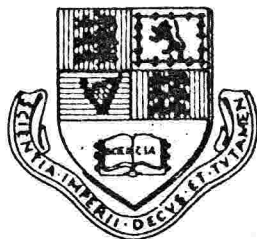


IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB



IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION
PRINCE CONSORT ROAD
LONDON SW7 2BB

NEWSLETTER No. 18 WINTER 1993

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Weekly meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at about 7:30 pm in Southside Upper Lounge. Messages can be left with the Students' Union (tel 071-589-5111).

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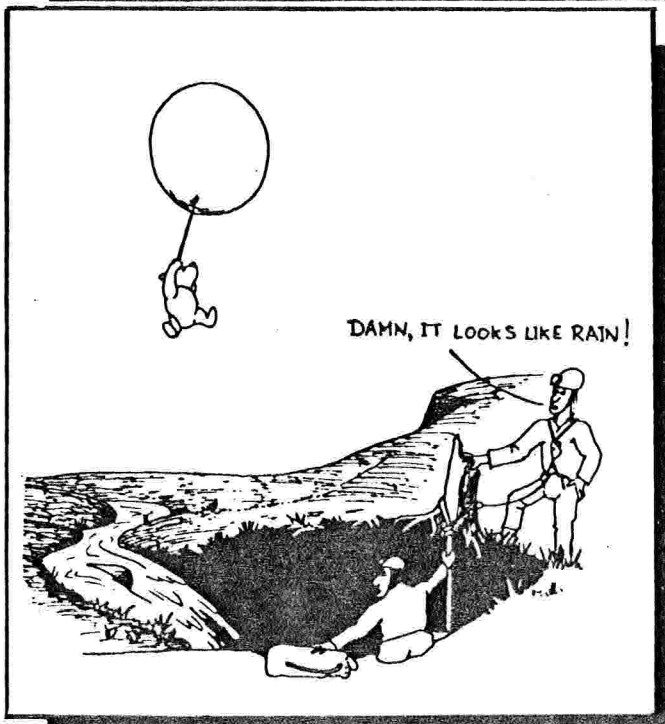
COVER:

Dave Mountain in Alum Pot, Yorkshire.
Photo by Caroline Fletcher.

IC³ Events 1994

<u>Date</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Permits</u>
21-23/1	Yorkshire, NPC	Lost Johns Pippikin Notts
4-6/2	Yorkshire, NPC	Lost Johns Lancaster Link
18-20/2	Mendips, BEC	St. Cuthberts
4-6/3	Yorkshire, NPC	Gingling Dale Head Notts
19-20/3	Yorkshire, NPC	Penyghent Birks Fell Hammer
Easter	Jura, France	
(Contact Rich A. Deposit Required)		
1-3/5	Yorkshire, NPC	
(Dinner Meet - Dinner on Sunday)		

More trips will be organised for the summer term nearer the time.
SRT Training will be organised within this schedule.
Expedition and Summer Tour details to be announced.



Editorial

"Something old, something new.
Something borrowed, something blue."

This 18th. issue of the newsletter marks ten years of continuous publication since Debbie Armstrong started it all off in the Autumn term of 1983. In this time the newsletter has never had any formal editorial policy, but the aim has always been to inform, entertain, educate, perhaps even to inspire. As for content, almost anything goes so long as it's relevant to the intended key readership, that is, IC³. As such the Newsletter reflects the interests and doings of a London-based group of perhaps fifty people at any one time. Of necessity it includes much which is fairly non-serious: even fiction and drawings - which is not the sort of thing I expect to see in "Caves & Caving". In short, as the old saying suggests, there's a right mix of stuff but hopefully there should be something for everyone.

But, does it have any purpose? Is it just a nice-to-have-freebie; a platform for the display of personal egos, or does it actually perform a useful function? Personally and with admitted bias I think it does.

Whereas most University clubs tend to have little or no continuity, part of IC³'s success must stem from its reservoir of expertise coupled with the benefits of being able to recruit new stock each year from a guaranteed input of fresh students. The Newsletter surely has a role to play in support of training and recruitment, and in keeping all the diverse membership informed and in touch. Moreover it provides a record of the club's activities and helps to broadcast these to British caving as a whole (copies are sent to several major clubs as well as the BCRA library). It is also free.

Any thoughts on content or aims? then let me know. It's ages since we had any letters!

CMO

Jim's Bits

As this year's pres' I have the task of giving a brief (and no, it won't have any mention of underwear) account of recent club activities, as well as mentioning some of our plans for the near future. First of all I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all the newcomers in the club: stick with us and we'll take you round the world..... well, Yorkshire at least. Seriously though, we are one of the most experienced and best equipped University clubs in the country. (Yes even better than Aston).

IC³ has been very active of late with a lot of trips to Yorkshire. Notable recent caves done include King, Vespers, Large, Penyghent, and that epic sporting trip Yordas Pot - Yordas Cave exchange. As this last is such a classic and so rarely visited, Rich A. took a video camera down and managed to get the glorious event on film, along with footage from another epic, Jingling. This will be cut together into a film in the near future (hopefully).

Last year's Summer Tour was to the Vercors in France. About 20 of us went there for two to three weeks in July. The main trips were Antre des Damnés, Gour Fumant, Trisou, Malaterre and the Gournier (all bottomed except Malaterre). I won't go into more detail about the tour as there should be articles on it in this issue from Rich M, Iain and Mark.

The club continued its policy of sending people on weekend SRT courses with C.I.C. qualified instructors. Last year we had Paul Ramsden, and it turned out to be a worthwhile experience and one which we intend to continue this year. We will probably have our first training weekend shortly after Christmas.

The recruitment events went well this year, mainly due to a sterling effort on the part of our publicity officer, John Moore. (That's a few pints you owe me, John). Many thanks to Clive, Pete and others for putting in a lot of work for these events. As I write this, it's the Monday after the third Beginners weekend (note the Politically Correct terminology) and we have taken 25 caving, 18 of which have already signed up for another trip, 3 have paid full membership and even started buying gear. All the signs are there that this should be a vintage year for recruitment.

The first few trips have gone off more or less to plan with only a few minor hiccups and events worth mentioning. The first was an unfortunate double booking we had on the BEC in the first weekend with a group of "interesting" characters from Aston Speleological Society (appropriately abbreviated to ASS) who argued, fairly strongly, that although we had got to the bunkroom first, they in fact had priority and they had a signed letter from Zot to prove it and so we should piss off (Zot was notably absent on this occasion). These minor problems were easily overcome by our polite, tactful and diplomatic negotiating skills (we said no!).

The second event was the rescue of Jeni Galligan in GB cave on the second weekend. Two of our groups were around at the time and Harry, Rob Knell and others ended up helping out on the rescue. Jeni has now been discharged from hospital and is making a recovery. She has sent the club a thankyou letter which is included below.

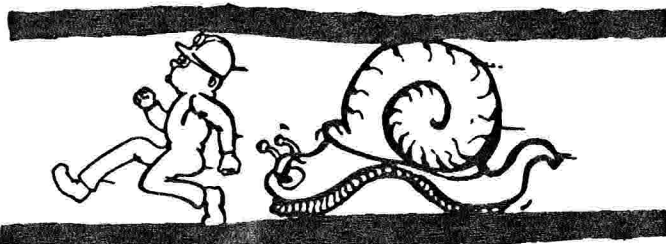
A timetable of our domestic trips for the second and third terms is included in this issue. This Christmas Tour will be in Scotland over the New Year and is being organised by Rich A. and Iain. The Easter trip will probably be to the Jura region of France. This year we plan to have an expedition in the Summer and we've now homed in on the area as the Slovenian side of Monte Canin. The advantage of this area over somewhere further afield is that we can have a full blown 6 week expedition for a core group, while still being able to accommodate people who can only make, say, two or three weeks, ie we can effectively have a Summer Tour at the same time. Additionally we know something of the area having been there before, and there are good known caves if people want some guaranteed sports caving. Anyone interested in either the expedition (about 6 weeks) or the summer tour (2-3 weeks) should contact me as soon as possible as we'll need to organise logistics in good time.

Here endeth the rant.
Have a good year's caving and keep safe (Man).

jim

1993-4 Club Exec.

Fascist Dictator:	James Evans
President of Vice:	Rich Anderson
Man with the Wads:	Mark Evans
Training Officer:	Richard Moon
Lady of Letters:	Jill Dove
Pub. Officer(?):	John Moore
Brian Blessed Clone:	Tim Rogers
Officers with Tackle:	Shi Chi Ho
	Edward Norton
	Andrew Lee



*Northfield
Somerton
Somerset*

3rd November 1993

*Miss J Dove
The Caving Club
Union Office
Prince Consort Rd
London SW7 2BB*

Dear Miss Dove,

On the 23rd October, students from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, London, assisted in a cave rescue operation at Charterhouse on the Mendips Hills, Somerset. I am Jeni, and it is I they helped rescue.

Members of your caving club displayed great courage and to them I am eternally grateful. I send this letter to relay my warmest regards and thanks.

I sustained four fractures to my right leg. I have had an operation to insert a plate and was discharged from hospital on 1st November. Thanks to the help of your fellow cavers I am now on the mend and hope to resume caving as soon as I am able.

Once again a BIG thankyou to you all !

Yours sincerely,

J L Galligan

One Drop Too Many?

or

CHEESE, CLARET & CAVES IN THE VERCORS

The end of the Summer term was beginning to loom and the excitement level ascending, as the Imperial College Caving Club's Summer Tour was no longer just a tedious topic briefly mentioned on a Tuesday night. The last minute preparations were under way and the stores was a hive of activity - for the first time since JJ and his underpants had moved out.

All the planning had been done; what planning you have to do for the Vercors, anyway. The tickets were sorted, the van had been hired, and the only thing we were lacking was accommodation, still, a minor technicality. All we were now concerned with was repairing and waterproofing tents, servicing stoves, getting medical insurance and patching all those holes in our oversuits that had been neglected throughout the year. Saturday 10th July arrived and the finishing touches were finally completed, such as the fully translated and laminated cave surveys (care of one K Maniac).

