had the



*Ruth and Hywel's Wedding
17th September 1938*



*Ruth and Hywel's Wedding
The Guard of Honour prepares*

An outing on Mendip

*Hywel Murrell,
Herbert Batch and
Ruth Murrell*



detonators in her hand, carefully wrapped in cotton wool. Thrutching through a narrow section, with one hand thrust forward, she looked down. Unfortunately, she was using a carbide lamp and she set fire to the cottonwool....

Eventually in 1954, the family were able to move to Mendip and they bought the Miner's Arms, at that time a small "Bed and Breakfast" house and tea room. This had long been an ambition of theirs as the Miner's had been a caver's favourite haunt for breakfasts in the thirties and they had many happy memories of the place. The Miner's Arms had lost its original alcohol licence in 1912, apparently for being a "house of ill repute". Ruth and Hywel managed to get the licence reinstated and started up a restaurant. This rapidly established an enviable reputation and before long it featured in the Good Food Guide.

In parallel with the restaurant, Ruth was working in her studio illustrating children's books and Hywel had his work in Bristol; so, in effect, each had two full time occupations. Despite this, they still found time for digging, this time with Aubrey Glennie in Lamb Leer. They had started in the direction of Palmer's Chamber and had expended a lot of effort through glutinous clay in this direction until told by Leo Palmer that he had given them the wrong position. Perhaps it is just as well that they did stop. In those days cavers used ropeladders, which were notoriously prone to rotting. Ruth and Hywel were in the habit of hanging their ladders in the trees behind the Miners to dry after Lamb Leer trips. These were ideal for the children to play on and on one occasion a ladder broke under Jessie when she was sitting on it; Jessie would then have been about 12 years old and much lighter than her father! Another ladder had actually broken as Hywel was reaching the stal overhang near the top of the pitch but, fortunately he managed to complete the climb.

Life at the Miners had its own sort of excitement and Murrell meal-times were never an affair for the fainthearted. One day, students had made a particularly revolting eggy pudding, which no one wanted to eat. Now, to Ruth or Hywel, being faced with inedible food and, in particular, inedible food that was also sticky, meant only one thing - throw it! Consequently a right royal battle ensued. It should also be explained that Ruth by this time had a substantial collection of modern art and a large abstract was hanging on the wall of their dining room. This received its fair share of spatter. The problem was that the painting contained areas of bare canvas and the eggy mixture squigged into these and then set and could not be removed. The very same painting was sold some years ago, still bearing its battle scars.

It became the custom for several years for Wessex members to descend on the Miner's after the club dinner and an impromptu party would ensue. Many pieces of furniture are still scarred from these evenings when there was fierce competition to see who could negotiate the tightest and most awkward artificial squeeze. Denis Warburton was particularly good at this, but Ruth usually managed to defeat him. Both Ruth and Hywel enjoyed these parties enormously and they were both saddened when they moved from Mendip and the parties came to an end.

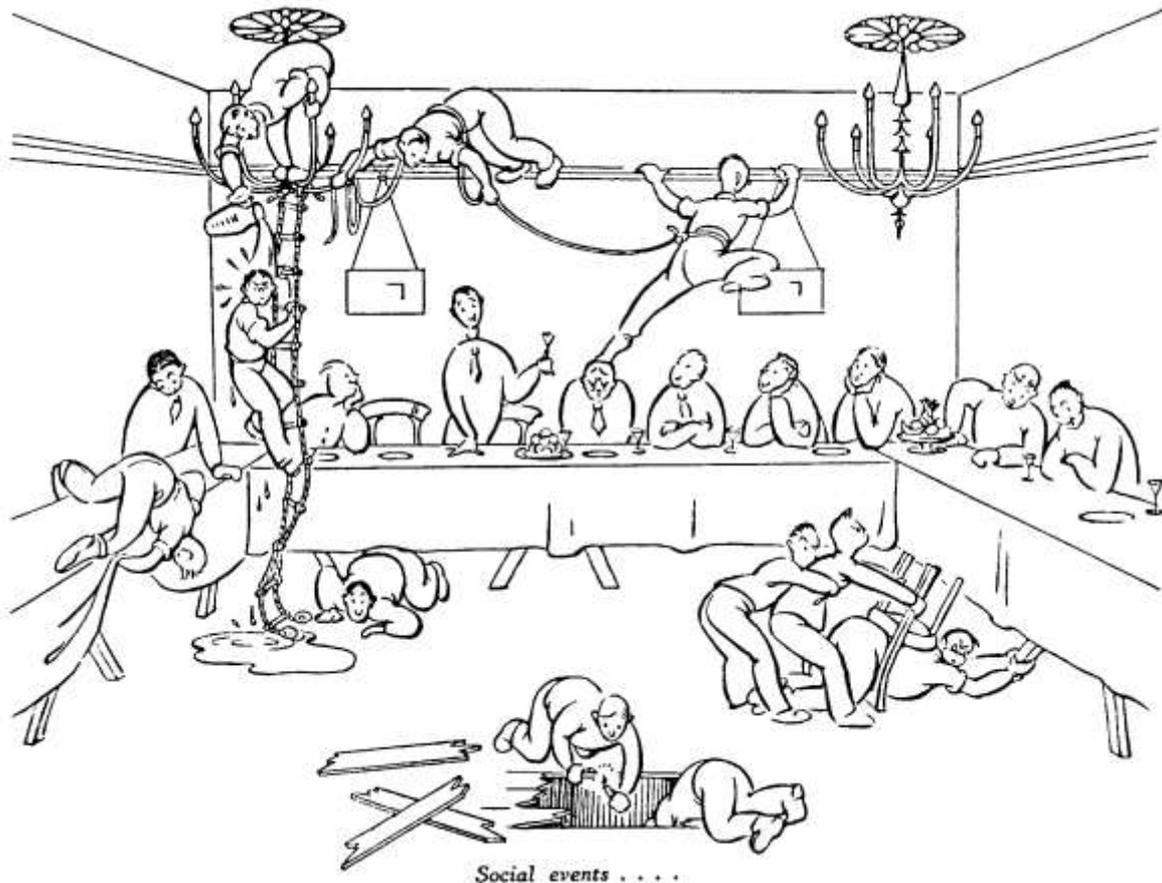
Ruth and Hywel remained at the Miner's until 1962, when they moved to East Harptree. Hywel's work had meanwhile transferred to Cardiff and they left Mendip finally in 1964 to move to Gelli-Ber, their house near Castleton. It was here that Ruth developed her passion, which had its origins at East Harptree, for sculpture in mild steel using an oxy-acetylene welder. It is difficult to decide which was the most impressive, seeing the results she achieved, or seeing her move the gas cylinders, which were as big as she was. Ruth looked comparatively frail but was surprisingly strong, as anyone who was foolish enough to wrestle with her will testify.

