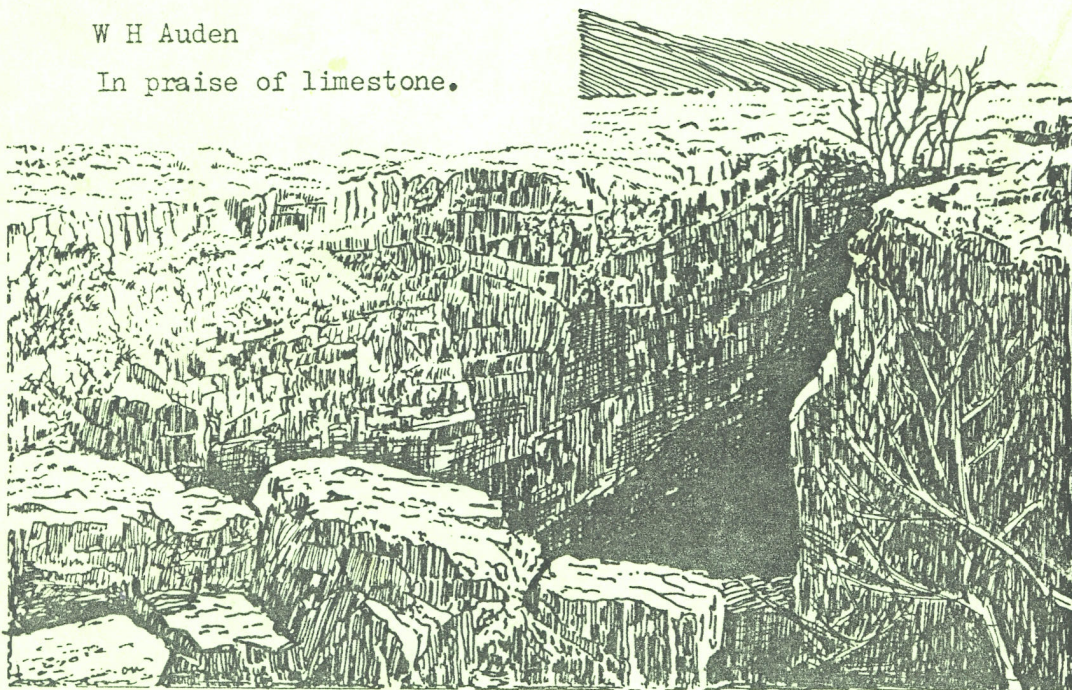


IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB

..... when I try to imagine a faultless love,
Or a life to come, what I hear is the murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.

W H Auden

In praise of limestone.



ROWTEN POT

NEWSLETTER

No.6
Oct. 1985

IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB COMMITTEE 1985/86

President : Harry Lock
 Vice-President : Dewi Lloyd
 Secretary : Simon Seward
 Treasurer : Richard Collicott
 Tackle Officer : Dave Wilson

Weekly meeting are held on Wednesdays at 1:00pm in the Union Lower Lounge, IC Union, Prince Consort Rd., London, SW7 2BB. Phone - 01 589 5111

MEETS LIST 1985/86

DATES	REGION	HUT	PERMITS
Oct 11-13	Mendips	B.E.C.	
18-20	S.Wales	C.S.S.	O.F.D., Cathedral/Tunnel, Agen Allwed
Nov 1-3	Yorkshire	N.P.C	
15-17	Derbyshire		
29-1	Yorkshire	N.P.C.	Lancaster Hole & Top Sink
Dec 13-20	Yorkshire	N.P.C	Notts, Dale Head, Washfold Pen-y-Ghent & Lost John's
Jan 10-12	Mendips	B.E.C.	
24-26	Yorkshire	N.P.C.	Cow & County Pots
Feb 7-9	S.Wales	W.S.G	O.F.D. (D.Y.O.)
22-23	Yorkshire	N.P.C.	Echo & Magnetometer Pots
Mar 7-9	Yorkshire	N.P.C.	Mongo Gill

Easter Tour and Dinner Meet to be announced. Suggestions as regards the dates, the venue, and permits (if applicable) for the Easter Tour are welcome, also thoughts on where the Dinner should be held.

Any articles, letters etc. for the next newsletter should be handed to Neill, as the sooner I get them the sooner the next issue will be produced.



EDITORIAL

First, on behalf of everyone in the club, I would like to welcome all new members to ICCC, I hope you enjoy your caving with the club.

The club has recently completed a successful summer tour in Chartreuse and the Vercors, including getting almost all the members of the club to the 'bottom' of the Gouffre Berger. Of the thirteen club members present while the cave was rigged, eleven got to the bottom and the other two got to -880m.

Following this, thoughts naturally turn to plans for next summer. Two different types of project are possible, either an expedition or a foreign tour. A meeting as soon as possible, where there could be a free exchange of ideas on this matter seems the best thing. So we need to think about what we'd like to do, and where we'd like to do it. As time is running out for organising an expedition it would be a great help if all suggestions could be backed up by some facts. Either some idea of the potential for finding new caves, or some sort of guide to caves of the area, depending on the type of venture. In planning a foreign tour, it might be necessary to bear in mind, not all members of the club appear to be able to sustain an interest in caving for more than one week.

I hope a meeting of this sort will allay some of the fears expressed by Chris in his letter, which is printed in the letters section.

Considering the problems we came across in France, in terms of finding worthwhile caves to do, it seems a pity not to publish some cave descriptions of those trips we actually did this summer. This would also help raise the standard of this publication, which can only be good. So if anyone feels they could write a clear description of any of the trips done this summer, I will be more than happy to print anything they may produce.

NEWS

If anyone wants to contact any of the Australians we met in France this summer, here are some addresses :

Stephen Bunton	Carey Barlow	Mark Wilson
P.O Box 48	Spelean Pty Ltd	84 Campbell Hill Rd
Miranda N.S.W.2228	230 Sussex St.	Chesterhill N.S.W
Australia	Sydney	Australia
	Australia	
Ph: (02) 524 8116	Ph: 02 264 2095	Ph: (02) 644 1142

Mark will be in London at the end of October, after his trip to the Pyrenes.

Dave Warrington is now at Liverpool University doing a Phd, a letter received recently is on the noticeboard in the stores, his Liverpool address is below for those interested.

2 Ferndale Road
Wavertree
LIVERPOOL 15

Whernside Manor will, from October, no longer have any further involvement in caving courses other than at a very basic, beginners level. However Dave Elliott is setting up on his own as an instructor, and we may be able to get him to give our annual SRT training course.

FOR SALE : Petzl handled ascender (left-hand)
- unused, good-as-new - Any good offers?
See Clive Orrock.

If caving in Chartreuse or Vercors, a more accessible alternative to Marbach's (TSA) is :- "Edelweiss", a small walking/ climbing/ caving shop on the Place de la Bastille in Grenoble (about 15 mins walk from the bus station). They stock most of the usual hardware, harnesses, oversuits etc as well as a full range of spares for Petzl ascenders/ descenders, carbides/ head-torches, and fisma generators. Prices (for caving gear) were generally cheaper than in Britain. They did not appear to have any caving literature or info' on local caves. In short, well worth a visit if you are in Grenoble, say, to pick someone up from the bus station.

LETTERS

Dear Neill,

EXPEDITION POLICY?

Does the club have such a thing? Rumours of "team A", going to "country X" having recently abounded.

At present this is not too important as those who have been invited are (generally) those who "deserve" a place on the club's next expedition.

But what happens if we get a couple of dead keen first years joining the club next year, who make rapid progress through the ranks and are up to expedition standard by the summer?

These lads and (hopefully), lasses, will miss out on developing all the organisational skills required to launch their own expeditions in say 1988: we all should realise the importance of maintaining continuity of experience within the club if it is to continue to prosper.

I suggest that a meeting of those people interested in something more than a foreign tour in 1986 is arranged so that the major venture can enjoy all our support and those not on the trip can get together to sort something out before it's too late.....

Love and kisses

The poison dwarf.

Chris Birkhead.

Dear Chris,

As regards club expedition policy, I'm not at all sure the club has one, certainly nothing is laid down in any detail in the constitution. However I'm sure everyone has a point of view on this matter. My personal view point is, that any expedition arranged by one or more member(s) of the club is under the control of those organising the venture; and being a member of the club does not mean an automatic invitation to join the expedition. Just because people from the club are going on an expedition, that expedition is not necessarily called "The Caving Club Expedition".

See the Editorial for more general comment on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Neill.

After a collection last year, £150 was sent to the CRO, the letter below was received in reply.