Evening was upon us and we were ready an hour or two ahead of schedule. The motion to try an earlier ferry was passed, and so, waved on our way by Mummy and Daddy Evans, we set off. This cosmopolitan corps of Karst crazy cavers was "On Tour".

The journey to Dover was fairly uneventful. We made the early ferry and were soon sea-bourne. Naturally, once aboard the first place to head for was the cafe for a fry-up. Well it was for me, the others weren't so keen, but they sat and watched.

Calais wasn't long in arriving. So, money changed, we were ready to push a few autoroutes. The drive passed without too much monotony and by mid-afternoon we were in Villard-de-Lans and desparately needing a campsite. This didn't take long to locate. and once we'd collared the owner, we communicated to him, in perfect pigeon french, that we needed to camp for three weeks. He didn't seem too bothered when he established that we hadn't booked. It was only when we mentioned that we were cavers and wanted space for 18 people that the look of terror appeared on his face. However, after some Horr-horr-horr-horr-ing, he found us a spot, rather reluctantly I feel, right at the end of the site, as far away as possible, not only from him but the rest of his residents also.

The next day was spent stocking up on supplies from the supermarket and familiarising ourselves with the area. That evening we had the pleasure of firing up the petrol stove for the first time and enjoying the first in a long line of meat slops with rice. This was followed by a trip into town and a game of "President Arsehole" in one of the local and expensive bars.

Tuesday was now upon us and we decided that we'd put it off long enough already. It was time to go caving. Gour Fumant was the destination and it was to be conquered in two shifts. The first party - James Evans, Mark Evans and Alva Gossan - rigged it

whilst the second party Richard Moon, Iain McKenna, Peter Evans and Jackie Wiersma - took a trip to TSA to kill a bit of time before following the first party down the cave. Gour Fumant was a very enjoyable cave and ideal as a practice cave for Jackie (our Canadian connection) who had only recently mastered the art of SRT, although mastered is a debatable word. There are five pitches in the cave and a very pretty stal section near the bottom which warranted a photo session.



Iain McKenna in Fumant. Photo by Mark Evans

This experience was all too much for us, and some serious dosing was required for a few days, much to the delight of A Gossan and P Evans. This was just as well since Wednesday was Bastille Day and also saw the start of one of the stages of the Tour de France. So, that evening we hit the local disco to strut our funky stuff with some "femmes de France", only to find that they'd all gone to another disco out of town. So we got pissed instead.

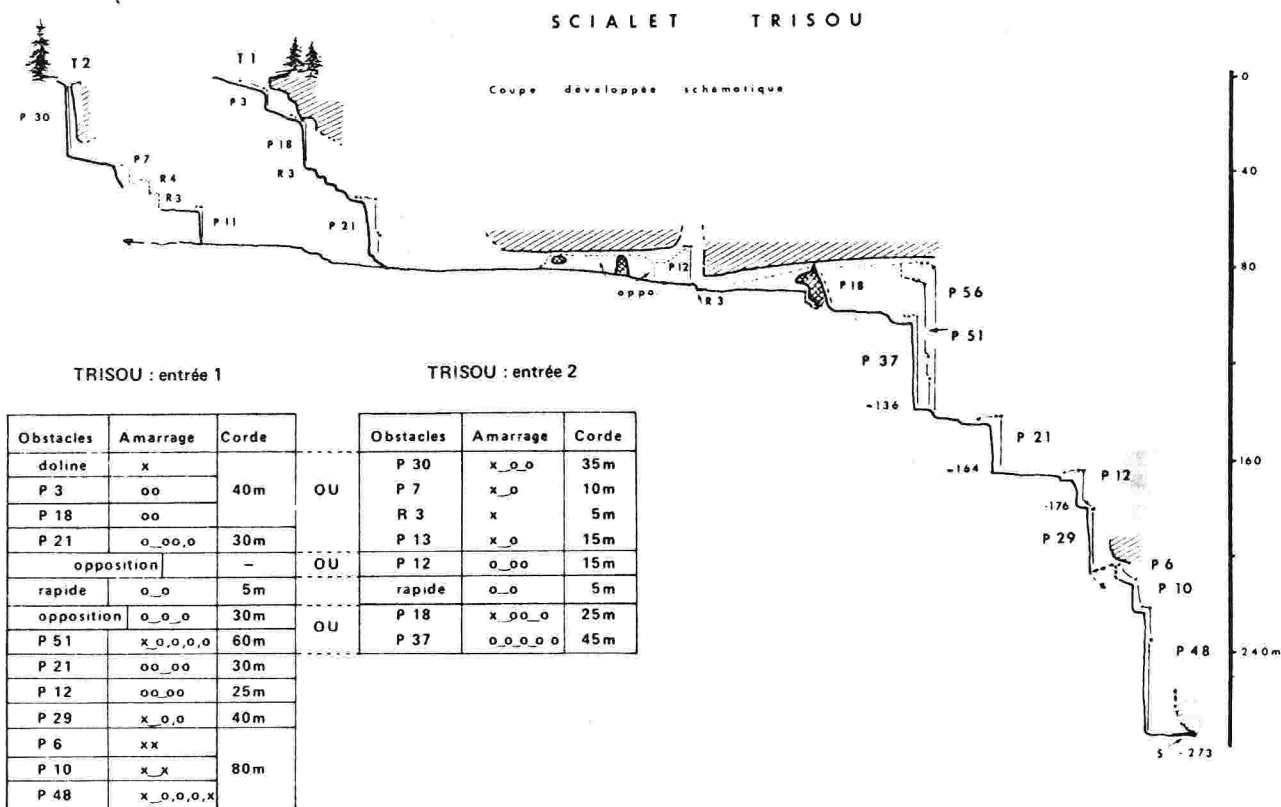
The next few days passed without too much excitement apart from the underground camp (see Kenni's article) but on Saturday our second party turned up. This consisted of Chard Anderson, Dave Mountain, Huggy and Janet, who were closely followed on Sunday by A Filfy-ddancer, Rob Knell, Pete Hambly. Pam Murphy and Jo Wright.

It was during this second week that we mounted our attack on l'Antre des Damnés - see Mark's article. Other caves tackled this week included Malaterre by two groups, who both failed to reach the bottom due to navigational problems, and the Grotte de Gournier, which justified a couple of trips and ended up being well photographed.

The less adventurous, or should I say less stupid, personnel participated in some alternative activities. The first was splash canyoning. Teams descended both the Furon Gorge and the Bourne Gorge. This involved getting slightly damp, to say the least, and jumping down some extremely nutty heights into what was hopefully some deep pools at the bottom. Both trips took about 2-3 hours to complete.

We also took the opportunity of hiring a some mountain bikes for a few days from one of the shops in Villard-de-Lans. This proved to be an excellent idea and, most of the time, an enjoyable one except when a certain party failed to make a rendezvous with the van and had to cycle for half the night to get back to the campsite, where, on arrival, they bombarded those responsible with an impressive barrage of profanities (Janet). Apart from these two sports, there was also some walking and climbing.

The final week was now beginning to poke its head around the corner, and this also saw the departure of Andy and the arrival of Tim Palmer, Bobby and Tony. There were three significant events this week. Firstly was the de-rigging of l'Antre des Damnes, which I won't go into. Secondly was the bottoming, in three trips, of a very under-estimated Trisou, which was generally referred to as the "Descent into Hell" due to its rather black nature below the shower pitch. This would have been bottomed in just two trips had it not been for a certain person who shall remain nameless, but who goes by the initials J.W. who pissed off out of the cave with the rigging gear leaving Jim and Iain at the bottom of the shower pitch. And so it took a third and very long trip to reach the sump and then de-rig the whole cave.



The final event of the week was the end-of-tour club dinner. For this we booked a table for eighteen in the garden of one of the local restaurants where we enjoyed some traditional food in very peaceful surroundings. Peaceful, that is, until we decided to entertain the other guests with some songs from the repertoire of the Imperial College Caving Club Male Voice Choir. This all went down surprisingly well, probably because they didn't understand a word of what we were singing. Thus we rounded off the tour in a very pissed and light-hearted manner.

The following morning was spent shifting hangovers and packing the last items for the return home, which was pretty much the same as the arrival except in reverse. The conclusion on the tour was that it was a bloody good holiday and that worthwhile experience was gained all round.

So until next time, this is Richard Moon, for C.C. News, London.

Subterranean Campsite Blues

And so it came down to weight or rather lack of it. The plan - devised by the largest and heaviest member of the club - was to spend the night at an underground camp in a pleasant, popular cave in the French Vercors.

"The volunteers for this experience will be the first members of ICCC to complete such an exercise, and in doing so will command the awe and respect of the rest of the club", said Jim, followed by a chorus of "Crap!", "Bullshit!!"etc. This method of recruiting volunteers was clearly not going to succeed. So instead the selection reverted to choosing those who would suffer most in the humid 4-8'C temperatures found in these caves. I was chosen for my light build and lack of body fat, Richard Moon for the same reasons and Mark Evans was picked because, even though he was a plumper version of his former self, he'd lived in Hong Kong all year and so wouldn't be accustomed to the cold.