When Hywel retired, they took over a sheep farm, Rhyswg Fawr, perched on the top of a mountain in South Wales. Ruth loved the farm and the animals and kept it on for several years after Hywel's death in 1984. For a short time she lived in one of the barns and although she managed to make this moderately comfortable by blocking up the larger holes in the walls with fibre-glass wool, she did have some problems with rats. She was woken one night to find a large rat seated on her stomach engrossed in washing its face. Now Ruth had a great love for animals but this was too much even for her. Even so she did not want to resort to poison and chose instead to use live traps. Against all her expectations, the traps did injure some rats and these she nursed back to full health before finally releasing them.

In May 1988 she married Eric Hensler, an old caving friend of many years standing and together they set up house at Rockley Farm, near Trellech. According to Ruth, it was a household with "His" and "Hers" welding rods in the airing cupboard! Their marriage was a happy one, but tragically short as Eric died after less than four years.

After Eric's death, Ruth was determined to move back to the Rhyswg and much of her time was spent in designing her new house there and supervising its construction. She finally moved back in December 1995. Perhaps she had driven herself too hard this time for she died less than a year later on 27 October 1996, aged 82.

Ruth's cartoon for the new member's brochure - August 1939



To think of her now may bring a hint of sadness, but also most definitely a wry smile when remembering her enthusiasm for life, her impish sense of humour, her twinkling eyes, her curiously hesitant speech. Her conversation was a joy; she had the

flexibility, the curiosity and the enthusiasm of youth but the wisdom and knowledge of her years. Ruth lives on now in a host of memories of those whose lives she enriched.

Pwll Du Land Purchase Appeal

The land surrounding the entrance to Ogof D'aenen is being sold by the Coal Authority and the Pwll Du Cave Management Group (PDCMG) has made a bid to acquire the land in an attempt to guarantee future access for cavers. The Group is working up with local residents and other organisations but there is a large shortfall in the sum of money required to secure the land purchase. PDCMG appeals to all cavers, clubs and representative bodies to consider making a donation to the land purchase fund. The Group has already secured some funds but requires a good deal more. Access to this internationally-important site may be at risk unless the land is acquired and subsequently managed by cavers. The Group must make its bid before the end of August 1997, so please don't delay. Please make a donation, or a pledge, as much or as little

as you can afford, now. Donations will be accepted by the Hon. Treasurer of PDCMG, Spencer Drew at 87 Melrose Avenue, Pen-y-lan, Cardiff CF11 2SS/01222 255096/e-mail: drew@cardiff.ac.uk

If the bid is successful, the land will be held by trustees appointed by PDCMG and it will be administered in accordance with the constitution and policies of PDCMG. In the event that PDCMG is unsuccessful in its bid, the group will attempt to return donations (but it should be understood that, as PDCMG has no other source of funding, any expenses incurred in making the bid will have to be met from the donations). Membership of the group is open to any caving club with an interest in the area and those wishing to be involved should attend the Biennial General Meetings.

Tim Long

Blast From The Past!

(taken from Wessex Journal No 96 Vol 8 1964 Page 118-119)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

“Dear Sir,

So they want fixed ladders in Swildons! May I be allowed to appeal to all right-minded cavers to resist this pernicious move to the utmost. There must be many cavers, like myself, who hold laddering the forty foot as one of the most sacred rites of Mendip caving. To eliminate it is to ruin one of the most impressive incidents of a beginner’s initiation into sound caving. Where else can we older cavers better impress on the neophyte a proper sense of the risks and dangers inherent in the simplest trip? Or have a better opportunity to display all the fine points of Cavership so ably laid down by Robert Lawder in his celebrated treatise?

The excuses are the usual ones - Progress and Safety forsooth!

A wiser move would be to have the Priddy barn for H.Q. There would then be enough cavers on the spot to complete the Priddy Green dig and open up the much needed by-pass to Inner Swildons. This alone would greatly reduce congestion at the Forty Foot and accelerate further exploration. As to the second excuse for fixed ladders - that it would save the M.R.O. from being called out to parties left ladderless, there is a simple remedy - to hang a dial inscribed with the words “These ladders will be withdrawn at... (time)” the hand of the dial to be moved accordingly.

However, to show that I am no enemy to true progress I submit a sketch suggesting a more dynamic solution of the problem than a mere fixed ladder. It should be well within the technical resources of the Club’s engineers and should have the following advantages:-

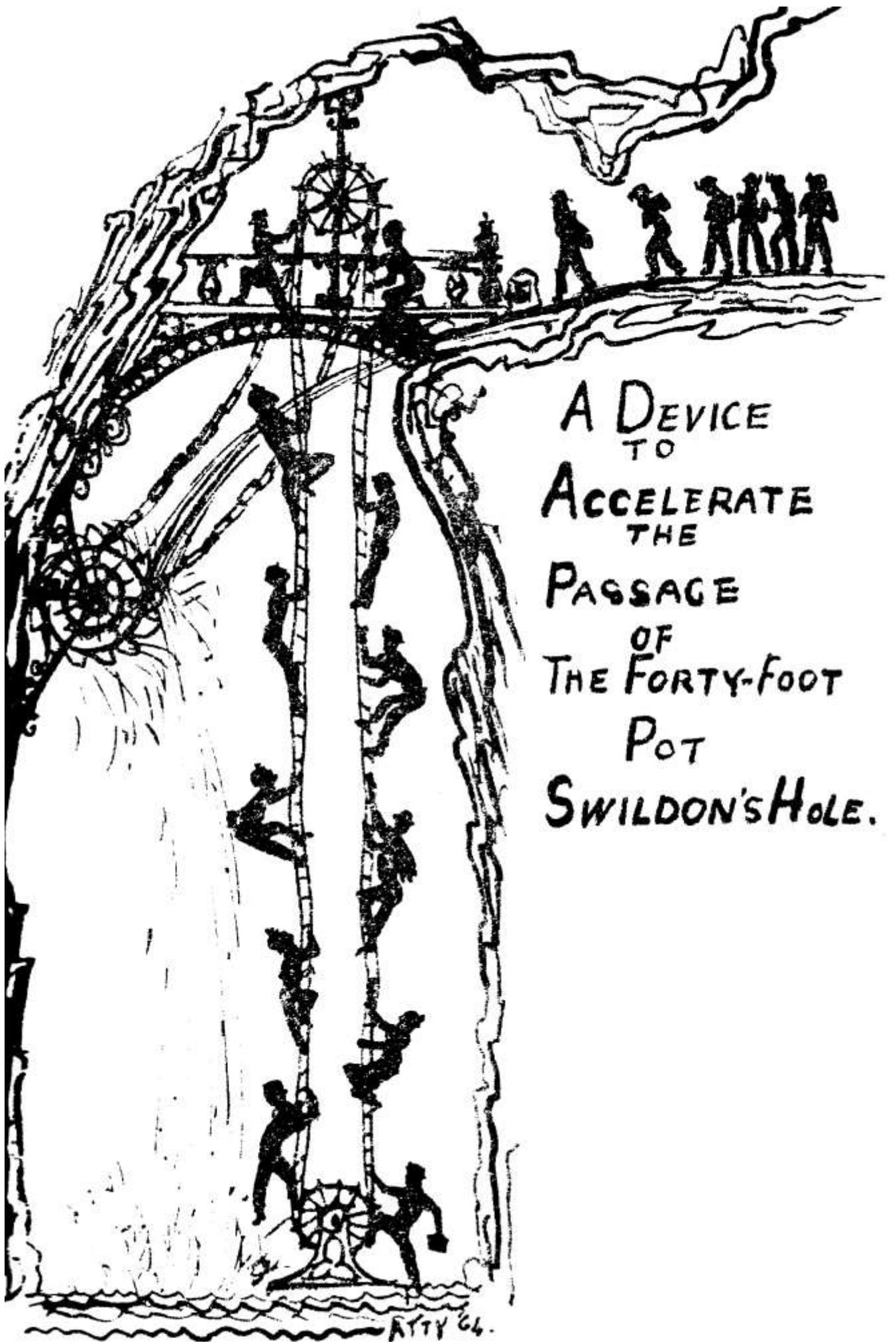
1. Parties can ascend and descend simultaneously
2. Simple to construct and maintain
3. Speed is increased in direct ratio to the volume of water going down.