The President,
Imperial College Caving Club,
Dear Sir,

Thank you very much indeed for your club's kind and very generous donation to the CRO funds. 1984 was a somewhat difficult year financially and only by severely pruning several projects was the CRO able to balance the books. (Income over expenditure in 1984 was just /31). Your donation will further enable the CRO to continue with its policy of replacing its ropes with modern Blue Water rope. Please pass our very grateful thanks on to your members.

Yours sincerely
Brian Boardman.
(Rescue Controller, CRO)

On hearing in June of the likely fate of Whernside Manor, Steve wrote a letter to the National Park Officer, asking if there was any possibility of saving Whernside as The National Cave Training Centre. The reply is printed below.

Dear Mr. Lane

WHERNSIDE CAVE AND FELL CENTRE

Thank you for your letter received on 5 July. I note your comments about the facilities being offered at Whernside.

We would like to expand the facilities for cavers at Whernside but there are a number of factors which suggest that this would not be feasible. The demand for caving courses and cave training facilities is in fact very limited. As an experienced caver using Whernside you are one of just 128 people who in 1984 attended specialist courses. Despite expensive and extensive advertising, cavers do not appear to want to go on courses or use specialist facilities in any great numbers. Additional support from the Sports Council or the National Caving Association would be most welcome but at the present time is very limited.

The economic realities of Whernside are that within 18 months certain financial targets are to be met and if the Centre is to survive at all changes have to be made. I am particularly grateful for the concern which you express and would welcome any suggestions for cost effective ways of improving facilities at Whernside, or enabling the National Park Committee to obtain outside support for the running of this important training Centre.

Yours sincerely
J R Baker
for NATIONAL PARK OFFICER

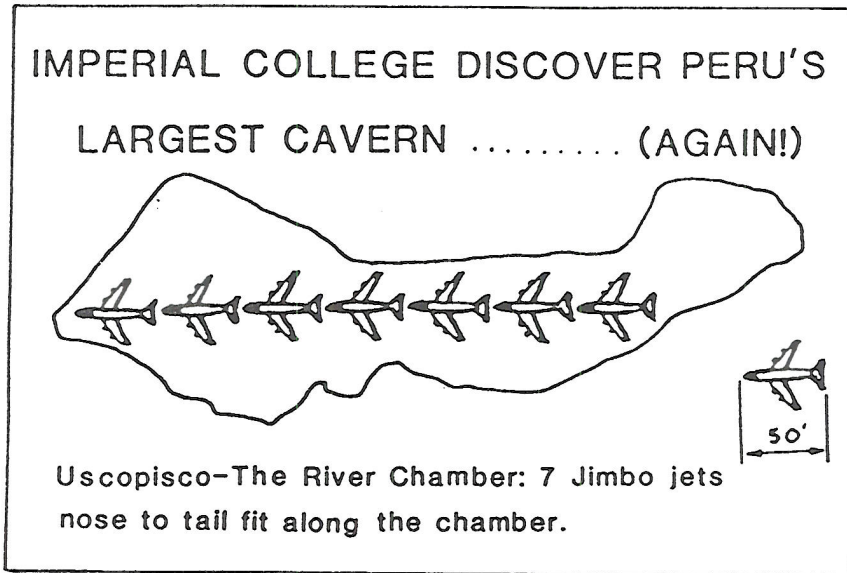
Our day would start quite late as we struggled out of bed after a usually listless, dream filled sleep. Once we were established we ate quite well, for breakfast alternating between eggs and macaroni and rice 'pudding' and perhaps brown sugar. Good healthy stuff and all bought in the village. Despite the Great Fried Egg Argument, we all cooked our own, some frying eggs with the pasta, others eating them separately. After breakfast someone would wash up; you roughly knew when it was your turn. The rest would usually adorn a huge conglomerate boulder, in the middle of the stream bed, reading and discussing the forthcoming day's activities. Again we knew roughly which two were staying in camp, and where the other two parties would be caving.

Yes, well caving was what we came for, and being underground 5-7 hours a day meant about 1200 man hours underground or walking to the nine entrances dotted up and down the valley. Although all were conjectured to be part of the same system, the caving was varied and interesting. Although surveying can be somewhat tedious, that is relieved when pushing into new passage; where no man has been before cf: Andy Eavis. The sheer size of the main river cave was exciting, one side passage we came upon, by swimming around a bend, was enormous and complete with pink crabs and a mysterious fungoid growth. Unfortunately the excitement and delight did lead to over-exaggeration. Tragadero, the main sink was said to be taking a river 'the size of the Wharfe at Otley'. As a past resident of Otley, I was intrigued, but eventually disappointed to find it more like the Bain at Donington. Yes well, if you've never heard of it, it gives you some idea. The resurgence was credited to be 200' high but was later reassessed on the more cautious side.

As usual the people you're with make the day and although we were only eight, the permutations made interesting contrasts. From the grim determination of the usually frozen Ladies Swimming Team (Kath, Chris and I), through the "quietly competent and sophisticated approach of Steve and Clive" (surveyed by Roberts), to the somewhat exuberant approach of the F team (Spike, Jon and I). Spike and his carbide were a team of their own, it was guaranteed to break down, a true prototype of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation. In one extremely loose boulder choke, Spike was forcing his way through after Steve and I declined to lead, when the carbide and Zoom back up failed simultaneously. After we had struggled out, he repaired the lamp by blowing vigorously through every orifice, and off he went in the other direction, only to be deterred by a boulder moving in the bottom of the choke. Once in a downstream duck with only 1' airspace and everyone's head turned sideways, Spike's carbide turned to water pistol mode, spraying everyone and the surveying notes, supposedly safe pressed into the roof, save Spike.

Photo trips were especially enjoyable, except when Steve required us to "stay right there" in a waterfall, even so Clive and I would battle for modelling honours.

One humorous quote from Chris traversing along the side of the river: worried "You'll have to be careful here, it's a bit loos..." Splash, falls into raging torrent. Another occasion, funny when later reviewed, was Spike's underwater abseiling: on landing in a pool where it was necessary to swim off the rope, he carried straight on.



Some of the most enjoyable caving was into Tragadero entrance which became perhaps the first Peruvian tourist trip. After the riggers returned on the first day, even the intractable Mr Bown was excited, burbling happily about sunsets.

Meanwhile back at the ranch: le domestics (who were rotated to give Kath and Chris a break) would make trips to Ninabamba, buying bread, eggs, pasta / rice and ubiquitous sardines. Also you would do your washing or draw up surveys but most important of all was preparing the evening meal - about which I've not much to say except some were extremely good and in all my photos I'm not eating a thing. The day would end with reading and perhaps some local port, as we planned the next day, and most of all, kept up the ritual of diary writing. One would scowl around the campsite, your gaze would alight on one of your companions and then furtively scribble away. Paranoia is awareness. After dinner activities included arguments/discussions, usually Jon vs. the rest of the world, or floodlight (well smouldering pig shit) bridge, where arguments were restricted to between partners. On the occasion of the completion of the local

sugar cane crusher, we had a little feast with Reuben and his rather large and ambiguous family, consuming flash fried guinea pigs and cane spirit, which smelt like our stove fuel. However one of my favourite nights was spent staying up late, about one o'clock, with Steve and Clive, naughtily guzzling all our port in one session.

The nights were very long, getting dark early but lit with southern stars, an often beautiful moon and hosts of fireflies. Any bird which passed over was always immediately and easily identified as a guachero, the famous cave bird. One occasional break from routine was conning Clive into one's need for antihistamine pills - valued for their soporific effect, to help quickly pass away the long night. Usually you would lay for a long time in the tent listening to the cacophony of noises outside: piercing peep-peeps, annoying ping-wows and the mysterious bamboo tappers - a noise at first assigned to surrounding Indians in the hills. However two of the most common and easily identifiable sounds as one dozed off were the low seemingly random mumbling and higher pitched scolding tones of the Peruvian night.

Harry Lock

Cave Instructor Training Course, Whernside Manor, Sept 85.

Monday morning was spent "in the trees" with an SRT shakedown, then in the afternoon Geoff rigged a new Dick Lawson route down Jingling - an indirect and interesting route down an otherwise unexceptional hole. Knot tying was the evening session - as a result of which I shall certainly be using the bowline on the bight in preference to the figure of 8 on the bight, and the alpine butterfly in preference to the figure of 8 on traverse lines. During the day we were subjected to a constant stream of classic Elliot quotes - "Most British cavers couldn't find their arse with both hands.", "A visit to the Mendips is a trip back to 1820". The finer points of rigging were discussed in the George.