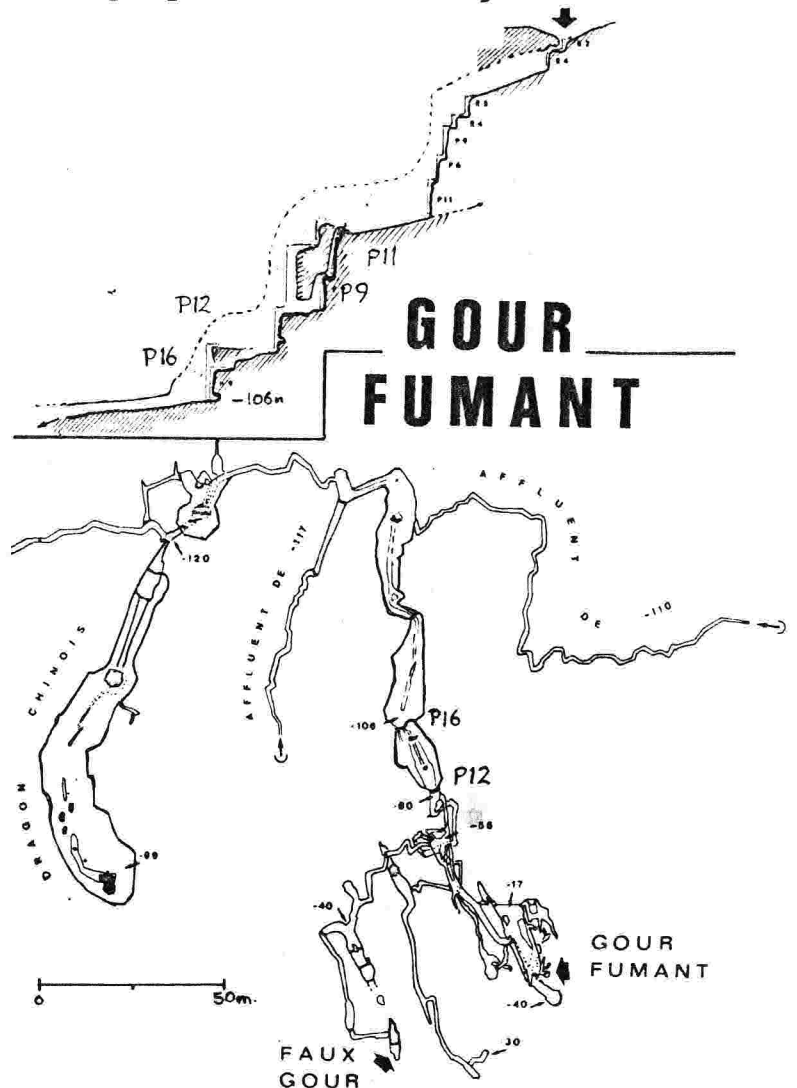
All three of us had ventured down the Gour Fumant on the first day of the summer tour and had left it rigged since then. The plan was to take our sleeping gear and dump it at the camp, at the foot of the fourth pitch - sufficiently far into the cave to dispel any ideas of an escape to the comfort and delights of the Girl Guide Camp situated just three miles down the road from the cave entrance. Once decided on the underground camp site we were to venture through a meandering passage and enter, via a series of short climbs, The Chinese Dragon - a most impressive chamber filled with turquoise pools and excellent formations. Here, Richard was to try out the photography techniques he'd been reading about, while Mark and I were to be models looking impressed by the whole thing - which wasn't difficult. This photographic session would also ensure that we would all be damp on returning to the camp so that something approaching real expedition conditions would be encountered.

Each of us had one tackle bag in which to carry our gear, which was typically: one Karrimat, one very thin sleeping bag, one spare furry suit, socks and a survival bag (thick polythene type). Between the three of us we carried two stoves: a Trangia and an unknown brand of unknown quality (both were fuelled by meths). The food was dehydrated: three dried meals and enough porridge to feed an army.

Approaching 10pm on the chosen evening, Dave Mountain completed the drive to the cave in record time without the aid of pace notes. Then, with the tail lights of the van disappearing into the gloom of dusk, and the thought of the rest of the team becoming alarmingly drunk back at the campsite, we got into our kit. We reached the entrance to the Gour Fumant just as the first stars began to shine in the clear night sky.

It was double rigged. It was late at night. Our imaginations raced. Were three female cavers already down the cave with the same idea as us? If so, this could completely invalidate the results of our experiment, if we played our cards right.

This was my third venture into this cave in as many days and as always, confidence builds with acquaintance of one's surroundings. So much so that the fourth pitch was nearly descended without using any rope. It was at the foot of this pitch that we left our sleeping gear. To reach the meander that led to the Chinese Dragon we descended a further pitch. At the bottom of this we met our friendly double riggers: two men and a woman, quite local (from about 50 miles away) who had come down for the evening. All had to go to work the next day and since it was now approaching midnight, the prospect of a night at our underground camp seemed not to appeal to them. By the time we reappeared from the meander they were gone. We had the cave to ourselves.



With the photography session deemed a success (until development anyway) and the fifth pitch derigged, we prepared our camp. Food was the first priority and was prepared in no time. The shepherd's pie was okay, the chilli con carne passable (although Richard raved about it), but, with too much water added, the beef bourginon had to be thrown away. It wasn't even a substitute for soup. Mark's tiny stove worked well but took 2-3 minutes to warm up. After a brew it was time to find somewhere to sleep.

Unfortunately there was no flat ground on the boulder strewn floor, so we made do with a bedding plane leading off the chamber via a rift in the ceiling. Once in a horizontal position there was barely 12 inches between one's nose and the roof, so movement was severely hampered.

"What happens if I awake with a stonker?", Mark asked poignantly, "I could be stuck here indefinitely".
 "Don't flatter yourself", came the reply in unison.

SO THIS IS WHY IT'S CALLED
A BEDDING PLANE



Manoeuvring was so difficult that I decided that it was too much effort to replace my wet furry suit with the spare one I'd brought. Mark and Richard changed theirs, and in the process gave up the opportunity of choosing the best patch to crash on.

Once inside both sleeping bag and survival bag, it was impossibly difficult to stop slipping down the slope, and as I was at the top, a series of collisions ensued which left us in a pile uncomfortably close to the 16m final pitch we'd derigged earlier. Richard removed his survival bag and the purchase was enough to provide a useful stop for Mark and myself, who both remained in our sliding state.

The hours passed slowly. Sleep, after the first hour, proved elusive. While my undersuit was merely damp, the survival bag proved to be such a barrier to moisture that the condensation that had formed now soaked my thin sleeping bag, rendering it almost useless. By 6 am I had had enough and decided to light a candle.

"Are you wet?", asked Mark, making it perfectly clear that he too had suffered an uncomfortable night in a wet sleeping bag. So, even with a dry furry suit, the body produced enough moisture to soak a sleeping bag within a polythene one. Richard on the other hand had had a comfortably dry night having removed his survival bag almost immediately. The lesson was clear. Find somewhere dry to bivi, or if that is impossible use a breathable bivi-bag.



Throughout the night, whilst lying awake and cold, the thought of warm porridge was what kept me going. This porridge was to be one of James Evans' inventions. The oats, dried milk and sugar were all mixed in the correct proportions in the same bag, and instructions, simple enough even for cooks down a cave were inscribed on a sticky label on the side: "Add 5 cups of water", it said, "then heat". We did so, but unfortunately didn't take into account the expanding nature of the stuff as it soaked up the water. It seemed as if there would be no end to the amount of porridge being produced. Too much to eat, we tried to dispose of the stuff in the trickle of a stream, but it soon blocked the flow and was of such consistency that I'm sure it will still be somewhere in that cave to this day.

None of us had previously noted the laxative effect of a good bowl of porridge, but all were suffering now. With no toilet roll (but who needs that anyway?) and a great desire to leave the cave as we'd found it (apart from the porridge) we controlled it, at least until we reached the woods by the entrance. The weather forecast had promised a cloudless sky with the temperature in the twenties, and we were not disappointed. As we lay in the sun absorbing the warmth the van arrived - its occupants sporting a fair hangover which is a normal state of affairs at 10 am, whether in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, the Mendips or the Vercors. Unless of course, you'd spent the night underground.

Kenni Maniac

Recommendations for future trips:-

1. Our sleeping gear was sufficient apart from the polythene survival bags. In future find somewhere dry where they are not needed or use a breathable bivvy-bag. These are undoubtedly expensive but really do the business.
2. Wear a headcover or a balalava, and don't breathe into your sleeping bag/bivvy-bag.
3. Try and find somewhere flat to sleep which is preferably not in close proximity to a large drop or running water.
4. Take lots of candles. They preserve batteries/carbide and if rationed, last for ages, particularly the night-light type in foil containers.
5. Getting out of your sleeping bag and into wet caving gear is one of the most unappealing things one could do immediately after waking, so it's always a nice gesture if the first person up has a cup of tea on the way to make it easier on the others.
6. Anything that has come into contact with porridge needs to be washed immediately after use, otherwise the stuff sets like concrete: a serious problem if it needs to be used over and over again on successive nights.
7. Limit your personal gear to the capacity of one tackle bag, typically consisting of sleeping bag, karrimat, bivvy-bag, spare furry, dry socks, warm gloves and a share of the food, candles, stoves and fuel.
8. Two stoves between three was a luxury, but since Mark's was so small and light (it fits inside a mug) we would probably do the same again. One can heat the food while the other supplies the never ending cups of tea required in such a situation. Only one set of cutlery, and one plate and mug is really required as long as you don't mind sharing.
9. If you intend staying down a cave for more than one night/2 days, then the toilet facilities are going to become problematic. For a long term camp, therefore, it would be wise to set up the site near a place where nobody is ever likely to venture, and bury the stuff in plastic bags, where it won't contaminate any streams (your possible water supply). Ideally all solid waste (shit) should be carried out of the cave with you.