Of course it might be more progressive to turn Swildons over to a Development Company and have an Escalator, Coffee Bar and Pintables to soften the arduousness of the journey!!

For obvious reasons I sign myself,

Yours faithfully

Penumbra Lunatica”



A DEVICE
TO
ACCELERATE
THE
PASSAGE
OF
THE FORTY-FOOT
POT
SWILDON'S HOLE.

WCC Meets

Places are still available for the Wessex trip to **Slovenia** this summer from 26th July - 9th August. If you're interested in any aspect of the trip, contact Les Williams (Caving Secretary), Dave Cooke (Membership Secretary) or Andy Morse (Tackle Officer) - details in the front of the Journal. Remember that T-shirts will be available before the trip - contact Les Williams for details of them.

At August Bank Holiday we have a Meet in **Yorkshire** which coincides with the Craven Pothole Club Winch meet at Gaping Ghyll. So if you want to take the easy way into (and out of) the GG system this could be the time to do it. Details from the Caving Secretary for accommodation and club caving for this weekend. If you need to know more about the Winch meet contact the Craven Pothole Club.

A Wessex meet on the **Gower Peninsula** has been arranged for the 27th-28th September. We will be staying at Nicholaston with sand, sea, surf and ...! within 100m, although the caves are a little further. Camping is available so bring a tent to NGR 522/883. Contact the Caving Secretary or Hut Admin officer for details, but more information will be available in the next Journal.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB ANNUAL DINNER

DATE: 18TH OCTOBER 1997

VENUE: COXLEY VINEYARD

*GUEST OF HONOUR: JOHN FRANKLAND
(co-author of
'Race Against Time')*

*OTHER ACTIVITIES: AGM 10AM SATURDAY
SUNDAY TOUR*

Editorial

After an initial supply of articles since Christmas, the supply seems to have dried up. If you have time to be bored when you're not caving or you go on holiday and find a bit of cave passage, please feel free to scribble down the details and you might see your name in print. However, please note that my e-mail address has changed to:

rosie@libertus.demon.co.uk

Did you go to the Summer Solstice Party at Little Crapnell Farm on Saturday 21st June? I think all who went agreed that it was an excellent event which should be repeated. Many thanks to Dave Speed for allowing us the use of his field for the event and camping and also to Dave Morrison for organising the BBQ, marquee, disco, beer tent, etc. Despite almost the wettest June on record it didn't seem to dampen spirits and the marquee with bales of hay for sitting (and sleeping on) created a good atmosphere for a party. Thanks to all those people who contributed to make the evening such a success. It was nice to see so many people from the different clubs on Mendip and let's hope that all those who helped to organise it (and others) will be willing to do it again.

Still no takers for anyone interested in doing the Journal Index for Volume 23? Are you sure you couldn't do it?

Due to a complete change in circumstances with mine and my husbands careers, after this year I will be unable to continue being the Editor for the Wessex Journal - I think it's called trying to fit too much into life! I am currently doing a full-time job with on-call duties and have recently started a Management Course at University which until the week before it started wasn't considered even to be a remote possibility! Also, as my husband is no longer in the printing trade, we do not have access to the facilities required to keep the costs appropriate, although thanks are overdue to Jon Palfrey for helping out with production in this interim period. However, I will complete the next issue before the AGM, together with the AGM Handbook, but will then be standing down. Someone will obviously have to do it next year, but if anyone is willing to have a go, they will have all the support that we can offer on both editorial and production aspects of the Journal.

Happy Caving

Rosie

Library Acquisitions

REGARDS 1996/25

BULLETIN DE L'UNION BELGE DE SPELEOLOGIE

Hranicka Propast. Moravia. Expedition Hyball 1995 - last year, a VVS expedition went to Czechia hoping to discover the secret of the unbottomed sump of the Hranicka Propast. The depth of 205m was reached making Hranicka Propast the deepest cave in Czechia. A well-illustrated account with map, photos and diagrams

Paleokarst in the Arawili, Rajasthan - expedition to the Arawili Mountains (215 billion years old) of Paleokarst developed in metamorphic secondary dolomite, with maps, surveys and photos.

Le Fond des Cris (Chaufontaine, Pro. de Leige) - this is a new cave. The discovery and exploration, well illustrated with photos and surveys Vocabulaire de Wallonie Usite pour Designer les phenomenes Karstique, Part 1, or in other words: -ow to say it in Wallonie. Also has a drawing of a Wessex Cave Club member on holiday

Une enigme de la Prehistorie: Bruniquel Cave Tarn-et-et-Garonne, Frande - circles of broken stal some 48,000 years old, a discussion paper illustrated with photos and drawings

ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN CAVING CLUB 1995 No 117

Visiting Santa's Grotto, Ogof Fynnon Ddu, Red House Lane Swallet, Westbury Brook/Edgehill Iron Mine, Yorkshire 1995, Westbrook Potter and extensions to Slaughter House Cave

MENDIP CAVING GROUP NEWSLETTER

Sept 1996 No 256

Picos de Europa 1996, Yorkshire & Ogof Carno

WSG NEWSLETTER

Feb 1997 No 20

Ogof Draenen (Gate)
Park Western Shaft

CRAVEN RECORD

Jan 1997 No 45

Old Gaping Gill pictures
The Big Snow
Paderac, In Science
The Plants of Gaping Gill
Favourite caving publications

INTERNATIONAL CAVER

1996 No 16

Latest Investigations of the Caves of the Matumbi Hills, Tanzania, Africa
Prehistoric art of Papova Cave, Russia