Tuesday morning saw 4 go with John to do Long Churn / Alum, while I went with Dave Elliot to do Sell Gill Hole. Elliot uses the butterfly knot 70% of the time, and uses ring hangers and bollards in equal numbers. He revealed that he had no plans for a book on great bolt routes of the Yorkshire Dales, but nevertheless quite enjoys winding up the British caving public - it is also a fact that Dave has not placed an anchor ("red bolt") since December 1984! Other typical comments - "Jingling Pot is the most vertical cave

Jerry Wooldridge has ever been down", "Mulu, where's that?", "He can drink 8 pints, he must be a good caver", "you only win photo prizes at the BCRA for shots of Bridge Cave or OFD 2".

John Forder that evening gave us some practice and hints on placing 8mm SD anchors, and the idea was suggested that a red bolt in Birkinshaws forehead wouldn't go amiss. Needless to say, Birkinshaw was on holiday in Greece at the time!

Wednesday was the ladders and lifelines day ("But what do we do after 9.30am?"), Paul Ramsden explained the various lifelining methods and Forder was on hand up the tree to suddenly release the ladder belay as the climber approached the top. Other topics covered were self lining, abbing on Italian hitch etc. In the afternoon there was a lecture and discussion on fall factors, peak forces, drop test rigs etc, followed by practical hoisting, lowering and SRT self rescue with John and Paul. The evening was spent on the Cave Instructor scheme/ organisation of novice groups/ flooding/ hypothermia etc. with Paul. Then off to the George with Geoff.

Thursday saw three of us down Ireby Fell Cavern with Dave Elliot, rigging a new route down the entrance series, which involves a 30m pitch and a very acute deviation which can only be reached by a bold penduluming manoeuvre. We didn't get to the bottom since rising water had made Rope pitch impassable. The evening session was Paul Ramsden on flooding, followed by Geoff Barbers "leaving" drink at the George.

Friday was Lancaster Hole. Three went with Dave, and didn't spend much time underground, and three went with Geoff, on his last ever Whernside caving trip, and he gave us a thoroughly enjoyable and informative trip taking in Montagu West / Downstream Sump / Wilf Taylors / Stake Pot / Fall Pot / Oxbow Corner / Colonnades. Friday evening, John gave a short chat on cave formation, then showed us his own slides of Picos de Europa / Vercors / Chartreuse.

Saturday we decided to do Juniper Gulf, with a combined 2nd and 3rd pitch. Big pitch was impressive as ever, and sump pool very foamy, with twigs and grass floating in it! Derigging didn't take too long. Saturday night Paul gave another talk, this time on Access and Conservation, and briefly about the nature of the CIC assessment. Went to the George that night. Sunday morning did Swinstos - probably a more enjoyable cave than Simpsons. Got back to centre just after 2pm, changed and set off back to London, after an enjoyable week at the Manor.

South Pembrokeshire - England's Second Major Caving Area.

A contentious title perhaps? Only if one does not acknowledge the, locally loathed, title of Pembrokeshire as: "Little England beyond Wales". This summer, in an attempt to lift the somewhat phallic bias of our learned journal, I am spending seven weeks investigating the potential of the region.

Alerted to the fact that South Pembrokeshire is a bloody great slab of limestone, I made contact with the local geologist, where I was working. I learned two things: limestone is not porous enough for caves and secondly he wasn't much of a geologist. Heedlessly ignoring the learned sage's advice - "to look in the old red sandstone"; I, in my youthful way, began a quest for the hidden subterranean world in the coastal carboniferous limestone.

My first find was Wogans Cavern known for only 2000 years. Lovers of the walk in, will hearten to the news that it's situated underneath the great hall of Pembroke Castle. "Stronghold of the Normans in West Wales" - See The Best Of Pembrokeshire (with sketch maps). However I should of been suspicious of the Castleton tainted accent of the gatekeeper: having assured me of the existance of the largest bat colony in South Wales(?), I was charged 50p entrance fee.

The cavern is a large hollow (30m x 15m x 20m), walled in, and reached by a spiral staircase from the castle above. Sacreligously burning my copy of Coast to Coast - the Pembrokeshire National Park Free Newsletter, I could only find two leads: drafting phreatic tubes, 9" diameter.

Time for a more scientific approach. The grey cliffs of S W Wales provide some of the best exposures of the 345 million year old Main Limestone formation. This rock represents the full development of conditions ideal for the growth of calcereous organisms in a clear warm sea. To the south of Castlemartin, a 20 mile long 3 mile wide, undulating plain, ends in 150' cliffs, of Main Limestone. Aquiring a bike and a torch, I set off in search of sinks, prepared to encounter some of the most hostile terrain in the British Isles, namely the Leopard tanks and panzer grenadiers of the 25th Panzer Division. Cycling round these access restrictions I reached the coast which is furnished with the full range of coastal features: stacks (Elegug rocks), arches (The Green Bridge of Wales - "imposing" STBOP), and plenty of caves. However a rope was needed but not possessed.

I continued my search and came across references to Hoyles Mouth, a cave of archaeological significance west of Tenby.

Strangely omitted by that venerable tome STBOP. The entrance, Trou de Glazish, is located on what seems to be an old cliff line. After approximately 40m of passage it lowers to a crawl. In Mulu tradition, shorts and T shirt, I squirmed through to a small chamber ending in a possible dig. Cleverly, I then dropped my Asda torch which rolled back through the squeeze, endearingly turning itself off. The solo caver followed...frantically.

The following weekend I requested for the "famous Lydstep Caverns" - STBOP. Yes well, really only a series of arches but there are some side passages in the fractured limestone. Interesting cave life, of the giant crab/starfish variety. While traversing, with confidence, underground in a narrow rift above a deep pool generously stocked with 8" shell crabs, I, with another characteristic stroke of near genius, dropped my torch again, which in its friendly little way switched off again. Some tentative groping was called for. Feel with confidence.

Anxiously in search of another success, I went to "the great limestone quarries of West Williamston" - STBOP, to look for cavernous indications. The only sizable hole was inhabited by badgers - the droppings were pretty big anyway. On the way to the next quarry, it's inhabitants were ancient, white-bottomed, droopy breasted nudists. Thankfully stomachs covered most of the genitals. Well embarrassed. I declined to join them, no unsatisfied middle aged women were immediately apparent.

"Just passing through." I breezed, peddling furiously up to the road.

Do not despair however. Caves are here, several vertical shafts and sinks (blowholes) are inland of St. Govans Head. An anonymous (slander I shall not) member of our illustrious club is due to arrive; to push back the frontiers of spelaeology, with a pocket full of 50p's(?)

Harry Lock

Debolting

On a recent visit to Black Shiver Pot, Chapel-le-Dale, I was dismayed to find that the notorious "red bolts" on the first pitch had been variously destroyed as follows; at the pitch head one anchor appeared to have been completely drilled out and at the ledge 7m down, a further two red anchors forming a reelay/ traverse had been tampered with, one having had its thread shattered, the other having been "pinched in" at its base, rendering both unusable. Moreover, although an

alternative anchor did exist on the opposite wall, this was not flush with the rock surface, and the rusted gritty threads could not securely hold a twisted hanger and bolt. ie. the well positioned, drilled, and greased anchors had been destroyed simply because they bore the red plastic disc that seems to have brought them to the attention of, and caused offence to, some Northern cavers.

This foolish act is annoying for at least two reasons. Firstly, if the anchor is to be destroyed, then those responsible could at least drill it out completely, instead of merely tampering with it, so that the less observant may use it without being aware of the internal damage. Secondly, if this "debolting" crusade continues, then it will become impossible to rig some pitches without incurring substantial rubpoints, making necessary the use of thicker abrasion resistant ropes, or ladders. This would be particularly disappointing in a cave such as Black Shiver, which, with its 83m pitch, is eminently suitable for lightweight SRT exploration.

Certainly, removal of some fixed aids "provided only for the short term convenience of the persons who originally placed them", and now celebrating their fiftieth anniversary, could usefully be undertaken; the previous day we had removed three lengths of frayed, stiffened, knotted tape from Vesper Pot, but this new move, advocated in some letters in both Caves and Caving and the more sensationalist caving magazines, is going too far.

Personally, I would have more confidence in a well placed, well maintained anchor than in the various objects such as wooden beams, steel eyebolts, dishcloths and washing line that adorn some caves.