Iain McKenna

Speleo - Statistics: Caves over 1000m deep

1.	Réseau Jean-Bernard	France	1602 m
2.	Lamprechtsofen-Vogelschacht	Austria	1550 m
3.	Gouffre Mirollda-Lucien Bouclier	France	1520 m *
4.	Vjacheslav Panjukhina	Georgia	1508 m
5.	Sistema del Trave	Spain	1441 m
6.	Boj Bulok	Uzbekistan	1415 m *
7.	BU56 (Ilaminako Ateeneko Leizea)	Spain	1408 m
8.	Sistema Cuicateco	Mexico	1386 m
9.	Sniezhnaja-Mezhonnogo	Georgia	1370 m
10.	Ceki 2 "la Vendetta"	Slovenia	1370 m *
11.	Lukina Jama	Croatia	1355 m #
12.	Sistema Huautla	Mexico	1353 m
13.	Réseau de la Pierre Saint-Martin	France/Spain	1342 m
14.	Siebenhengste	Switzerland	1284 m
15.	Gouffre Berger	France	1278 m
16.	Cosa Nostra Loch	Austria	1265 m *
17.	Torca de los Rebecos	Spain	1255 m *
18.	Systeme Vladimir Iljukhina	Georgia	1240 m
19.	Akemati	Mexico	1226 m *
20.	Abisso Olivifer	Italy	1220 m
21.	Schwersystem-Batman Höhle	Austria	1219 m *
22.	Abisso Veliko Sbrego	Slovenia	1198 m
23.	Abisso Fighiera-Anthro del Corchia	Italy	1190 m
24.	Sistema Aranonera	Spain	1185 m
25.	Dachstein Mammuthohle	Austria	1180 m
26.	Jubilaumschacht	Austria	1173 m
27.	Anou Ifflis	Algeria	1170 m
28.	Sima 56 de Andara	Spain	1169 m
29.	Kijahe Xontjoa	Mexico	1160 m
30.	Gouffre BT6	France	1157 m
31.	Abisso W le Donne	Italy	1155 m
32.	B15-Fuente de Escuain	Spain	1150 m
33.	Sistema del Xitu	Spain	1148 m
34.	Arabikskaja	Georgia	1110 m
35.	Schneeloch	Austria	1101 m
36.	Sima G.E.S.M.	Spain	1098 m
37.	Jägerbrunnstrog	Austria	1078 m
38.	Sotano de Ocotempa	Mexico	1070 m
39.	Pozzo della Neve	Italy	1050 m
40.	Vandima	Slovenia	1042 m #
41.	Sotano de Olbastl (Akema Bis)	Mexico	1040 m
42.	Çukurpinar Düdeni	Turkey	1037 m
43.	Meanderhöhle-Herbsthöhle	Austria	1028 m
44.	Torca Urriello	Spain	1022 m
45.	Coumo d'Hyouernedo	France	1018 m

Listing as at October 1993 (compiled from "International Caver" No.s 5,6,7 and "Spelunca" No. 51).

* depth increased since Newsletter No. 17

new caves to list:

Vandima on the Slovenian side of Monte Canin was pushed to -1042m in July 1993 by Club DZRJ (Ljubljana) making it the 3rd Slovenian cave over 1000m deep.

Lukina Jama in the Velebit Range of Croatia was explored to -1355m during underground camps in July and August 1993 by various Croatian clubs. This is the first cave in Croatia over 1000m deep.

Damned Hard Work

L'Antre des Damnés - The Lair of the Damned !!

If you've already read all the descriptions and surveys of this cave which are lying around in stores then you'll have enough information to sink a battleship. It would therefore be pointless for me to tell you that the cave has a total depth of 723m and its entrance series as having a depth of 480m consisting of P60, P30, P205 !! "Le Goudurix" (totally breathtaking), P80 "L'Indomptable !" (pant filling), and finally P13. And obviously I would not waste my time and tell you it was discovered in 1982. So for brevity I'm not going to mention any of that. Instead I will describe my thoughts and experiences (the ones I still remember) and give a brief description of this cave.

A total of 7 trips were made to the cave entrance over the final 2 weeks of the tour, summarised as follows:

Trip 1: Recon.	Jim & Alv.
Trip 2: Gear hauling to cave entrance.	Everyone.
Trip 3: Rigging down to near the bottom of P205.	Jim, Alv, Kenny, Huggy, Dicky, Me.
Trip 4: Rigging and continue to the end of the "Galerie Titan".	RK, Pete, Dave, Huggy.
Trip 5: Bottoming trip (inc. rigging the streamway).	Jim, Ian, Dicky, Chard, Alv, Me.
Trip 6: Attempted bottoming trip. (inc. derigging the streamway).	Bobby, Tony, Jo, Dave.
Trip 7: Derigging the entrance series.	RK, Pete, Jo, Pam, Tim.

Finding the cave entrance is not much of a problem provided you have a map and compass! From the Carret shelter the rough path climbs a vertical height of 300m and follows a high plateau to the north. The climb takes about 30 minutes. On the recon trip certain Club members (who would have remained nameless if I hadn't already named them) spent several hours scouring the hillside before accidentally stumbling upon the cave entrance (this technique sounds very familiar). Naturally the gear was transported to the entrance by helicopter to save us all the effort of carrying massive, overladen rucksacks up steep, winding mountain paths.... after all these trips are about having fun, not hard work (Not).

The rigging was done in three stages: the first going to the the final pitch of the P205, the second carrying on to the bottom of the P80 and down past the Galerie Titan to the first pitch in the streamway, and the third putting in a few short lengths during the bottoming trip. There were some French ropes in place on the P205 and so some double rigging was necessary. Incidentally the route at the top of the P205 is not easily found (unless it is already rigged). When standing at the top you can see a large hole in front of you: you have to traverse across on a ledge (down and up again) to an opening on the far side. This is where




l'antre des damnés

the cave really opens up. below you lies 285m of uninterrupted vertical shaft (a thought probably best forgotten at this point). The p205 is rigged against the wall all the way, in sections of about 20-30m. it is broken by two large ledges (where it is possible to swap places if necessary).

The P80 follows almost immediately after a small climb down. This was rigged with a single hang straight down the middle of the circular shaft (it is also possible to rig this shaft against the wall). Another route is possible down a series of smaller pitches which avoids the flood-prone P80 shaft. From the bottom of the P80 a traverse (rigged but dodgy) takes you over a P20 and down the final pitch, P13. This leads to a small dry chamber (a good place to have some food, brew kit etc for on the way out). After a small high level traverse (also rigged, also dodgy) some stonking passage follows (Galerie Titan) down to -570. The way on is back and to the right.

From this point on, the passage can't decide whether it wants to be large breakdown chambers or narrow rifty meanders, so it oscillates between these two extremes. There are four or five short pitches (10m rope each). It continues like this down to the sumps: if you're really keen you'll find both.

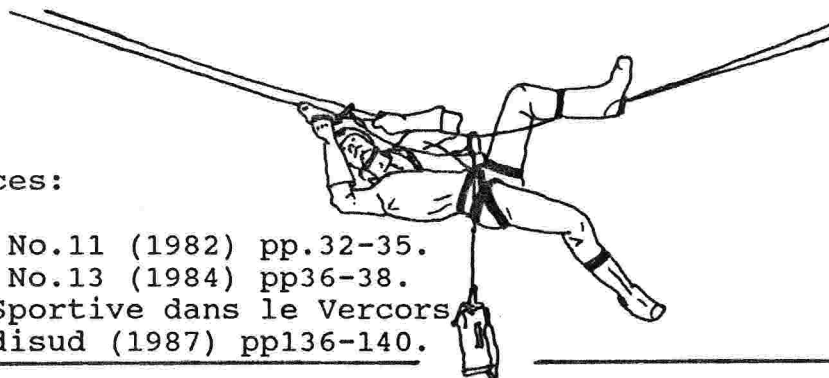
As I remember it, the way out was pretty similar to the way in, except in reverse. There was a substantial amount of mud in the bottom sections of the streamway which made SRT a bit of a pain, and it all had to be washed off before the entrance series. The pitches were tiring, especially the final P60. The whole bottoming trip took around 12 hours with a group of five.

To Galerie Titan
& the sumps (-723m) 

The refuge was used as a base for each underground trip. Each team spent the night before and the night after in its relative luxury. The campsite at Villard de Lans was becoming pretty overcrowded by this stage so the refuge was very tranquil by comparison. We had to leave a couple of short ropes in the bottom and we accidentally derigged one of the French ropes from the bottom of the entrance series (which we didn't discover until much later).

So that's basically all I have to say. Obviously the tour wouldn't be complete without its fair share of drunkenness (courtesy of Jim), debauchery (courtesy of Andy and Janet) and several tons of baguettes and soft cheese. Definitely the recipe for a good holiday despite all the hard work.

Mark Evans



References:

Scialet No.11 (1982) pp.32-35.
Scialet No.13 (1984) pp36-38.
Speleo-Sportive dans le Vercors
Publ. Edisud (1987) pp136-140.

Classic Caving

When Men Were REAL Men

Fernand Petzl describing cave exploration in the Dent de Crolles under Nazi occupation:

"In 1943, when the Germans occupied the southern part of France, I was called up for compulsory labour service in Germany. Of course, I didn't want to go, I wanted to stay with my family, and to go caving. Finally, I found out that firemen were not called up, so I joined the fire brigade in St. Ismier (Vercors) and I was able to stay.

There aren't many fires in St. Ismier, so the work of a fireman is mainly to carry the coffin for the occasional funeral. St. Ismier was a small town, about 1,500 inhabitants, and three or four firemen would have been enough, but suddenly there were 80 of us, as many as for Grenoble itself."

As for caving:

"Everything was in short supply, gear, rope, food. Take food for example - we had nothing. For a

week's camp on the plateau we had nothing but 15 kilos of maize flour; not a very exciting menu. On the other hand Chevalier never ate anything anyway. I remember once he cycled from Lyon to Perquelin (110km), then climbed straight up to the Guiers Mort entrance, did a 25 or 30 hour trip underground and then cycled back to Lyon and with practically nothing to eat.

Mind you, that simplified matters. There were only two or three of us: we had so much tackle to carry and the sacks were so heavy, we couldn't take any food. The tackle, of course, was essential; without it we couldn't have pushed further on and the trip would have been pointless. We made do with a couple of aspirins or a tube of anchovy paste."

Fernand Petzl interviewed in "Caving International" magazine 6/7, 1980.