Cave Fauna of Malaysia - map, descriptions, history, horror, pinups! and snakes

Forest of Dean, England - map, description, history, survey, geological, photos

Caving Reconnaissance in Vietnam and Laos - photos and access

Tequila 95 expedition, Mexico - in search of the Golden Giraffe

INTERNATIONAL CAVER

1996 No 17

Missing

INTERNATIONAL CAVER

1996 No 18

Houet Quattine Azar, Lebanon

Cave Reconnaissance in East Sulawesi, Indonesia

La Grand Junction, De Gouffre Padirac, France

Bat Slabs and Dinosaurs, Thailand

Cave Art in the "Blue Caves" of Western Mongolia

Philippines 1995 - International Speleology Expedition

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Feb 1997 Vol 39 No 2

Lava Tubes in Tenerife, Spain
Victoria Fossil Cave, Naracoote, Australia

Return to Countries I've never been to (Morovia)

Ogof Draenen

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March 1997 Vol 39 No 3

The 1996/7 extensions in Ogof Draenen - sketch surveys, descriptions, dreams and fantasy

Ogof Draenen - OUCC and Duncan Price - a discussion, rescue problems and access

Bones them Dry Bones them Dry Bones - the discovery of L365, Nullarbor, Australia - exploration, description and history

BELFREY BULLETIN

Jan 1997 No 489

Life after Reynolds?
Knots

DESCENT

Feb/March 1997 No 134

Normal round-up of news from Wales, Derbyshire, Scotland, Ireland, the North, Mendip and Mining

Into the Black - Ogof Draenen, Dollimore Series - description, photos, survey and map
Snaplight lightstick (Cyalume)

Mud, Sweat and Caves Kalimantan '96 - description, maps and photos

Subterranean Sketching - Little Neath, Yordas, Swildon's Hole, Aggy, OFD

Dragon's Breath Cave & Harasib Cave, S. Africa - diving & survey

Ecosystem threatened, Bahamas Hidden River expedition, Spain

Lusca's Breath, S. America - 3rd deepest, photos, survey

Caving beneath the Gobi, Asia - map, transport, survey and photos

GEORGIA UNDERGROUND

Nov 1996 Vol 33 No 1

Close to the Edge (Canada)

Scaling the Heights of Geiger Cave - Alabama

Birmingham Pit - Alabama

Cueva de Santa Cruz, 1994 - Mexico

SHEPTON MALLET

CAVING CLUB JOURNAL

Spring 1996 Series 9 No 10

Brief History of Mendip

SMCC hut logs 1976

Holwell Cavern - a brief history

SHEPTON MALLET

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New exploration in White Oak Blow

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Salon gallery '96

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The discovery and exploration of

Hurricane Cave, Colorado

Sallon gallery '96

**UNIAO PAULISTA DE
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XII Expedicao Sao Vicenti 1996 - the continuing story

**UNIAO PAULISTA DE
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Relatorio de Actividades 1996 - what we did last year
Areado: Ulitmas Impressoes - a caving balls up?
Expedicao Lapa Sem Fim
Endless Cave - report on the 3rd joint expedition between ELP & UPE
Iraquara, Um Inicio Trabalho - a new cavers paradise

**CAVES AND CAVING
Winter 1996 No 74**

BCRA News, the Dales, Mendip, Ireland, Wales and Derbyshire
Trolldalsgrtta, Nonway - exploration, photos and survey
Caves of Kalimantan, Borneo - map and photos
Hidden Earth '96 - BCRA Conference
Gouffre Berger, France - incident and obit
'It's better than sex' Su Bentu Cave System in Sardinia
Grotta Di Su Palu, Sardinia

**CAVES AND CAVING
Spring 1997 No 75**

BCRA News, Devon, Derbyshire, Forest of Dean, Ireland, Wales and the Dales
Matienzo, Spain - maps, surveys and photos
CUCC in Austria 1996 - Totes Gebirge, maps, photos and survey
Hidden Valley Expedition, Mulu, Sarawak
Speleological abstracts on CD-ROM

**WHITEROSE POTHOLE CLUB
NEWSLETTER
May 1996 Vol 15 No 2**

Boddington pot, Pikedaw Calamine Caverns, Peak Cavern, Pasture Gill, Simpsons/Swinsto exchange, New Goyden and a mine worth looking at - the Mines of Maria

**WHITEROSE POTHOLE CLUB
NEWSLETTER
August 1996 Vol 15 No 3**

Gaping Gill - a new guide £2, Ireland 1996, Dye tests, Search for the Fangs of Hillary plus the Mud Wall, Boddington Pot/Milkmaid Pot - dig

**WHITEROSE POTHOLE CLUB
NEWSLETTER
Nov 1996 Vol 15 No 4**

Dirty weekend in Daren, Dye Test on Sink AA, side of the River Wharfe
Langstrothdale, Grotte de Bury, Vercours, France

**DERBYSHIRE CAVING
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**
Monteshole Chalk Mine, etc
Giants Hole Sump Dive
Magnesian Limestone Update
Caving for Beginners
DMMs - Rowten Hole & Odin Mine
Knotlow 2nd pitch deviation is no more
Knotlow fixed ladder - ?unsafe
Long Rake Mine, Bradwell Moor.
Danger home-made resin anchors
Roadside & underground thefts.
Plackett Mine Caverns - description, history and access
Danger of fire damp in natural abandoned passages
P8 Perryfoot, Xalley's Sump

**AXBRIDGE CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**
Canada Combe Cave - NGR 3604-5853 - the discovery
Shute Shelve Cavern - progress report
Carcass Cave - above Shute Shelve Cave - history, description
The Bat Population of Shute Shelve Cavern
Axbridge Publications
MRO Report 1995 - CSCC and CCC News
Stoke Lane Slocker incident - personal & historical viewpoint
Ghyston (Giants) Cave St Vincents Rocks, Clifton, Bristol - Journal - July 1873
Tynnings Barrow Swallet - Berties Paradise Dig - progress report

**JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST
STUDIES
Dec 1996 Vol 58 No 3**

Application of Thermography to Karst Hydrology
Cave "Arrhopalites" new To Science
Biology of the Caves at Sinkhole Flat, Eddy County, New Mexico
Discussion: comment on extremely low frequency emissions in Bat Caves, complete with a reply

**MNRC NEWSLETTER
Dec/Jan 1996/97 No 57**
Cave Radio and Electronics Group Field Meet
Is there a Santa Claus?

**MNRC NEWSLETTER
Feb/Mar 1997 No 58**
Summer in the USA - from our friend in America
The Rain in Spain Falls, Matienzo - cave paintings in Spain

**CRAVEN RECORD
April 1997 No 46**
Club news, Greenhow Notes, continued from No 45, Geoff Workman, exploration
GG to SE Pot dye test
How well do you know your countryside?
Yorkshire Dales Experiment - a Romanian view of the dales
CNCC and NCA - annual general meetings
Kendal: signpost to the future

**CAVE AND KARST SCIENCE
Dec 1996 Vol 23 No 3**
"Hidden shafts" in the Venetian Pre-Alps, Italy
Karstification of the Garron Area, County Antrim
Mineralogy of speleothems from Romania
CO2 in Cango Cave, South Africa
Symposium extracts

**MAN AND THE MENDIPS
Edited W G Hall, Med, FRSA
The Mendip Society 1971**
Overview of the Mendips up to the year 1971
Ex Libris: Paul Lambert

**MENDIP: A NEW STUDY
Edited Robin Atthill et al
David and Charles 1976**
Overviews of the Mendips, Historical, Geological, Topographical. Maps and photographs *Ex libris: Paul Lambert*

**DISCOVER THE CAVES
OF MEGHALAYA**
India's N E Zone - Tourist leaflet *Ex libris: Tony Jarratt*

**A TOURIST GUIDE TO
GAPING GILL**
A book from the late Dick Glover, with descriptions, tackle guide, map and survey

Thanks to all those people who have donated items to the library for other members' information and enjoyment. All the items listed above have been donated or exchanged with other clubs, except for magazines such as Descent, Caves & Caving and International Caver.