Much thought has been put into the placing of most of these new anchors, they are generally where they are most wanted, rather than where they are most convenient, and as a result, the "bolting programme" has led to some very interesting and mostly dry hangs, notable examples being the roof traverse above the third pitch in Meregill Hole, the traverse above the Big Pitch in Stream Passage Pot, and the New Roof Traverse in Lost Johns Cave.

I am aware that of some claims that a number of caves are now "overbolted", and a number of curious situations have been reported where a red anchor has been drilled into a perfectly adequate natural belay, so what is clearly needed is some moderation by all concerned parties, or the end result will be pitch heads and rebelayes where the rock is impossibly overstressed and hence weakened by the efforts of bolters and debolters.

A HISTORY OF VERTICAL CAVING

Mankind has been entering caves for many, many years, with the aid of a guttering rushlight, candle, carbide, or nicad. Neolithic exploreres went deep into many caves but sooner or later these intrepid stone-age speleos must have been confronted by a pitch. Herein lies one of the fundamental aspects of cave exploration - vertical caving, or how to get down, and hopefully back up a vertical drop. The following (none-too-serious) treatese plots the major developments in this field.

Ahem...to procced, we have left our poor cave man contemplating a yawning black abyss at his feet. He has probably thrown a few pebbles down and heard an answering boom, but since he doesn't know that $s = \frac{1}{2}at^2$ he still hasn't much idea of what lies down t'ole. To discover he must descend.

He could jump, or attempt to climb down with his sputtering mammoth-fat lamp clasped firmly between his teeth - both are hazardous. What he really needs is a simple invention, nothing complicated like fire or the wheel, but something which unfortunately will not be invented for another 10,000 years or so.

What Mr Ug really needs.....
Is a SRT rope!

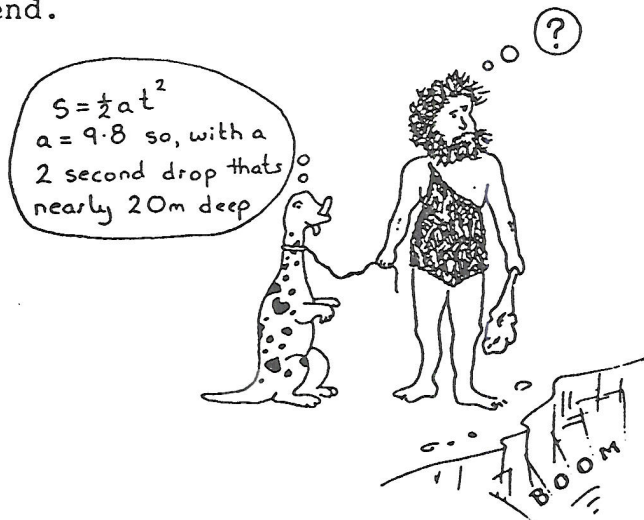
But not having one our stone-age friend is forced to resort to stone-age techniques - he builds a caving ladder. Primitive peoples the world over used, and still do use, ladders to descend into caves. For example, the Mayan people of the Yucatan peninsular in Mexico descended a hundred foot vertical shaft in the Cave of Bolonchen by constructing a twelve foot wide ladder of tree trunks lashed together with bark. It wasn't particularly flexible and couldn't be stuffed into standard tackle bags, and is probably better classed as an early fixed aid, but as such it remained in place for centuries until discovered by the explorer John Stevens in 1841. It gets a bit tiresome having to construct a new ladder for each cave you do, so flexible ladders soon caught on.

WHAT'S WRONG WI' ME
CAVING HELMET —
WE'VE 'AD IT IN'T
FAMILY FER YEARS.



The first really portable caving ladders were massive affairs of hemp rope and wooden rungs. Ladders such as these were used by Roman soldiers during the seige of Syracuse in 212 BC. and it is perhaps surprising to find them still in use by British potholers in the 1950's.

Still, as I have always said, cavers are very conservative folk, and don't like being rushed into using new-fangled equipment.



These rope and wood ladders were extremely heavy - those that took Martel to the bottom of Gaping Ghyll weighed no less than 220 lbs. Added to this there had to be a lifeline team of strong lads (and lasses - Norbert Casteret thought nothing of climbing down ropes that were belayed to nothing more, than that indispensable piece of equipment; a wedged Madame Casteret!). Very often it was easier to dispense with the ladder and just lower a man on a rope. The great danger in this technique is that the man on the sharp end of the operation has no control over his movements once out of shouting distance. They usually needed considerable persuasion before they "volunteered". In Elizabeth I's reign, Robert Dudley had to bribe one of his serfs with gold before the man allowed himself to be lowered into Eldon Hole. The hole was successfully plumbed to 200 ells, but when the man was finally hauled to the surface, his hair had gone white and he died soon afterwards from shock.

True SRT starts with that indefatigable inventor Leonardo da Vinci, who in about 1500 invented the first descender. This was comprised of two half-cylinders of metal held on the rope by hand pressure. It was designed to allow spritely knaves to make their getaway over the castle walls. A full stop wasn't possible..... or usually desirable.

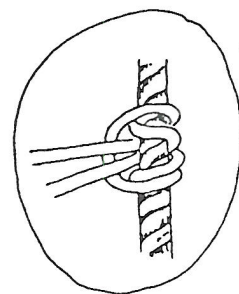
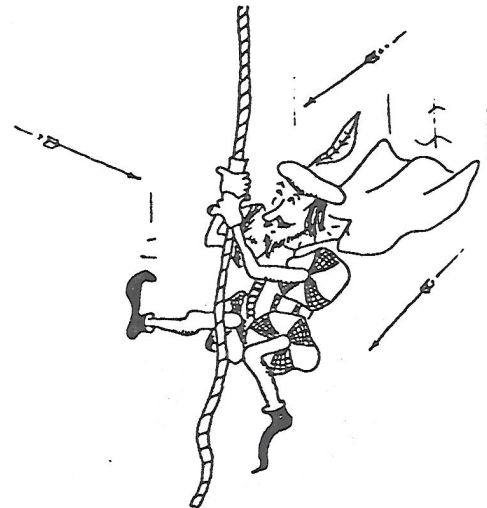


Much, much later mountaineers developed the karabiner brake from which developed the rappel rack..... which is still used by those cavers clever enough to thread it correctly.

Numerous other descenders have been developed, from the figure-of-eight, through the whale-tail to the Petzl Stop.

However the problem with all these devices is still how to get back up again. It was not until the 1930's that a solution was found to this.

A certain Dr. Karl Prussik kept falling down crevasses in glaciers. Rather disturbed by all this he put his mind to the problem when he was just hanging around one day, and invented the prussik knot. Inevitably cavers started to see possibilities. During the exploration of the Trou du Glaz Pierre Chevalier and his mates used a primitive ascender called a "monkey". These metal claws gripped the rope in a



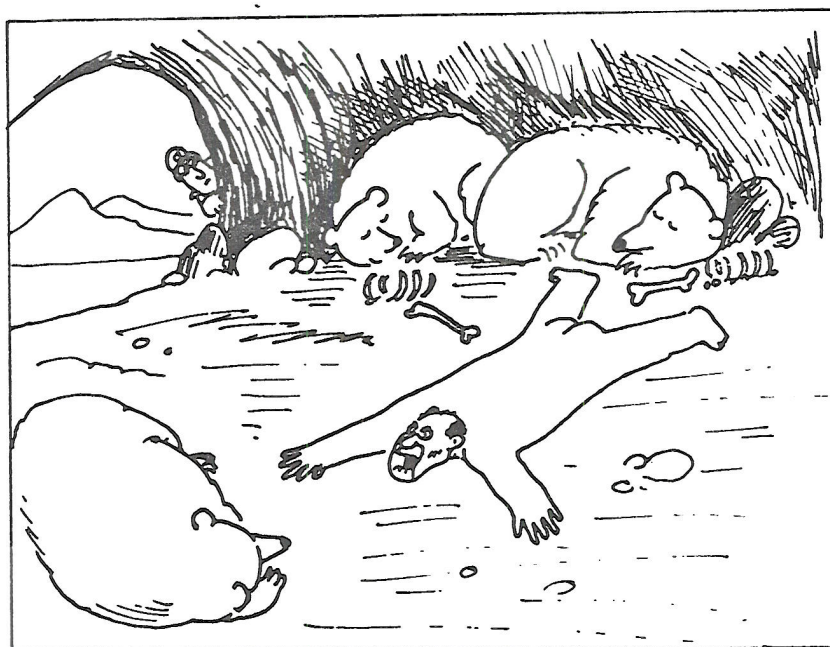
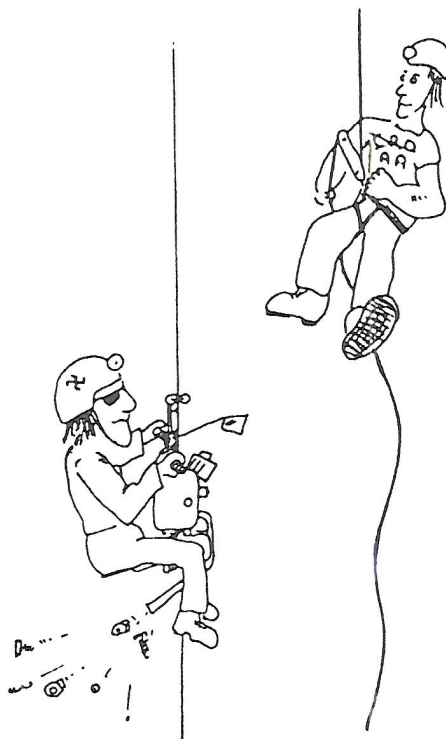
pinching squeeze capable of bearing body weight so that they could, as Pierre Chevalier says, "make use of our old mountaineering ropes and dispense with ladders".