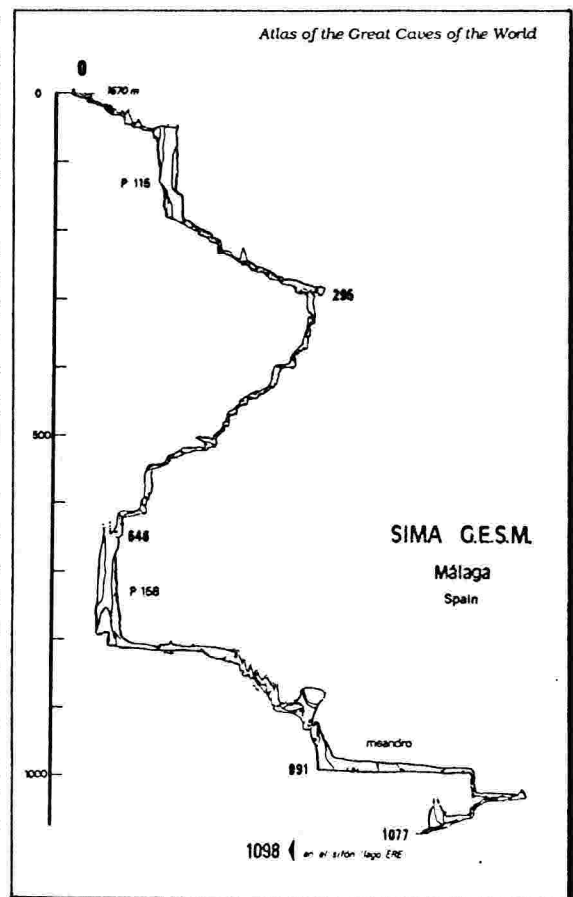
Ronda Reconnaissance

Walking The Karst of Andalucia

Easter 1993 saw myself, Rob Chaddock, Chris Birkhead, and Andy Radcliffe flying out to Malaga for a week's walking and touring. Inland from the Costa del Sol is an intricate landscape of 'Pueblos Blancos'; pretty towns of whitewashed houses set amongst limestone sierras, and still relatively undeveloped.

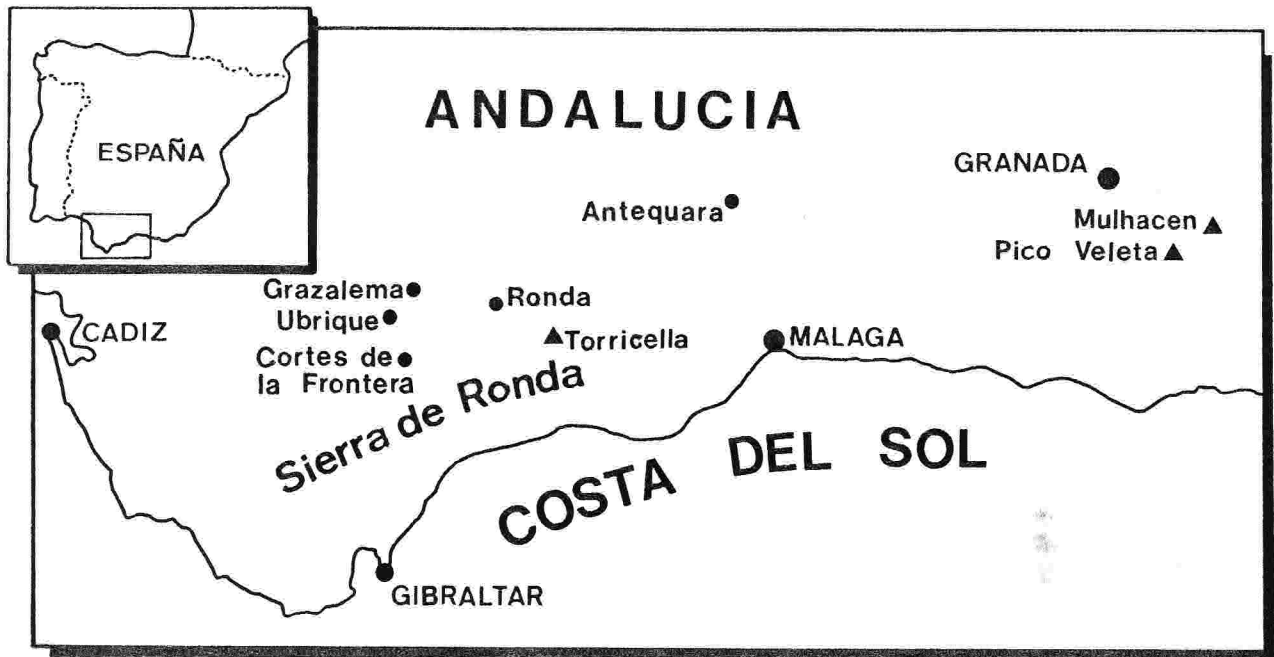
We first decided to visit the Sierra de las Nieves near the ancient town of Ronda, 50 km west and inland of Malaga. This National Park culminates in the summit of Torricella at 1919m, and, more interestingly from a caving point of view contains the 1098m deep system of the Sima GESM.

I'd been interested in this cave for some time and had already made contact with the local club with a view to visiting the area and descending the cave. With its series of entrance shafts, including one of 115m and one of 158m, requiring over 1km of rope, it had looked like a vertical caver's paradise. Access to the area is made 13.5km south of Ronda on the C339 from where a driveable ICONA (forestry) road leads for about 8km to the Refugio Felix Rodriguez (1250m) and campsite: a good base from which to explore the area. Shortly before the refuge, another driveable road forks off to the right and climbs to 1760m, where it ends at the Puerto de los Pilonos. From here the entrance to the Sima GESM is an easy 1.5km walk. The entrance pitch beckoned, the spits were crying out for bolts, hangers and rope to be fixed, but, sadly, all of that sort of kit was languishing back in a UK caving store. Instead we bagged Torricella and then spent a few hours looking over the many dry valleys, dolines and areas of pavement nearby.



The next morning was spent in Ronda, an ancient town divided into two by an impressive gorge spanned by a single bridge. In the afternoon we drove east to the famous El Chorro gorge, recently very popular with British climbers. Here we made a traverse of the Camino del Rey, a narrow walkway that clings to the west wall of the gorge, leaving a drop of up to 200m below. The walkway was originally built at the time the gorge was being developed for HEP, but it is now crumbling into disrepair, which makes following it all the more exciting!

Finally that day we drove further east again, to El Torcal, 13km south of Antequera, described in the guidebook as: "the most geologically arresting of Spain's national parks (with) looming limestone formations, eroded into vast surreal sculptures". Arresting it might have been if one hadn't seen limestone pavement before but in the event it proved rather disappointing, the large interpretive centre and the profusion of broad 'wheelchair access' paths detracting from the experience. It was rather like Brimham Rocks, but made out of limestone and with views to the Mediterranean. As well as this, there was nowhere to doss, so we drove straight off and camped beneath the northern ramparts of this limestone massif.



The next day was 'culture day' in Granada (685m), during which we ticked off The Alhambra (the Alcazabar castle, the Generalife gardens, and the Casa Real palace). As is normal amongst cavers, we tried to beat the 3 hour time recommended for the Alhambra in the Collomb Climbing Guidebook. Seriously though, it was impressive, as we slipped back to the 11th century, and walked down corridors where once Moorish Sultans had strode. Its likely, however, that those Sultans, when they went out for a meal, had the good sense not to order a delightful fish called something like 'rapa'. Even Rob 'Mondongo Man' Chaddock couldn't finish this little number, whose texture was a cross between soggy Mother's Pride and sheeps' brains.

Late in the afternoon we headed south, out of the city towards the Sierra Nevada. The Sierra Nevada contain Spain's highest summit, Mulhacen at 3482m, but they're not made of limestone. Instead soft mica schist has given the hills a rounded profile, culminating in a crumbling ridge. We stayed at the 'Hostal El Ciervo', one of many apartment blocks at Sol y Nieve, the ski resort at 2200m, and spent a good evening in town.

So good, in fact, that halfway up Veleta (3398m) the next day, we realised we'd forgotten to pack any food. Indeed one of us had forgotten to bring any water as well! With an expensive telecabin ride already behind us, there was no turning back.

Ten hours and 30km later, as we stumbled back from Mulhacen in a blizzard, the effects of altitude and the lack of sustenance certainly made themselves felt. To quote the ever perceptive Rough Guide: "For any exploration of the Sierra Nevada...do take ample food... (if)... the weather turns nasty, you could be in for some unpleasantness".

The next day we left the ski resort, which by this time had plenty of Nieve, but not much Sol, and drove back down to Granada. We'd originally intended to head north to the Sierra de Segura near Cazorla, another attractive limestone national park that had been recommended to Rob. It was rather a long drive in the wrong direction though, so instead we went west to the Cortes de la Frontera nature reserve, west of Ronda, between Ubrique (340m) and Grazalema (830m), and actually in Cadiz rather than Malaga Province.

In the afternoon we finally got the underground experience in; a visit to the Cueva de la Pileta, a 'national monument', noteworthy for its palaeolithic cave paintings.

At 2132mm, Grazalema has the highest annual rainfall in the Iberian peninsula, and this falls onto limestone hills up to 1600m high. Not surprisingly, therefore, there is plenty of karst about. From the Puerto del Boyar (1103m), 3km west of Grazalema, we walked south-east to the summit of Reloj (1539m), and traversed about 5km of continuous, deeply fissured pavement, with numerous unmarked entrances which looked as if they might go. The area was very reminiscent of the PSM, or even the Canin karst, though admittedly lacking the depth potential of those areas. Other hills, with enticing names like 'El Hoyo', stretched to the west. This area definitely deserves revisiting.

That evening we drove back to Malaga ready for the flight home the next morning, after an excellent introduction to Southern Spain and some areas of caving potential.