French Connection 2 (The Truth)

Malc Foyle

As you may already have read, in the summer of '93 there was a large contingent of Wessex members well dug-in on a camp site at St-Amand-Coly, generally out to have a good time with a bit of caving and diving thrown in for good measure (not to mention the Vino Callapso).

One of the more serious objectives of the trip was to go and dive a couple of sumps for the Speleo-Club de Perigueux. One in a cave called Le Trou Du Huguenot and the other in a little cave called Font La Due. The sump in the Font La Due had been dived the year before by Russell Carter when a group of us from the Wessex and CDG called in for a few days on the way home from the Pyrenees (we had met in the previous year 1991).

The terminal sump in the Font La Due was about 20m from the entrance and the whole distance is all crawling and flat out in water; the roof was covered in millions of mosquitoes (oh, where are me Dwarfs when you need them most). Anyway Russell passed two more sumps, all of which were only a few metres long, and added about 120m to the length of the known cave. He emerged covered in mud, muttering about lard stuck to various parts of his anatomy, to report that he had left the cave at what looked like a longer sump and owing to the fact that he was not using fins he decided to leave it for someone else ...

The trip to La Chassine to dive the Huguenot and the Font La Due was planned for Sunday August 1st. Over the evening of 31st, the plan of campaign was drawn up. It was decided by a unanimous vote (mine) that I was going to dive the Font La Due because talking to Christianne the year before I guessed that the Huguenot might be the place not to be (ha ha).

Due to the fact that Robin did most of his diving with me he was forced into coming to the muddy little hole that I chose whether he liked it or not. Duncan Frew, Pete Hann and Mike York were to come with us. Keith Savory, Mike (keen lad) Thomas, Colin Masters and various Dwarfs in the sizes of Graham Bromley, Dom Sealy and Dave (SMCC) were to go to the Huguenot; Keith and Mike to do the diving, past what was hoped to be a short sump and run off down CAVERNS MEASURELESS TO MAN - well so they hoped.

The big day dawned and people slowly drifted out of tents and started getting all the gear sorted,

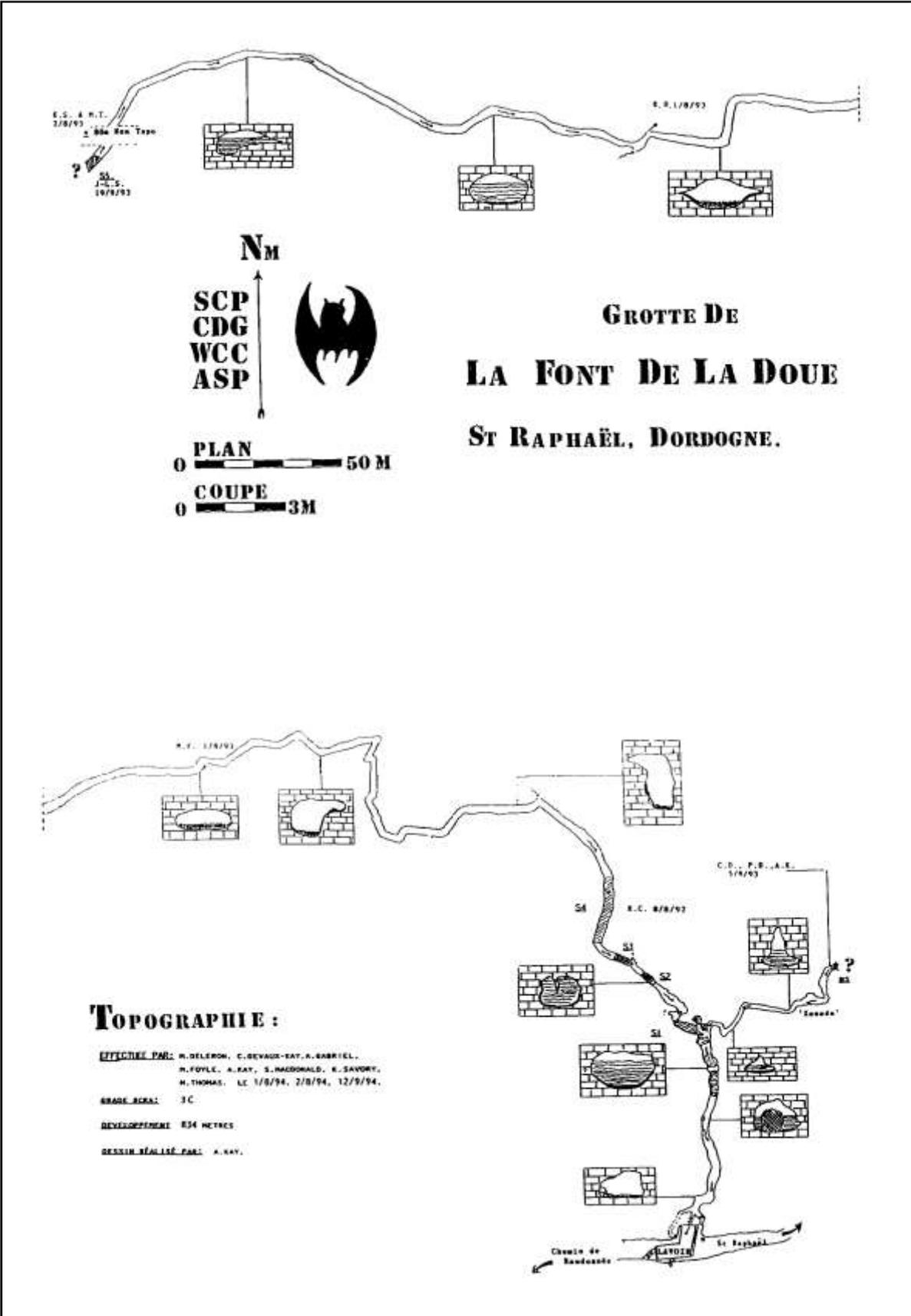
bagged up and put in the right heaps, so that all the right bits went into the right vehicles. The next job was to tidy up the rubbish tip that we were living in. As usual, dozens and dozens of little beer bottles were collected and put into the rubbish bins along with a dozen or so wine bottles and another normal camp site evening was concluded. Next, breakfast. Anything you could keep down, topped off with a brew and 'eadache pills. Once all this was done the gear was loaded in to the cars, vans etc and the journey to La Chassine was started in one big Wessex convoy.