The use of SRT has spread rapidly (despite someone inventing the electron ladder) and is now almost universally accepted.

So where do we go from here?

Inevitably the Americans should turn to some form of mechanised method. Nevin Davies of Pennsylvania invented the motorised ascending device in 1969. Not inaptly known as MAD it used a 2-stroke petrol engine and worked well until it ran out of petrol half-way up a pitch.

Looking to the future the day cannot be far away when we have the linear induction ascender running silently and smoothly on light-weight flexible metal ropes. Then all we need to do is develop compact and more powerful batteries to power it all - but that is another story.....





TECHNICAL

Dave Wilson

Caving Ropes

Introduction

Rope comes in many materials, constructions and diameters, and it is useful to examine these one by one to reach a definition, or definitions of which characteristics we desire a rope to have to qualify it for use in various fields of caving activities, the one of interest to us being its suitability as rope for single rope techniques.

Pt 1 : Materials:

The following criteria must be satisfied for the material to be acceptable as well as flexibility as a fine fibre :

- a) Rotproof : A caving rope can be frequently left in a damp, muddy state, and so must not decay under these circumstances.
- b) Strength : A high tensile strength is desirable so that a thin, easily manageable, light rope can be constructed.
- c) Abrasion resistance : The rope should not fall apart if it rubs slightly against rock whilst in use.
- d) Melting point (for plastics) : The rope must be able to stand up to temperatures between about -10C, or a very cold Yorkshire car boot, and the temperature of a hot descender at the bottom of a long, dry abseil.
- e) Dynamic strength : The rope should ideally not snap when presented with a shock loading, as this can result in a rapid end to a fine young caving career.

(a) rules out natural fibre ropes,
(c),(d),(e) rule out polypropylene (remember GG, ~1974?)

The best two materials are nylon (polyamide), and terylene (polyester) in that order, with kevlar, etc still to be usefully employed, though offering some considerable improvement in strength / unit area. Although it is more

resistant to chemical attack than nylon, and it does not lose 10% of its strength when wet, as nylon does, it is not as frequently used, since, due, to its lower stretchiness, which is ok for reducing bounce on the rope, it has significantly lower shock absorbcancy (9mm Marlow breaks with one fall of about factor 0.5), and so is generally less safe.

Pt 2 : Construction:

There are three differently constructed types of ropes which are:

a) Hawser laid : A set of twisted strands, themselves twisted together to form the main rope (like cotton) with the result that when put under load, they tend to untwist a bit and you spin, also all fibres near surface at some point, and are thus subjected to abrasive wear.

b) Plaited rope : A fairly obvious method, but all elements of rope appear on surface, so all fibres wear, unless a double plait construction is used, with a plaited core, and a plaited sheath (eg Marlow). Usable, but not as goog as :

c) Kernmantel rope : A central core of straight filaments or 10-20 slightly twisted ropelets (core is half to three quarters of mass of rope), surrounded by a tightly fitting woven sheath, which protects the core from dirt, abrasion, etc. We climb or descend on the sheath, which clings to the core by friction, and is effectively joined to it by a knot in the rope. This is by far the best type of rope to use for single rope techniques.

Pt 3 : Diameter:

In this section we will consider the useful diameters of ropes for SRT and other uses, we will talk of nylon ropes only, as they are the best.

Manufacturers :

Edelrid : German, make six different caving ropes, 10,11mm Extrastatic, (with a water repellent treatment) and 8,9,10,11mm Superstatic. Tightly sheathed ropes that stiffen significantly with use.

Beal : French, make three ropes 8,9,10.5mm loosely sheathed soft and flexible ropes, very smooth on descent, as recommended by the river-tamers. The 10.5mm will be examined closely with a view to further purchases this year, as it stood up very well in the Berger.

Lyon Speleorope : 'Specially designed under the careful guidance of Ben Lyon', it appears identical to Beal except

for a different coloured marker yarn, so the same comments probably apply.

Bluewater : American, originally only the large diameter rope was available, and it rapidly made a name for itself due to its abrasion resistance. Designed for North America's non-technical caving techniques. 9mm looks good but both ropes are quite expensive by comparison with most other manufacturers.

Troll : British, a newcomer to the rope scene, after many years of preparation, their ropes look good, if a little stretchy and expensive. See section on rope ageing.

Generally available diameters, a rough guide to tensile strength is also given :

8mm Edelrid, Beal : 1630 Kg

A useful ultralight personal rope, or short lengths handy for club use as slings, footloops, v.short pitches, extension to insufficiently long main rope, etc. Little margin of safety if any abrasion present at all.

9mm Edelrid, Beal, Bluewater, Troll : 1800-2100 Kg

A good medium weight personal rope, or lightweight club rope for expedition situations where weight is at a premium. 25% more nylon than 8mm rope.

10-10.5mm Edelrid, Beal/Lyon, Troll : 2400-2600 Kg

A medium weight rope for club or heavy personal use in most situations. 50-70% more nylon than 8mm rope.

11mm Edelrid : 3100 Kg

Heavy use club rope.

11.5mm Bluewater : 3000 Kg

Ultra heavyweight club rope for abrasive situations. Stiff and bulky but virtually bomb-proof (comparatively). About 30% more nylon than 10mm, and over 100% more than 8mm rope.

Generally, 10 and 10.5mm are most used club rope, with some 11.5mm for bad pitches or when some other group has sneaked off with all 10mm rope of required length, and up to 10m lengths of 8mm for use in improvisation situations, as described above.

Ageing of ropes

Nylon ropes lose strength in many ways; by chemical attack from acids, solvents, etc; by photochemical ageing, as nylon is sensitive to attack from sunlight, and so should be subjected to it as little as possible, being stored in a

cool, dry, dark room when not in use; but mainly abrasion, both internal and external.

External abrasion

This is caused by contact with rock, generally during abseiling and prussiking, due to stretch in the rope causing a sawing action against the rock. Ideally the rope should not touch the rock at all, but sometimes this is unavoidable, and a large diameter abrasion resistant rope is the best choice in this situation, if no deviations, rebelay, rope protection, or alternative hangs are available. NOTE : a rope of 11.5mm diameter can have half of its fibres severed by abrasion, and still be as strong as an 8mm rope. Since, while prussiking, a peak tension of about 4x bodyweight can be produced on a long bouncy ascent, about 400 Kg, and a knot in the rope reduces its strength by about 30-40%, 8mm rope, when new, only allows a safety factor of about x3, and any abrasion whatsoever can easily reduce this towards no safety factor at all. This means 8mm rope is only safe for use on short pitches, where stretch, and therefore bounce is reduced to a minimum, and even then only with care.

Internal abrasion

Mud, frequently found in caves, is, of course, composed of finely powdered rock. If/when it finds its way into a rope, it sets about the wonderful task of sawing through all the ultrathin nylon fibres inside, every time the rope is flexed, rock and nylon meet inside, and the rock usually comes off the winner, the nylon (and the caver) the loser. The solutions to this problem fall into two main categories, cure and prevention.

Cure

While it is not possible to undo the insidious damage caused by internal abrasion, it is possible to limit it by washing out the mud from the rope before it has a chance to damage it. As washing is essential to enable examination of the sheath, and assessment of the damage caused by external abrasion, all dirty ropes should be washed after each trip or at least between weekends.