Guides:

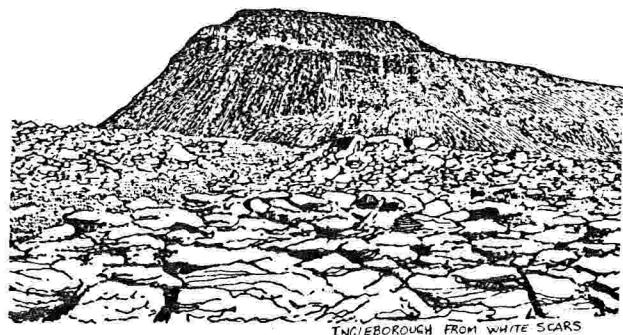
- "Gredos Mountains and Sierra Nevada", Robin Collomb. West Col Productions.
- "Spain. The Rough Guide", Ellingham and Fisher.
- A 1:50,000 map of the Sierra Nevada was available in Stanfords. We bought 1:50,000 maps of the Sierra de las Nieves and Macizo de Grazalema in local bookshops.

Quote - Unquote

Harry Lock

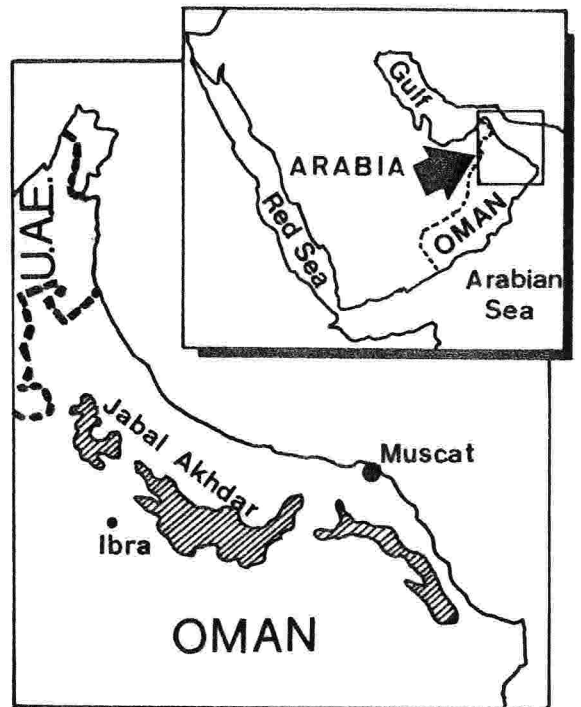
'Unlike other popular mountains, whose every nook and cranny has long been charted, Ingleborough releases its secrets slowly, and a thousand years of exploration will not disclose all its underground mysteries.'

A Wainwright
"Walks in Limestone Country"



Omani Caving

As most of you will have seen the article in Dougherty's rag, I won't dwell on the trip down Majlis al Jinn that Jo and I did last Christmas. We did get another trip in however, down Hoti Cave, in the Jabal Akhdar mountains. Like Majlis al Jinn, this was a weekend trip, setting off the day before the trip and camping near the entrance. We went with two people from the Petroleum Development Organisation, one of whom used to go caving with OUCC and was given to making some interesting comments, for example; "there was one time, right, when we'd done this really muddy cave and our ropes were so filthy that we took them to a lake and washed them. We actually washed all the mud off them!", pauses for laughter and is confused when Jo says, "Well, we wash our ropes quite often". Maybe this could explain the amazingly worn state of his Bobbin.



Hoti Cave is quite an interesting little hole - it's basically a wadi with a roof on it: a long slowly descending passage which floods spectacularly (allegedly) whenever it rains. Although locals have gone partway into the upper entrance for years to get at the water, it was first really explored by an Englishman, Doug Green, who made the first through trip in 1977. It was surveyed by Waltham & Co. in 1985. The large lower entrance is quite a popular spot for tourists to visit, although few go any distance (those that don't get stopped by the boulder choke are stopped by the lake).

We went to do the through trip, and after a quick look in the lower entrance to make sure that a duck was passable, charged up the top and into the upper entrance, at the end of a blind wadi. There's a pipe going in for a bit which used to get water pumped up it. The 9m pitch obviously didn't discourage the locals from their search for water as it had a thing hanging down it which could possibly be called a rope, if you aren't fussy about definitions. Not the kind of fixed aid to trust your life to.

The entrance is followed by about 700m of very big passage with a lot of breakdown and climbing over boulders. Quite PSM-like, if a little smaller. It was absolutely awful. Why? Well, imagine that kind of thing at 30°C and 100% humidity, with a strong whiff of bats and their doings. Get the idea?

It was with great relief that we arrived at the first lake and plunged into it. Been down Dan-yr-Ogof? Remember that pool called the Crystal Pool with the little rafts of calcite on the

surface that you have to traverse around to avoid sinking the rare and precious crystals? Well, there are kilometers of lakes in Hoti Cave, every one has got loads of the stuff all over it, and you just swim through them. The lakes are also stuffed full of blind cave fish, all 3-5cm long and white to pale pink colour.

A few more lakes, some more big breakdown passage and we got to the flowstone cascades, roughly the halfway point of the trip. These are a series of big flowstone dams across the passage which you have to abseil down (9m, 13m, 5m, 6m). They're quite bizarre because most of them have deep water at the top and bottom, but none going down the pitch. So, you swim up to the pitch head, abseil down the dry pitch, and the tread water while you get off the rope! Weird.

From here, after some spectacular gours (I took some photos but forgot to remove the lens cap) the remainder of the trip is mostly swimming, ending up in the 800m long main lake. The two lads we were with had brought lifejackets, but Jo and I had scorned them on the grounds that we were far too hard to need such wimpy things. We were, therefore, very glad to find some inflated inner tubes shortly after the start of this long swim.

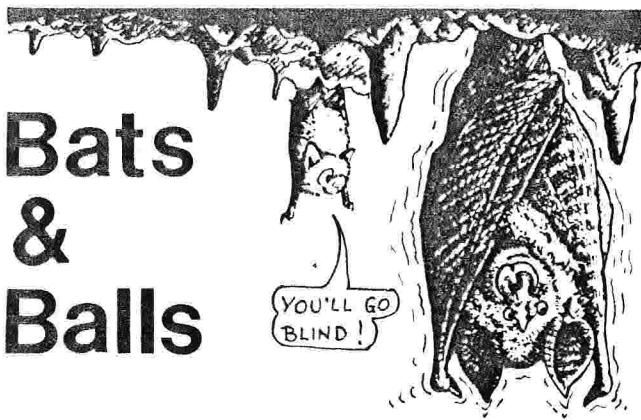
Once you get out of the main lake it's only a few hundred metres of big passage and you're out. The total length of passage in the cave is 4975m, of which 4300m are on the through route, and the vertical separation of the two entrances is 262m. A great trip; almost worth going through Omani customs and immigration for.

Rob Knell



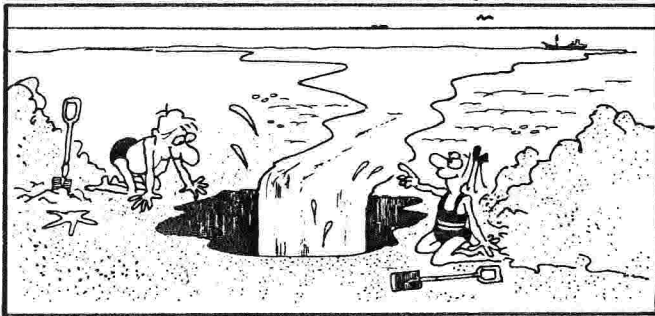
The lower entrance of Hoti Cave, Oman.

Bats & Balls



A bat's penis is long and bent at an angle to enable him to copulate upside down while clinging onto the female. Given this precarious positioning it is just as well that, like an elephant, the bat has a motile penis which moves independent of the body, requiring no pelvic thrusting from the owner.

From "Facts & Phalluses" Parsons 1988



Dominican Republic Update

In January '93 a French group led by Alain Gilbert visited the Dominican Republic. They explored about 50 caves around Santo Domingo and in the provinces of San Cristobal, Sanchez Ramirez and San Pedro de Macoris. A total of 3km of cave passage was surveyed, about 1km of which was newly discovered. The remaining cave was already known to local archaeologists and had been extensively used by amerindians before the Spanish Conquest. Numerous ancient remains were discovered as well as some wall paintings. The longest single cave surveyed was 1454m with a depth of -123m.

More details, including 5 surveys, are in **Spelunca** (Fédération Française de Spéléologie) No.50 (1993) p38-45.

"Daddy....."

"

Where do newsletters come from?

"Well son.... Look haven't you done this at school?"

"They said to ask you".

"Errr... Well. First there's what's called a contributor".

"Who's that?"

"Well it could be anyone".

"Even me!"

"Yes, even you. He..."

"Or she?"

"Or she, gets together with a pen and puts words on paper".

"What sort of words?"

"Well anything really. Sometimes its about a caving trip they've done, or a visit to a new area, or about a new piece of gear, or about some special caving interest they've got. Or perhaps its just something they think other people in the club will be interested in - letters, notices, reviews, even stories, puzzles or cartoons".

"Ok. So what happens then?"

"You just send it to a nice chap called the editor".

"What about pictures?"

"Maps, drawings and cartoons are fine, and sometimes the editor can even use photos".

"But I'm not very good at writing, and I've always got too much homework to do".

"Well, if you get a list of ideas down on paper, or a few thoughts on an outline for an article, the editor can usually fill in the gaps and complete it for you".

"Gosh! He must be clever. Is that it?"

"Yup. The editor does the typing and copying. Look son: there's nothing special or shameful about contributing to the newsletter".

"Right. So what about babies?"

"Ah..... ask your mother when she gets back from Mossdale!"



Your Newsletter Needs YOU

TO WRITE SOMETHING (ANYTHING)

NOW!

Slaughter Stream Cave

When I first joined the club I used to go around asking all and sundry whether there were any caves in the Forest of Dean.