Surprise, surprise everybody got there at the same time - it's amazing how Dwarfs can concentrate when they are frightened of getting lost. This was the first time that I had met Andy because the previous year he had been away at work. The introductions took quite a long time because with all the assembled Wessex bods and Speleo-Club Perigueux members there were about 25 people milling in and around Andy and Christianne's house and of course every time that you looked for a dwarf to introduce they were hiding under the bloody table or under a cat or something.

Introductions complete, the Wessex contingent were chomping at the bit, but as they found, out our hosts had other ideas. "We'll just have a spot of lunch" said Andy. Having experienced the superb Kay hospitality the previous year I then expected what was to come. Anyway after copious amounts of alcohol and a banquet, the well-oiled divers, a bunch of pissed dwarfs, Mike York my conscience and the girlies were ready to depart with our new found French friends.

Keith, Mike and their crew who now included Andy and the French contingent set off to the Huguenot. Myself, Robin and our little crowd which included Christianne, Rita and Yorkie departed towards the Font La Due and the sun was shining - on the whole it was a beautiful day. What in God's name were we doing going diving in a cold, wet, muddy cave on a day like today?

Well we didn't get lost on route and eventually arrived at the cave entrance. I could see by Robin's face that he was not impressed and with a few words of encouragement from the girls, duly we started to kit up (very slowly!). After we had struggled into our wetsuits and retrieved the diving kit out of the back of the car we set off.



The entrance of the Font La Due is, as I said, not the most inspiring place that you have ever seen. It starts as a crawl over rocks for the first few metres until you can drop down and meet the stream, which flows all year around and has never been known to dry up - one of the reasons that the French were interested in further explorations taking place. Once you regain the stream a dwarf could stand up (we couldn't), you crawl into a small chamber and start dragging all the diving clutch out of the kit bags and get kitted up. Rob was still not impressed. Duncan had by now found the stupidity to don a wet suit and join us because he said "it's too bloody hot out there" (fool all dwarfs are, aren't they readers). Then Pete arrived clutching camera to record this momentous occasion, so now Rob and I had our own clutch of dwarfs sitting on rocks and very pretty they looked too.

After a bit of huffing and puffing we were kitted up and ready to go. I was wearing twin kit and carrying fins because I got the short straw and had to dive the end sump. Rob had a single bottle just to come to the end to act as back-up and moral support. We started up the passage towards the first sump. After the little chamber the passage lowers until you are flat out again in water, dodging the Mossi's which carpet the roof. Wallowing up the passage the first sump was encountered and there was a very small air space. Russell's line was still intact so through we went followed by Duncan (what a brave dwarf). Still crawling, which is a delightful experience in full diving gear, we carried on to the next sump which again is short and was passed without any bother - the dwarf followed. After the second sump you surface in a small chamber and you can actually stand for the first time since leaving the daylight - the only problem was you had to climb over a pile of lard-covered boulders (now I know what Russ was on about) and what an epic it was. This assault course was followed by the next sump which again was passed without any problem - Duncan was still with us and going well (an aquatic dwarf!). "Just think" I said to Rob, "we're only the second, third and third and a half (Duncan) people to ever have seen this part of the cave" I enthused as we crawled up towards the fourth sump. "Yep" he said "isn't it a grand place" lying through his teeth.

At the fourth sump we thought that it was the limit of Russell's exploration the previous year, so I took the line reel and got ready to set off into the next part of this squalid little cave on my own and yes, you've guessed it, Rob still wasn't impressed.

The plan was that I would dive the end sump and if it was short, return and get Rob so that we could

both run off up the passage like a pair of headless chickens (well the best laid plans of mice and men). I took the line reel in one hand and the line that Russell had laid in the other and boldly went where no man had gone before by wriggling head first on my belly into the sump and surprise surprise you could have knocked me over with a feather when, after about only 3 or 4 metres it surfaced. I thought you big poofster Russell, stopping at a little thing like that. My elation was cut short when I realised that I still had his line in my left hand and the unused line reel in my right (whoops).

Composing myself I shouted back to Rob something to the effect that it had surfaced again and where had this extra bloody sump come from. To this day Russell and I still have a discussion now and then as to which one of us can count. After waiting for a few minutes and realising that sound does not travel very well from me through a few metres of water and back to Rob (and not really wanting to go back through the last sump because I was still lying flat out in a passage that wasn't even 1 dwarf high) I decided to have another look for the terminal sump.

Crawling on up the passage, suddenly it hit me Russell had said that just before the last sump the line was belayed to a chert knob sticking out of the wall about $\frac{1}{2}$ a metre off the floor and sure enough there it was just in front of me. At last reasonably sure of my whereabouts in this cave I set about the final checks to make sure all my gear was working as it should have been. Checks completed I set off into the sump, as usual head first on my belly and just as Russell had said there was the end of the line about 1.5 metres in front of me.

Now as you can guess, in a place like this visibility lasts for about $\frac{1}{2}$ a second, so you have to be very observant (hard for a Wessex member I know). Having tied on the new line by Braille I moved forward just enough to get good vis again. The sump looked to be about 1m to 1.2m wide and about 0.6m high with mud banks either side and a bit of a channel gouged out in the middle. No belays - you might think he's in trouble now - but being like a good boy scout and armed with information from the previous year I pulled out my little lead weight belays and as I moved forwards very slowly about every 3 or 4 metres I put a belay in to hold the line in the middle of the passage. I was quite happily flipping along (he lied) when I felt the passage getting smaller. I knew this because my back was on the roof and my belly was on the floor. Time to lose weight I thought, so I waved my left arm about a bit as you do when you are starting to shit yourself

and found that the passage felt a bit more roomy to that side. Nearly the instant I moved over I could see again and blow me down it had surfaced. I was looking up 10 metres of passage that was 2.5m wide and about 2m high.

After lying in the water like a beached whale for a few seconds not quite believing my eyes, I actually stood up for only the second time since entering the cave. Having tied the line around a convenient rock I walked up the passage expecting it to end at the back of the little chamber, but it turned through 90 degrees and I could see for another 20 or so metres up a walking size passage - needless to say I took my kit off a bit rapid. Being all big and grown up about the whole thing I resisted the temptation to run up the passage screaming and picked up my slate and pointy twiddly thing and started to survey as I walked, yes walked, up the passage. Most of the passage was about 2 metres high and between 1 and 2.5 metres wide.

After doing a very rough survey for about 230m I got to a place where the passage dipped and I would have had to get on my hands and knees again but I could see at least 25m up the passage, so I thought sod that and turned around to head out. Wimp you might well say, but by now I had been away



from Rob and Dunc for quite a while and thought it was time I got back (I never carry a watch).

The return trip was quite uneventful and on surfacing I was faced by a very stern looking Robin and yes folks his eyebrows do meet in the middle when he's angry. "Where the Fu ng Hell have you been" he said, not letting me get a word in as usual. "I've just sent Duncan out to try and get me another bottle because I'd reckoned that by the amount of time

you'd been gone you'd have run out of air by now. I told him to be discrete so we didn't worry your misses". (He thought that I'd croaked it). I was quite touched by his concern, but by then he saw that I was grinning. "I've been exploring" I said and proceeded to explain what was beyond the sumps.