Prevention

Apart from the obvious methods, like using tackle bags to carry ropes, avoiding muddy hangs, avoiding muddy caves, the usual method of prevention is to use a tight sheath on the rope to protect against ingress of mud, or possibly a loose sheath (Beal) to facilitate easy washing out of mud.

A new method is the use in the construction of the rope of a membrane of plastic between the core and the sheath, which, as well as protecting the all-important and invisible core from insidious damage by mud, also protects it from the absorbance of water, with a significant and highly welcome reduction in the weight of soaked rope, and consequently slightly stronger core due to the lack of strength loss due to aqueous fibre softening. We will have to wait and see if the promised increased life and reduced weight justify the extra 20p/m price of the rope.

Clive Orrock

The Caving Sit-Harness

Inglesport has, for some time been stocking the range of TSA harnesses, which in general design are much the same as the various Petzl harnesses. I have seen a TSA equivalent of the "croll" and have used both Petzl croll and avanti, as well as the TSA "avanti". This is essentially a comparison of two light-weight harnesses, the TSA plume and Petzl avanti, with the "standard" cavers' sit-harness, the Petzl croll, although the general comments on the TSA innovations will apply to the full TSA range.



Avanti sit-harness
28mm webbing, 270g, £14.55
Croll sit-harness
48mm webbing, 470g, £18.80

Plume leg-loops
43mm webbing, 230g, £11.20

With the development of SRT, there has been a change in sit-harness design away from simply adapted climbers' harness to more sophisticated cavers' harness, specifically designed to be sat in for long periods (eg the croll) and now towards lighter simpler designs (eg the avanti and plume).

The standard cavers' harness, the Petzl croll, is undeniably comfortable, the two sizes (medium and large) probably ensuring a better fit, particularly if you're "large". However I have not found either light-weight harness (with less or narrower webbing) to be uncomfortable - except after very long trips when any harness can be expected to make you saddle-sore. The reduction in weight I personally don't think too important (the difference is equivalent to two Krabs) but I like the reduction in bulk, both when wearing it or when carrying SRT gear on the top of a tackle bag etc. The principal savings in weight of lighter harnesses are in

an absence of metal bits (no steel links to connect to central maillon) and in the reduction in the amount of webbing used. The resulting simpler design of light-weight harnesses also makes for much easier adjustment. The croll is not easy to adjust especially if it has been "worn in". Both the avanti and plume are very easy to adjust whilst being worn in cave if necessary.

The croll, then, is comfortable and very robust, but also very expensive, heavy and bulky. Even for weekend caving in the dales I would prefer a simpler, smaller harness such as the avanti or plume.

As has been said, in general design these two harnesses are essentially the same :-

The principal differences and innovations of the TSA compared to the Petzl harness are :-

- (i) rivetted as well as sewn joins
- (ii) velcro adjustment of leg-loops (the velcro is of course non-load bearing) - leaving only one buckle (at the back of the waist loop).

The rivetted joins wear very well since most of the wear is taken by the very wear resistant metal studs. The traditionally sewn avanti is more susceptible to join wear and the relevant section is reinforced with double thickness tape.

The velcro adjustment of TSA harnesses makes for very easy adjustment even after the harness has been worn in. Furthermore although I personally have had no troubles, some people say that the two groin buckles of the avanti can give pain and that their absence in the plume is a major improvement. The only buckle in the TSA is the single flat buckle in the middle of the waist loop. This I found to cause severe abrasion to the tape, so much so that it rendered the harness unuseable and unsafe after just five Yorkshire caves. Clearly this needs some sort of sleeving with tubular tape or plastic (similar to the plastic sleeving on the avanti leg loop sections) before use - why couldn't TSA have done this? Alternatively TSA could have fitted a wear-resistant buckle of the type fitted to the Petzl avanti. These are bulkier but do protect the tape. The tape of the plume is wider than that of the avanti which would imply more comfort but it is also thinner, and in practice tended to roll up. Finally the plume is cheaper than the avanti.

In conclusion I much preferred the avanti, particularly because of the back buckle but both are good harnesses. Its good to see that Establishments Petzl don't have the monopoly on good harness design - competition inspired innovation never did anyone any harm.

REVIEW



Clive Orrock

The National Caving Conference. 21-21 Sept. 1985

"Where's the perfect conference venue?" asked Caves & Caving No.28 after last year's conference. UMIST is certainly a good candidate. Unlike some previous years', Manchester's conference activities were all located together. The lecture theatres led off from a central area of displays and trade stands, there was a bar and cafeteria (open all day), and accommodation was available in an adjacent hall of residence. Added to all this, were the lectures, videos and films, which were generally up to the usual high standard.

The following reviews are all based on personal observations and subject to personal prejudice, so not all the events are included but I hope they still impart something of the flavour of the 1985 conference.

Treviso '85

A 32 member mega expedition still trying to connect the deep potholes of the Picos with the Cueva del Agua. Bown, Foster and cronies were noticeable by their noise, but the Aussies from the Berger took all the credit for the photos and also did the final pushing trip in the infamous Dosser's Delight.

Peak Cavern - The last 10 years

Slides of tourist trips and digs culminating in the recent Speedwell link. All good clean(?) fun but wetsuits and steel toe-cap boots obviously a must!

Radio Location

A change from all the mega slides of mega caves on mega expeditions. Bob Mackin gave an outline of the basics of mole-phone construction and operation. Very interesting but the technical information was a bit rushed.

China - What's it all about?

Tony Waltham addressed a packed hall in usual dynamic style outlining the proposals for the forthcoming expedition. Details remain to be finalised, indeed all seemed to be chaos, but basically it's a diplomatic / reconnaissance trip

to S.China, hopefully paving the way for further British expeditions.

A few caves in Oman

Without a single pause Tony "bullshitter" Waltham launched into the results of the N.Oman reconnaissance accompanied by the usual rapid procession of spectacular slides; mostly surface shots since not a lot of cave was found, only 2 significant caves - one a vertical pothole surveyed to -130m before they gave up not being "roughie-toughie cavers", the other a 4-5km through-trip containing Arabia's longest lake (850m) which the oracle Tony dismissed as, "the only proper cave in the whole of Oman". - Does he know something we don't? Nevertheless a very good lecture.

Three Counties Diving

Accompanied by surface photos and well-drawn diagrams, Geoff Yeadon described the current state of exploration, and speculated on the potential for further work. Looking ahead to the future Geoff had us believing that it can't be long before it'll be possible to go from Top Sink via Pippikin and Lost Johns to Notts, Ireby and Marble Steps and thence from West to East Kingsdale and finally from Crescent to Dale Barn to surface in Chapel-le-Dale at Hurtle Pot. Definitely a trip for roughie-toughies only!

Kerry '85

Thinking of caving in Ireland? - forget Co.Kerry. Beneath those green and pleasant lands lurks a grotty natural sewer linking a series of rubbish filled shakeholes. Rats, dead cows and rusty cars competed for pride of place in the photos.

Indonesia '85

In their usual competent way Andy Eavis, Tony White and Colin Boothroyd described the various projects of their successful expedition. Lots of good photos, those of the local people providing an interesting change from all the cave shots. The slide of a cave absorbing a river the size of the Thames was particularly impressive. Needless-to-say that is one cave they didn't get far in!

Recent Developments in Mendip

The MCG described interesting advances in Upper Flood Swallet, whilst the BEC recounted tales of sudden incontinence amongst cavers as 1000m of fire hose leading down St Cuthberts, was suddenly inflated to 120psi of air in an attempt to pump out the sump.

Daren Cilau

With the following lecture cancelled Clive Gardener was able to ramble on and on to an accompaniment of slides seemingly taken at 5m intervals throughout the cave. Certainly a very important find, but it's all so boring. Martyn Farr finally

managed to describe the hydrology and diving in his usual modest way.

Ladder and Lifelines - what can go wrong

-showed a home-made video of people falling off a ladder and sometimes being held by the lifeliner depending on the technique used. This showed just how useless is traditional round-the-body lining.

Making the best of natural belays in SRT

As a prelude to the (red) bolt discussion, Steve Foster (billed as: "one of Britains' most expert devotees of SRT" (wince) tried to show us how it is possible to rig without using 8mm anchors. It all seemed a bit like teaching your grandmother to suck eggs, since he was pompously expounding techniques which we've all been using for years. Is the BCRA conference really the place for "how to do SRT - lesson 1"? However, considering some of the amazing displays of prejudice and ignorance in the following bolt discussion a lot of people could do with that lesson. But, is that arrogant, self appointed god of SRT, Steve Foster, the person to do it? I think not.