"Nah mate", would come the reply. "Wrong sort of limestone! Now why don't you jump in the back of this van and come up to Yorkshire with us, and stop asking stupid questions".

But I knew there were caves there. I'd got mates at school who had been caving there during the school holidays. I just didn't realise that there was a difference between what schoolchildren did as caving trips and what grown-ups did as caving trips. Now I am grown up, I know the difference, and I was dead chuffed to hear a short while back that after years of persistence a group of cavers from The Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club had broken into a sizeable chamber and found their way down into a decent stream passage, and subsequently gone on to discover somewhere in the region of eight kilometres of cave.

Jim, Rich Anderson, Ed and myself paid Slaughter Stream Cave a visit in September, and while it is probably true to say that it doesn't match up to your classic Yorkshire potholes, or some of the more impressive South Wales and Mendip systems, it has a very individual feel to it and some features which don't appear with great regularity in other parts of the country. (Must be that wrong sort of limestone).

The entrance shafts are a true monument to the determination of the diggers who have worked the site over the past forty years, and the cave loses most of its height on these fixed ladder shafts and the recently discovered 3m and 12m pitches which follow shortly after. This descent leads into the streamway which has some very unusual and strangely shaped features, reflected in the naming of one section as "the Sculpture". Progressing further down the stream will remind anyone who has been in King Pot of the T-Shaped Passage, only in this one you can walk in the stem of the "T", stretch your arms out, and just touch the sides.

Some of the going is less pleasant than this, with a fair deal of crawling involved if you want to make the round trip (don't forget your knee pads, eh Jim?). There's also plenty of ex-wildlife in the place with "The Graveyard" and "Dog's Grave" containing some fine specimens of dead things. R.F.O.D.C.C. would be keen for anyone with knowledge of such matters to go into the cave and help try to identify a few of the skeletons.

We spent about six hours underground, of which we probably wasted a couple taking photos and trying to squeeze through a tight bedding plane which was "definitely the way on"only it wasn't. We also spent a bit of time uhhmming and ahhring about the way on in the vicinity of the "Zuree Aven". Don't be fooled into the dangerous looking climb down into a chamber. Turn back and go and have a poke around elsewhere. Everything will become clear as the way on is nowhere near as steep as the

drop which you have just seen (providing of course that you take the same wrong turn that we did in the first instance).

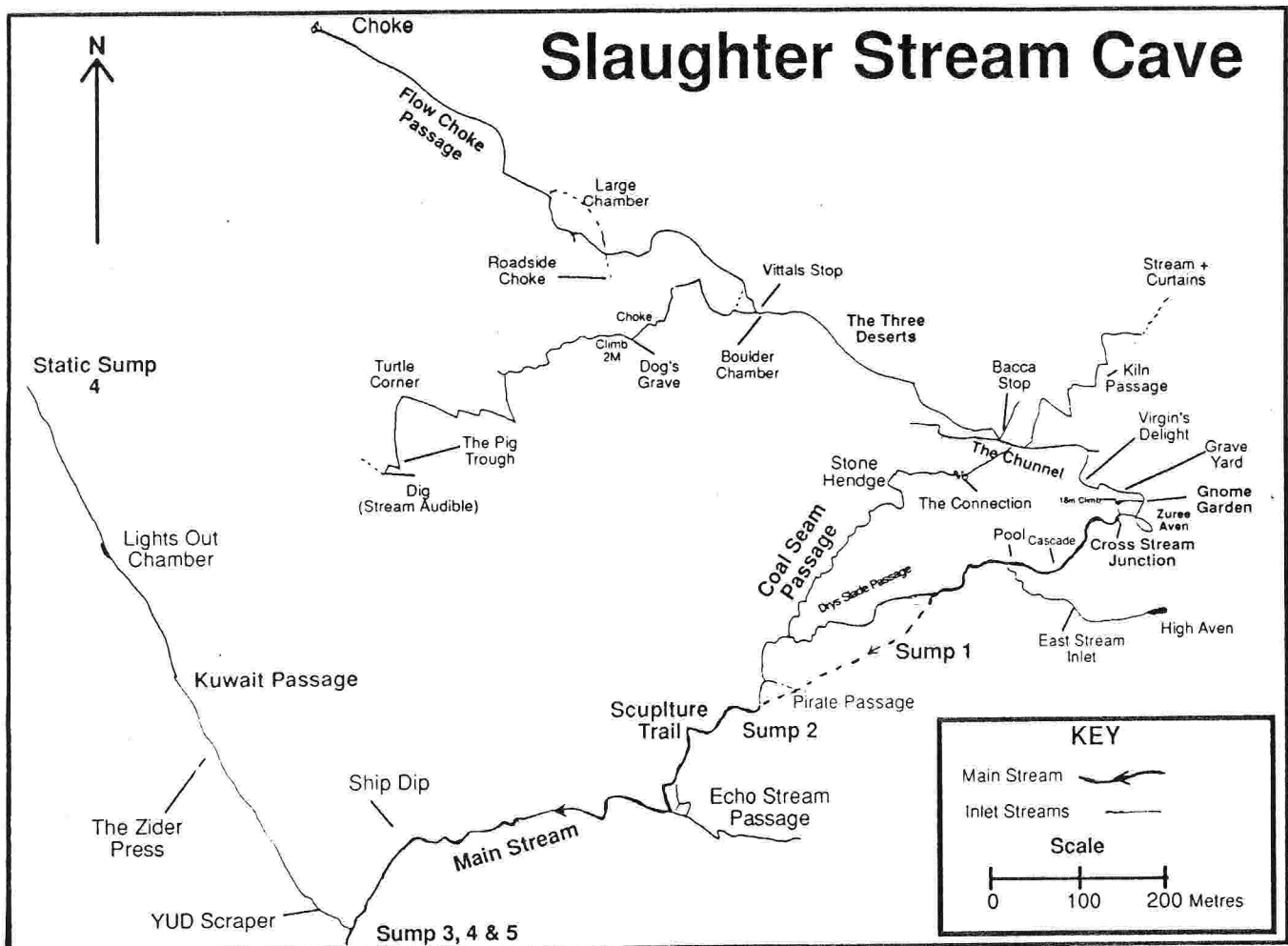
So as I say, not an absolute classic, but, well worth a trip, especially if you're visiting Otter Hole on the same weekend (only about 20 miles away), or even worth a drive over from Mendip. And when you see the size of some of the passage, it's very hard to believe that there isn't a fair bit more undiscovered cave in the area.

Access is controlled by R.F.O.D.C.C. and enquires should be made to :

Andy Clark
Sunshade Cottage
Lower Redbrook
Monmouth
Gwent NP5 4LZ

He requires about a months notice and his house is conveniently close to a superb pub where post cave refreshment can be purchased. (Or pre-canoeing refreshment if you like, but that's another story).

Dave Mountain



SURVEY FROM: "CAVES & CAVING" No. 56 (1992)

Old Knot New

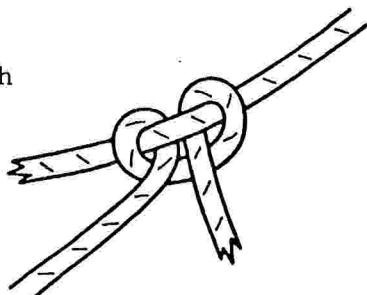
In December 1931, Dr Karl Prusik - climber, writer of mountaineering manuals and professor of music - published an article on "A New Knot and its Applications" in the journal of the Austrian Alpine Club (1). It was a time when much magazine column length was being devoted to such questions as: should one tie-in below or above a backpack; so this new "Wunderknoten" as it was being called a year later caused a sensation.



Prusik's Knot:
4 coils around
the rope.

The initial idea from which Prusik developed his knot was described by a friend, Wolf Kitterle (2). Prusik had been a soldier on the Western Front in World War I. During the long winter evenings he played the guitar to pass the time, but eventually supplies of strings ran short. However Prusik then remembered a knot, that he had once seen in a book, that was used for tensioning ropes. This was the cow hitch: two half-hitches which can be slid along a rope, but which will then tighten and hold by friction if loaded.

Cow Hitch

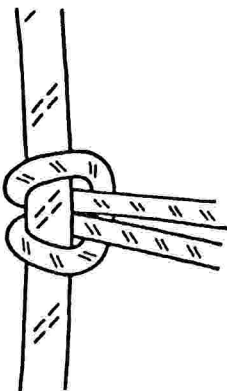


From this slide-and-grip action Prusik saw the possibility for its use in ascending ropes, and thus from it he developed his knot. The so-called Prusik knot greatly influenced alpine rope techniques and played an important part in the development of caving SRT (single rope techniques).

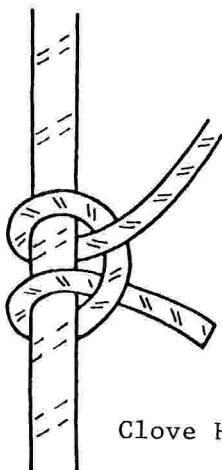
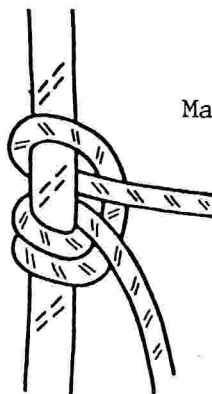
But, it wasn't new.

Manuals on knots and rope-craft, published about the turn of the century, list various knots and hitches which have a similar slide-and-grip action:

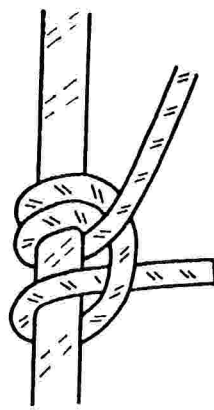
Bale Sling Hitch



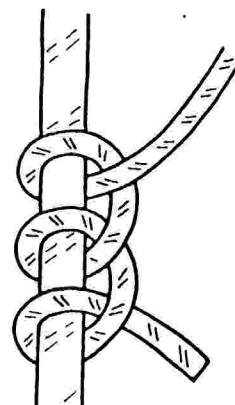
Magnus Hitch



Clove Hitch



Double Clove Hitch



Double Builder's Knot
& Clove Hitch

Likewise prusiking was no invention of Prusik, though named after him, because the mechanical ascender had already been developed in 1929 by the French caver Brenot(*). Moreover the idea if not the practice is certainly older as a lot of evidence suggests that sailors had been using such knots for scaling ships' rigging perhaps a century or more earlier.