After I'd finished telling him he all most raped me. He had my kit off me and on himself quicker than he combs his hair and believe me there ain't much of that. He duly disappeared in his normal fashion - water and mud flying all ways - like a bloody Exocet and now it was my turn to wait. Duncan finally returned and we sat around chatting. After about an hour Rob returned and said that he pushed on for about another 150m mostly crawling and could still see a fair distance in front when he turned around - needless to say he didn't survey any of it ('cos he can't read a compass) because he said time was getting short. Now I think Rob was impressed. I gave Duncan the survey notes and told him to guard them with his life and we exited all rather pleased with ourselves and wondering how the others were getting on in the Huguenot.

It was nice to be out in the sunshine after being away for just over 4 ½ hours. Everybody listened to our story and we eventually managed to convince Christianne that the 400 metres of passage was really above water level - after comparing notes we reckoned that the sump was about 25 metres long. So a very happy little gang jumped into the cars and departed for the Kay's house.

What of the Huguenot? you may well ask. Well after getting back and sorting out the gear, I jumped in the car and having found out where the entrance was jumped in the car and sped up to the entrance to see how the hard (or should we say stupid) lads were getting on. As I drove across the field towards the entrance I could see that the French contingent were already out and just as I walked over to the depression I heard a little jingling noise and I could see a pointy hat approaching with a little bell on top (not really) and underneath it was a very grubby frowning dwarf!

Eventually all the vertically challenged ones and the divers extracted themselves from this dreaded hole and told me that unfortunately the sump did not go and on hearing how we had got on the words 'stitched up' started appearing in the conversation. Now how could I have known that it was going to be as hard to get diving kit to the sump as it actually was??? Now what of the dwarfs. Well none of them were 'HAPPY' they were all a bit 'GRUMPY' but don't you think that for going in in the first place when I was kilometres away they were just a bit 'DOPEY'

To stop Keith and Mike crying in their wine the next day they went in the Font La Due and explored to another sump giving an approximate extension of -50 meters. They took a camera in on this trip and we have since been back and passed the sump that they found but they are both different stories and maybe one day will be told.

This was the first of now quite a few trips a few of us have made to the Dordogne and we have done some excellent caving and diving, but more importantly we have made some very good friends indeed. Watch this space!!! Bye Bye.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Rosie

Well I was going to answer the plea for articles, but it would seem that I have been pre-empted! However I can't let the dwarves and the Beer Monster have the last word, so here's a paragraph to add underneath their scribblings.

French Connection 3 (Nothing but the Truth)

Dear Reader

Let it be known that 95% of Bromley and Foyle's outpourings are lies. Graham, being of dwarf-like stature, naturally sees things smaller than they really are. The Huguenot's crawlways are in fact 350 metres in length, *before* one gets to the meanders, but are in fact quite spacious in places. Furthermore, the 500 metres of meanders *precede* the junction with the streamway. Faulty memory or what? Secondly, Keith made his brave diving attempt on the downstream sump: the upstream one awaits a suitable volunteer! Finally the difficulties experienced by Colin M, in the first squeeze are still (by those in the know) put down to extravagant lurching rather than the cave's morphology.

Malc, being a diver, likes to exaggerate the number of sumps, and thus does great disservice to Russell Carter's mathematical ability. In fact, on our most recent trip up Font de la Doue (please note spelling), on an air-space breathing trip only, we arrived at Sump 2 with Malc convinced that we were at 4! Admittedly water levels were high, and the whole place has become complicated by a certain Grampian CC member (who shall remain anonymous) lining it all from the entrance. On the same occasion a visit was made to the upstream 'New Sump', but sherparing kit up there will be decidedly tricky.

Nevertheless, the WCC '*French Connection*' has become a close-knit, elitist and invitation-only group. Dedicated sherpas only, need think of applying these days: potential cooks will have MDY to contend with! Consult the 'CDG Newsletter' to know more

All the best

Andy Kay

A Summary of Charterhouse Caving Company Ltd's 1997 AGM

Dave Cooke

The following summarises the meeting of the 5th of April. As you will read it was not a meeting without its moments of excitement and drama!

The accounting principle that the member clubs subscription should cover CCC Ltd's administration costs and that the permit subscriptions should cover conservation and access costs, such as keys and locks, was adopted. Using this principle the club subscription was set at £30 (raised from £25) and the permit cost was set at 20p (increased from 10p).

The Gruffy Fields lease has now been registered and a final copy has been circulated to all the member clubs. It is important that all previous copies are destroyed.

The second annual GB report, with colour photos, was presented to the meeting. The first Charterhouse report should be completed within the next couple of months.

There have been several stal. cleaning trips in GB with excellent results achieved using high pressure sprays. Further trips are planned and any help from volunteers would be much appreciated. An NCA grant will be used to buy three more high pressure sprays.

News of a new mine shaft opening in the Gruffy Field was received. A party of investigators went to view the shaft in the afternoon.

Following the recent removal of some of the bolts on Ladder Dig, the meeting resolved to re-bolt Ladder Dig with four eco-hangers and a length of chain under the NCA's bolting programme. The meeting also resolved to rebolt Rhino Rift.

A discussion was held on the way that the company had been functioning. The main problem, held in some quarters, was that the company was being run by the directors and not the members. It was noted that the directors had kept the members fully informed of decisions and remain fully accountable. It was also pointed out that it was possible for a club rep. to call a meeting simply by requesting it of the

Secretary, as described in clause 13.1 of the Articles of Association. This later fact was not widely known and satisfied the meeting.

The following appointments were made:

Chairman	John Dobson
Directors	Jon Bell
	Dave Cooke
	John Dobson
	Jane McCorquodale
Conservation Officer	Linda Wilson
Company Secretary	Graham Mullan

The ban on Imperial College had expired. The ban on Robin Grey expired on the day of the meeting. The bans on Ivan Sandford and Richard Blake were due for discussion at the meeting. The meeting expressed no desire to increase or impose any new bans. As such, thankfully, there are now no bans in place.

The BEC queried the contents of the letter written by the Conservation Officer to the BEC Caving Secretary in January regarding the actions of Ivan Sandford and Rich Blake in G.B. Specifically she asked the Conservation Officer to rescind the statement about the damage to the rock face, the level of damage in Great Chamber and Bat Passage since the placing of the stainless steel bolts and that the climb had been left unclimbable. This the Conservation Officer refused to do. The meeting supported the Conservation Officer when a proposal that the Company should write to the BEC stating that it was not in agreement with the Conservation Officer failed.

The Wessex, in the shape of Les Williams, was granted permission for a dig in G.B. in the eastern branch of the inlet passage behind the 40' waterfall.

Copies of the minutes of the meeting, the Gruffy Fields Lease and the second GB Annual Report have all been placed in the library.