Bolts - The Future

With a rash of circular red stickers having broken out during the conference affecting not only walls, but people as well, this promised to be a lively discussion. Keith Plumb, chairing the meeting, started by outlining some of his thoughts on the matter - well considered thoughts which helped to put things in perspective and I hope dispelled some of the narrow-minded, "lets get Elliot" feeling. This led on to an open discussion, - Dave Elliot was notably absent (probably bolting somewhere in the Dales!).

Clearly there is a lot of ill-feeling about these red bolts, presumably directed, mainly at Mr. Elliot (although it took about 20 mins before anyone had the courage to name him). The principal causes of ill feeling and some of the comments said (in all seriousness) were :-

- a) bolts spoil caves
- b) bolts spoil cavers' enjoyment of caves (?!)
- c) bolts don't last long enough
- d) extensive bolting is lowering the technical standard of British caving (?!?)
- e) SRT is lowering the technical standard of British caving (?!!!!)
- f) lets all go back to ladders and lifelines - they're much more exciting (!????)
- g) Dave Elliot plans to make money out of it all by writting a book
- h) Dave Elliot not only puts little bolts in, but actually dares remove other peolpes old scaffold poles/bits of angle iron/rusty bedsteads etc !!!

The discussion rambled on kept in check by Keith Plumb generally airing the grievances and problems, and sounding out the grass-root feelings, (although those who might have approved of Elliot's scheme - probably kept quiet for their own safety). Constructive (?) suggestions put forward ranged from :

- a) break Elliot's arms
- b) try to stop selling his book
- c) ban the sale of 8mm anchors
- d) use stainless steel anchors which might last longer, or set anchors in resin so they can be replaced in the same holes
- e) start a campaign to install permanent (say, 0.5" rawlbolt) anchors.

But, who would want to have to put in all the bolts? It emerged that the Steve Fosters of this world would only be too keen to have a BCRA mandate to bolt caves their way. In short the discussion began by pouring hatred on Elliot's bolting program and ended with no shortage of people wanting to start their own!

Saturday night stomp

For once this was free to conference goers and was housed in the university. A bit crowded and very sweaty, and the r & b bands' music wasn't to everyone's taste, but it was nevertheless a good do.

The SRT Race

This years was an obstacle course: prussik up, traverse over and ab' down passing a knot - unfortunately Steve Foster won again.

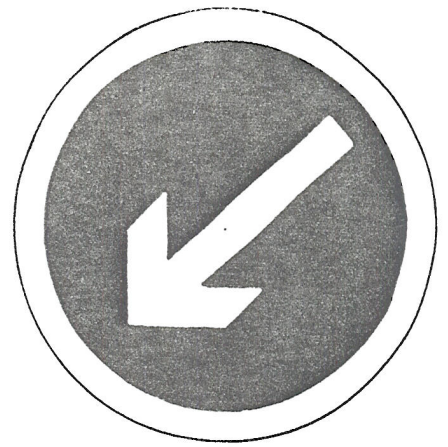
Photo Salon Results

Once again these were virtually a fore-gone conclusion the awards being largely divided between Clive Westlake and Chris Howes, Chris winning 1st, 2nd and 3rd in best monochrome print. Unlike previous years the cave fun shot was not put to the vote - we were simply told that Chris Howes' was the funniest.

Best Club Stand was the Grampian Speleological Group.

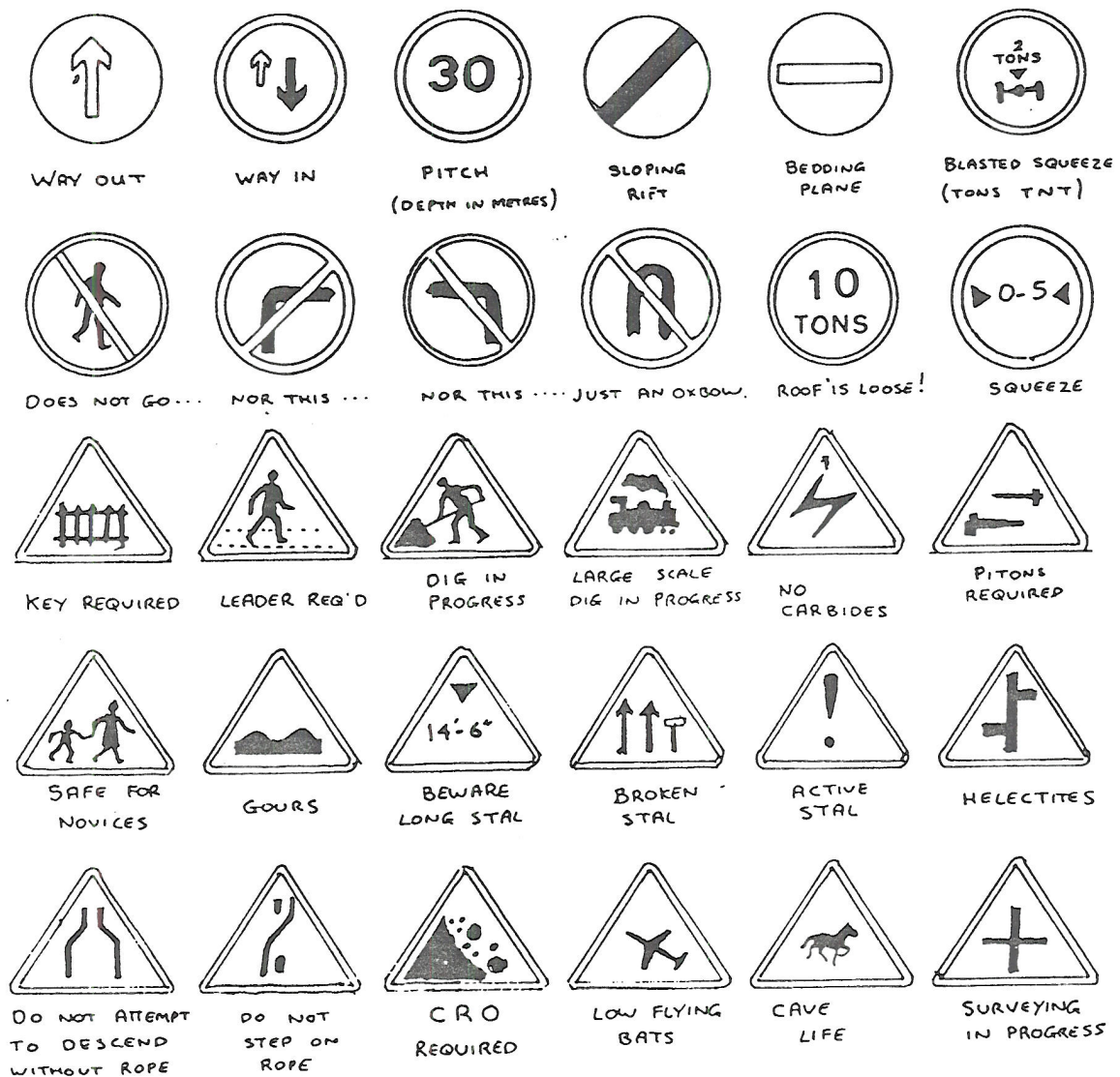
Trotman award for caving literature went to David Judson on behalf of all the contributors to "Caving Practice and Equipment".

the
caveway
code



With the recent proliferation of red bolts, showing where to belay, of telephone wires to show the way through, and of coloured tapes to stop you wandering into the formations, the Caving sub-committee of the Parliamentary Commission for Leisure activities has decided to standardise signs relating to caving.

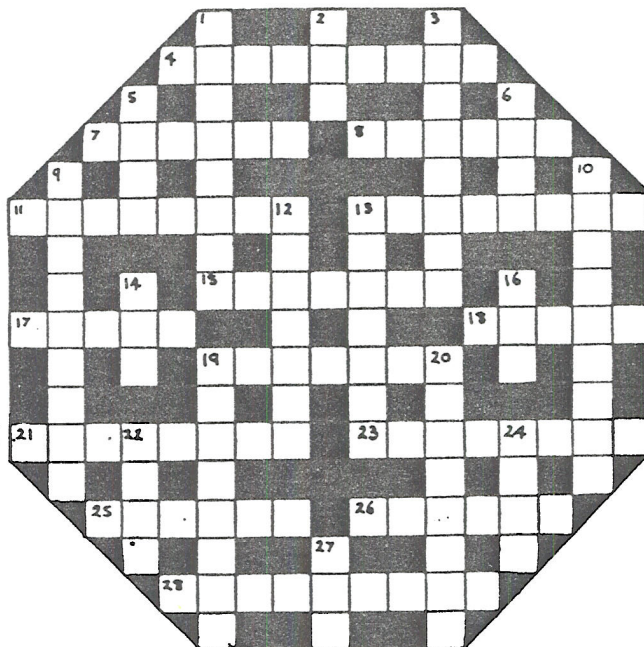
For reasons of economy, these are to be based on road signs, although the meanings have been modified. These signs become effective nationally at the end of the year, although certain areas (eg. Swildons) have been employing road signs for some time now. Most of the common signs are illustrated below, with meanings, so that members may become familiar with them.