With thanks to Dave Cooke for summarising the minutes of this meeting.

Logbook Extracts

1.3.97 - Cuckoo Cleeves

Maurice, Prewer, Vern, Rosie

Renewed my attack on Cuckoo Cleeves after 35 years. 1st 2 attempts in '59 and '62 failed ... on photographic/collectors trip ... surprisingly attractive little cave - even sporting in places by my standards.

1.3.97 - Box Stone Mines

Tina & Brian Pitman, Chris Grosart & Bob S

5hr epic trip. 2 responsible leaders got lost, not only in the mine but from each other... you cannot beat a good competent leader who has a great in depth knowledge of the system.

22.2.97 - P8

Les, Cookie, Bean, Dave

We took the high level option every time and stayed right out of the water. On the return trip: Dave "Some bugger has stolen our traverse rope" Cookie "I can only think of two possible buggers" Les/Bean "Snigger, snigger" (from around a rock at the other end of the traverse).

The rumour has it Les (T) Williams got lost in Lionel Hole (ask Mad Al) allegedly - it's only a farty little place.

8.3.97 - GB

Simon, Beatrice, Steve, David, Carl & Patrick

Managed to access "Bat Passage" by attaching equipment to a small attractive French girl and tossing her up the ladder pitch.

11 3.97 - North Hill Swallet

Bean, Butch

If dragging yourself along on your stomach is your thing. this is your cave.

16 3.97 - Let it be known that Tina was first up and out of the dorm (12.45) but there was only 2 in there !!!!!!!!!!! First time for everything!!!!

22.3.97

Just before Mr Prewer and Maurice start telling any lies (and before Les hears any total untruths), both Max and I fully intended to shorten the wire on St Lukes winch to the perfect length which just so happens to speed up the removal of the important bits from the bottom of the shaft.

31 3 97 - 11.4.97

Usual annual pilgrimage to spring clean the hut! various people round for dinner on Tuesday night. Some people down White Pit on Thursday. It's

much drier down here than up north. PS Almost forgot the Wednesday night digging in Lodmore.

4.4.97 - Little Neath River Cave

Dom & Debs

... yes the water is definitely too cold in April.

5.4.97 - St Cuthberts

Vern, Rosie & Mark

After vowing never to go down Cuthberts again 4 years ago, somehow persuaded by Mark and Vern in the pub on Friday night. Classic trip in Maypole series with lovely pitches but not much water. Managed to conquer Wire Rift, Entrance Pitch and even the entrance pipes.

9.4.97 - St Luke's

Aubrey, Max, Pete Hann, Les, Paula, Keith & Roz, Bob S, Martin

Les' first time to the dig in over 18 months ... funny how enthusiasm grows when something is found Pete Hann was the first into the new chamber last week (2/4/97) followed by Max. A clear night with a new moon and the comet very clear, so that is what the new chamber is being named after.

12.4.97 - St Lukes

Max & Pete from 11.00 filming the new chamber Max wanted to see himself several times until the battery ran down on the viewer.

16.4.97 - St Lukes

Aubrey, Max, Paula, Pete, Keith Fielder & Bob S Good digging, lost count of number of buckets after a time and motion study got things really flowing - dead quick! - team work.

10.5.97 - Swildons Oxbows

Les, Andy M, Mad Al, Ian Chandler, Arthur Millett, John Stevens, Cookie

Surveying trip to try out our new skills after Arthur and John's excellent training session. Surveying Lowbow was particularly squalid and how John kept his hands clean to write the notes I do not know. But it is now surveyed to grade 5 for the first time ever. Is this the start of the grand resurveying of Swildons?

4.5.97 - Ogof Pasq - Ogof Foel Fawr

Les, Mak, Jo, Richard, Cookie

A pleasant through trip with a bit of a horizontal squeeze in the middle. The roof must have lowered a 'tad' in the ten years since Les was last there since he found it somewhat committing and found himself shouting - Pull, Pull like F*!*

4.5.97 - Castle ?

Les, Mak, Jo, Richard, Mel, Cookie

Proper job Medieval castle. Impressed the tourists with our skill at castle traversing - well some of them anyway. Les impressed us with his prowess by climbing into a hidden room which turned out to be the Lord's closet. We visited the cave below the castle with a single dimming Q40 between us. The tourists cheated by using the large torches freely available with your ticket.

5.5.97 - Tunnel Cave

Les, Mak, Jo, Cookie

After the excesses of the night before (a good old sing song was had by all) even this straightforward cave taxed my determination to breaking point. After traversing a long ways I decided solid ground rather than a sixty foot drop was much more appealing, so much to the annoyance of the team I traversed back to my starting point, only to find I was twenty foot above it with no obvious way down. Just reward for faltering on the traverse.

4.5.97 - Polnagollam, Co. Clare

Aubrey, Mac & Stan

Weekend flying visit - very wet!

3.5.97 - OFD 1 to Top

Mark, Rosie & Vern

A 'steady' trip to show Rosie the delights of going up through the bottom!! - Rosie liked the Letterbox. No real performances (shame).

4.5.97 - Pont Ned Fechan

Mark, Carmen, Leg

A short! walk to look for the Silica Mines - found Pant Mawr instead. Several miles later (after a Leg short cut) we found the car.

5.5.97 - Tunnel Cave

Rich Web, Max and Mark

A top to bottom trip. After finding the entrance the trip went downhill all the way. Nice ladder pitch(s) 'what no floor!!'. Followed the sound of music to the show cave. A classic trip. Left tackle in for Les and tarts.

14.5.97 - St Lukes

No, it has not run in ... No, this week Max was back in control below to sort it out and down we go - anyone got another metal ladder spare?

4.5.97 - Porth-yr-Ogof

Rosie, Vern & Dave M in a wetsuit!!

After a performance-free trip the day before, decided to have a serious caving trip - hence the 3 of us arrived at the entrance with our inflatables (no sheep I'm afraid - just an inner tube and an aeroplane!). Floated gently thro' Porth, quick snorkel around with my divelight (viz crap).

Club Diary

1997

July

- 12/13th WCC SRT Training
- 11th-14th NAMHO Conference, Matlock
- 19th WCC vs. BEC Cricket Match
- 20th WCC Committee Meeting
- 26th WCC Slovenia Trip
- 31st Mammoth Cave Science Conference
Kentucky, USA

August

- 10th-17th International Congress of Speleology
- 22nd-25th WCC Yorkshire Meet (B. Hol)

September

- 7th WCC Committee Meeting
- 12th-14th BCRA Conference, Bristol
- 27/28th WCC Gower Meet

October

- 18th/19th WCC AGM and Dinner Weekend

November

- 10th-17th International Congress of Speleology
- 22nd-25th WCC Yorkshire Meet

December

- 6/7th French Cave Diving Symposium, Paris

1998

February

- 7/8th Ghar Parau Expedition Planning Seminar

July

- 4/5th Cavers' Fair, Mendip

August

- 3-7th NSS Convention, Sewanee,
Tennessee USA