Adapted from CSS Newsletter 16 (6) 1974.

Across:

4. The best fish 'n chip shop in the Dales? (9)
7. A cave name repeated from E. Kingsdale to Fountains Fell and Penyghent Gill. (6)
8. O not a cave. (6)
11. A deep pool in a dark, cold cave. (5,3)
13. Someone who'd use a clinometer. (8)
15. Plans produced by 13 across. (7)
17. A French harness. (5)
18. The most concentrated vertical maze in Britain. (5)
19. A tight pot in Thrupe Lane. (4,3)
21. Cheaper and stronger than krabs. (8)
23. Deepest hole in Greece. (4,4)
25. The bets are that these belays aren't too good. (6)
26. Caverns long overdue for connection with Bull Pot. (6)
28. The cavern with the nursery rhyme pitches. (9)



Down:

1. Where might you find a norse giant? (2,6)
2. A black mineral or part of a carbide. (3)
3. Useful for securing ropes. (8)
5. The best University caving club! (4)
6. Not rope, so don't shock it. (4)
9. CaF_2 . (9)
10. Bovine safety cords? (9)
12. More cave above Long Churn. (7)
13. Wood or metal shoring device. (7)
14. Yup, its that European cave salamander again! (3)
16. With providence you might get there in the end. (3)
19. East Mendip term for sink holes. (8)
20. Dry valley on the way to GG. (4,4)
22. Biblically, whose wife was turned into a halite speleotherm? (4)
24. A name, whats in a name?
A gouffre, gulf, pit or pot,
Chasm, cavern, slit or slot,
By any other would be the same. (4)
27. A colourful test for water flow. (3)



BACK-STABBING SUPPLEMENT

Cave Wars Episode 4.

At KLO Falcon our team been rounded up and are being taken to the cell block. Luckily for them Steve OBI Lanobe is resourceful as ever and applies a secret weapon - his hypnotising walk!! Soon the guards are fast asleep and our hero's free.

"OK FX@ and NP30 you go to the tractor beam control room and disable the tractor beam; Harry, Malcy and Simon rescue Princess Sarah whilst I and Clorrock will investigate" decided Steve.

"Why do I get all the shit jobs", mumbled NP30.

Meanwhile in the command room of OFD4 an important meeting is taking place between three top ranking figures. Commander Wouran, Daft Raider and the Emperor; Jimbo.

"Your pissed Wouran", cursed Raider.

"No I'm snot pissed", retorted Wouran finishing his twelfth pint of Imperial Geeness (a strong and potent drink equivalent to diesel fuel).

"It doesn't matter Raider, we must discuss the problem at hand, what threat do the rebels pose against us", boomed Jimbo authoritively.

"Theoretically none Jimbo, but I feel a disturbance in the Farce, which warns me that..."

"Oh Cr*p" yelled Wouran cutting Raider off, and nearly falling out of his chair. Raider was not amused and turned his mashed face towards Wouran.

"So you do not believe in the Farce" spat Raider and with a moments concentration telekinetically picked Wouran up and started to strangle him by the throat till he went blue in the face.

"Enough Raider leave that drunken fool alone..."

Back with our heroes, Harry and Simon have obtained Stormtrooper suits and are pretending to escort Malcy to the cells.

"This had better work kiddo" wished Simon.

"Grrrrrrr" added Malcy.

Harry gulped, why did he always have to think up the bright ideas?, and what would Malcy do if this went wrong? As Harry pondered this they arrived at the cell block and the guard met them. Simon tried to bluff his way past and within seconds a gunfight starts up, but Harry is a keen shot and as quickly as the fight started, it is over.

"Well done kiddo, pretty fancy shooting, I thought I'd let you handle 'em to see how good you was." said Simon cockily, twerling his gun in one hand and trying to holster it, but thought better of it and dropped it on the floor. Soon Sarah's cell was unearthed and the Princess released.

"Oh thank you, it was so horrible and indescribable" sniffed Sarah who then went on to describe the indescribable.

As our heroes listened on attentively they forgot all their troubles in Sarah's sweet and dulcet tones till.

Blaam!Zap!Zap!...Blaaaaam!Zap!...Boooom!!

"Looks like were in trouble" pointed out Harry.

"Quick, down this shaft" yelled Simon and jumped, followed by the rest.

SPLASH!!!!

"Yuck! We've landed in a refuse tip" said Sarah in distaste, trying to wipe the muck off her wet dress.

"Looks like brain-box has put us in another tight spot" tutted Harry.

"Sorry to say it could be getting tighter" laughed Simon nervously, as the walls of the room started to close in.

"Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr" put in Malcy.

But luckily for our heroes, FX2 is at this moment trying to deactivate the tractor beam.

"Look rust features, have you quite finished, just turn off the tractor beam" sighed NP30, who had been impatiently waiting as FX2 deactivated/activated every system apart from the tractor beam.

"Zippy wap pretty close now boop beep bap."

"No, rivet face, that's the rubbish compactor you've turned off."

"Zooo wee halogen bulb."

Eventually FX2 deactivates the tractor beam after unknowingly saving the team. But even as Harry, Simon, Malcy and Sarah make their way back to the KLO falcon, Clorrock and Steve OB1 Lanobe run into trouble.

"I sense something is wrong Clorrock, be careful."

"Of course Lanobe I'm always car... Arrrrrrrgh!!"

Clorrock fell heavily to the ground.

"Are you OK Clorrock?" inquired Lanobe.

"Of course he isn't fool, I've chopped him in half."

"Daft Raider... So we meet again."

"Yes Lanobe, but now I'm the master of the Farce and you're the pupil, prepare to die." challenged Raider as he wielded his light sabre. Lanobe energized his sabre and the two foes joined battle.

*

Tune in next Newsletter for another thrilling installment of Cave Wars.

A letter(?) to the editor -

The President is for Turning.

Dear Editor,

I am mortified by the "U-turn" performed by our beloved President as regards Mendip caving. Our once champion of Mendip meets has been transformed, in the space of one (need I say it) Whernside week into a bolt wielding proto-Elliot; scornfully deriding our Mendips as a "minority area". In his own words on this subject: "This is an incredible attitude to take." What has gone wrong. Is our tarnished Swildons golden boy now taking accent lessons from Dave? Soon he will be eating Yorkshire pudding in public.

I would like to direct your readers minds "back to the dinner meet, where if it was not for the behind-the-scenes

activity by us Mendipers the northern neo-northern drunks who unfortunately make up most of our club, would have voted for a bottle of wine, doubtlessly pronouncing the name wrong in the process. How we regret our actions.

My fellow "wets" & I now sadly await the remorseless arrival of the day when OUR Harry "stands up in the Hunters, on a Saturday night and declares Mendip to be a minority area".

Yours Aghast
A Mendip lover

P.S. I suppose I'll have to buy some blinkers - are they personal or club equipment?

Quote Competition

Below are a number of quotes which people in the club either have said or might possibly have said. All you have to do is match each quote up to the person in the list below.

1. "...the way on is low and dark..."
2. "...I've really knackered Simon out..."
3. "...the walk in is the best bit..."
4. "...you're so uneducated you haven't heard of Brian Eno!"
5. "...I've got f**k**g rabbits on the brain..."
6. "...I don't think I'll bother going caving today..."
7. "...sex is great with LSD..."
8. "...friends can f**k you know..."
9. "...pass me the tackle bag..."
10. "...blah blah Ogof blah blah better than the Berger anyway..."
11. "...mine's the blonde one..."
12. "...I take it from behind..."
13. "...Well Georges, I've just been down Marco Polo..."
14. "...I want to go home..."
15. "...It's so big!"
16. "...I lost it when I was six..."

Simon
Steve
Clive
John
Ian Davidson
Sarah

Neill
Big Dave
Jim
Cath White
Jane

Harry
Little Dave
Chris Birkhead
Richard
Dewi

Give me (Neill) your attempts as soon as possible, there will be a prize to the person who gets the most right, and a prize for the most amusing attempt.