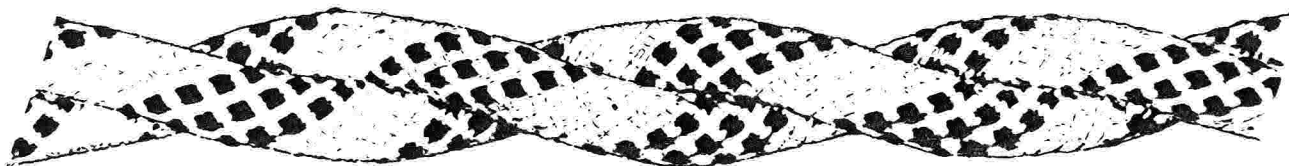
Prusik's great success was in getting climbers' minds off where to tie-in and onto more important stuff - and so gave infant SRT use a much needed boost. But it was of course cavers who really adopted the techniques and became the true masters of SRT.

References:

- (1) K Prusik, "Ein Neuer Knoten und seine Anwendung".
Österreichische Alpenzeitung. Dec 1931.pp343-352.
- (2) H Prohaska, "The Prusik Knot - A 60 Year History".
Nylon Hyway. 34 June 1991.ppl-3.

Note:

- (*) No doubt if ascending had been named after Brenot we'd still have trouble with the spelling. Like Prusiking/Prussicking, would it be Brenoting(Bren'owing) or Brenotting (Bren'notting)?



Sex, Sex, Sex !!

"What fierce exultation, sensual, almost erotic,
in violating the virginity of a cave!"

Jean Cadoux, 1956

"Underground water - a seductive black liquid
which, like a loose-tongued mistress can provide
boundless pleasure, or the gravest peril."

Bruce Bedford

"Challenge Underground", 1975

"On the electron ladder, the best technique is
to make love to it."

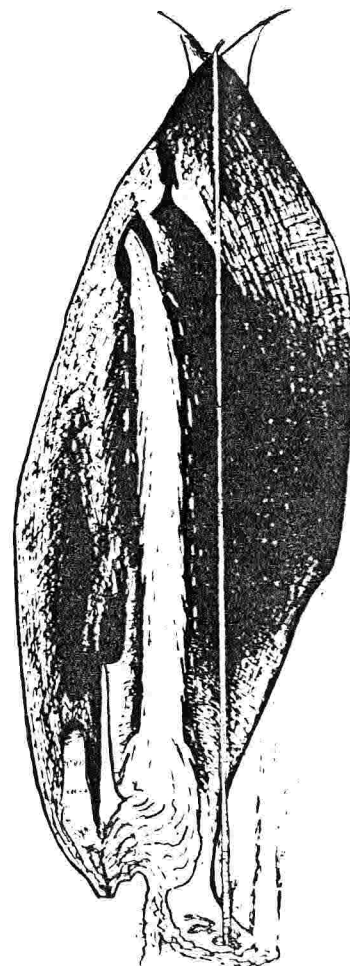
James Lovelock

"Caving", 1969

RIGHT>>

The Big Pitch in Juniper Gulf - Cover of ULSA
Review 1967, drawn by Alan Brook.

P'raps it's just me, but I think it looks kinda
rude: maybe Jean Cadoux wasn't so far off after
all ???



Story Time:

A Wild Stab in the Dark

(Part 2)

The year is 1893. After breaking down a stalagmite dam to drain an underground lake in the cave on his Yorkshire estate, the eminent archaeologist Prof. Farer gained access to caverns containing valuable prehistoric remains. However on the following day when he entered the cave alone, to examine the finds, he was killed. The body was found at the underground site having been stabbed in the chest by an ancient antler pick. The local papers ran lurid stories about the "Revenge of the Caveman". But, if not a prehistoric cave dweller, then who did kill him? The cave's only entrance was always kept locked and no-one but the professor and his only son, Reginald, have keys. On the day he was killed a workman was outside the locked entrance all day. He saw only two people: the fanatical village parson, who was vehemently opposed to the professor's "damned Darwinist" investigations, and a visiting French speleologist who is searching for caves and prehistoric remains.

The local doctor, Dr Bannister, is an old colleague of Dr Watson and so he has appealed to the great Sherlock Holmes to try and solve the mystery. But so far the famous detective seems to have made little progress. With the faithful Watson recording the events he is now returning to the cave for another look at the scene of the crime.

As it transpired, the day was somewhat advanced before we set off for the cave. Holmes had spent the morning interviewing the various local personalities associated with the crime, although he had done this more from a sense of duty than with any expectation of gaining useful information. "Witnesses", he said, "often speak more truth when they remain silent". Besides, this investigation, although serious indeed, was for him more by the nature of a game: a divertissement for the mind: an exercise for his deductive powers and reasoning. To him the thrill of the chase was best appreciated by quiet contemplation of the bare facts and incontrovertible forensic evidence.

As we walked up to the cave entrance in mid-afternoon Holmes described his morning's work. Contrary to his initial reluctance, he now seemed to have enjoyed himself. To my surprise he spoke with some admiration of the French speleologist Le Mart.

"He and I really have such a lot in common. You see, Watson, we are both detectives striving to use the bare facts to solve mysteries. I solve the mysteries of modern crime; he of everyday life, and death, thousands of years ago. Eduoard Le Mart showed me a monograph that he was about to have published. It concerned the find of an exceptionally well preserved neanderthal skeleton from a cave in the French Causes. The body was disarticulated and lay jumbled up among animal bones in a heap of boulders and debris at a considerable distance from the entrance. Just like our poor murdered professor, there was a single body in an improbably remote place underground.

Le Mart had noticed that many of the bones, and the skull in particular bore prominent cuts or grooves, like those caused by a butcher's knife. The established scientific community, no doubt prompted by popular opinion, deduced that the poor individual had been butchered and the body dumped

in a midden, with some quasi-religious theory about the origins of the concept of guilt because the body had been hidden deep underground. In short the find was taken as indisputable evidence that the squat, brutish neanderthals had been cannibals, in contrast of course to our own noble sapient forebears.

"But, to Le Mart, the facts did not fit. The heap of bones did indeed resemble a rubbish tip, but why so far into the cave? It had taken Le Mart two hours to reach the place equipped with all the aids of modern speleology. Then, one day he had had the good fortune to visit a colleague at the Zoology Dept. of Grenoble University. Handling the skull of a large modern lion he had suddenly been struck by the shape and spacing of the canine teeth. Borrowing the skull he compared it with the grooves on the neanderthal skull: they fitted almost perfectly. Later with a contemporary cave lion skull he'd got a perfect match. The butchery had been done by a cave lion. But why so far underground? Even so-called cave lions only inhabited the entrances. To Le Mart it was obvious. Big cats, he told me, often take their prey up into trees to store the carcasses, or to eat away from scavengers. In dry karst areas trees are rare and often only to be found in the moister confines of shakeholes or fringing open potholes. Le Mart therefore deduced that the lion had habitually fed in the shade of the trees which had once ringed an open shaft above the heap: a shaft long since blocked. And indeed Watson, by careful surveying he had even been able to track back on the surface to locate a sizeable shakehole directly above the underground talus cone. Was that not a superb bit of investigation and deductive reasoning, eh Watson? Worthy almost of myself", he ended immodestly.

"It was indeed", I replied, "but Holmes, did you find out where he was on the day Farer was killed?"

"Oh, I expect he was somewhere about, grubbing in some squalid little hole. I'm pretty sure it wasn't him".

I however, was still not convinced.

Farer's son, Reginald, he had found to be less agreeable company:

"That man is blunt and surly to the point of rudeness, though I grant you he has a quick and agile mind. And I suspect he would be totally ruthless where business is concerned. However, although he was reluctant to admit it, he is in some financial difficulty having stretched himself a little too far I gather. He did admit that his father's wealth would be very useful but had added, "on the whole, however, I would rather have my father than his money". All in all I got very little from him. He has a deft and practised way of avoiding giving straight answers, without actual refusal. He may, or may not, know more than he's telling. And what he did say was precious little.

"One fact I was able to substantiate though was the time he left Bentham. While we were talking his business secretary arrived with some papers to be signed. Before Reginald could coach or coax the man, I asked straight out what time his employer had left the mill on the day of the murder. The man considered for a few seconds and then stated that it was just before 3 o'clock because the afternoon post had arrived shortly after he'd left. This agrees with what Reginald had said and would also tally with his explanation that he walked over to get here about 5 o'clock, which is when the doctor first saw him. However if he rode or drove over he could be here 1½ hours earlier. Unfortunately no one seems to have seen him travelling over here. That I find improbable, though not impossible".

"Unless he came by a different route, say circling round via Ingelton", I suggested. "If he rode fast, he would be able to leave Bentham at 3:00, get to the cave about 3:45, stay there perhaps 45 minutes, and then get back down Long Lane to enter the village, on foot if necessary, from the South about 5:00. It would be tight for time, but it is possible".

"But Watson, the time of death is reckoned to be about 3:00 at the very latest. That rather rules Reginald out".

"Ah Holmes, for once let me be the expert. Dr Bannister estimated the time of death by body temperature. In the cool of the cave I suspect he may have over estimated the time elapsed. I believe he could have been killed an hour, even two hours later". "Hmmm, that changes things somewhat. I'll have to think more about that, but first let me complete the summary of the morning".

Holmes had also visited the church to speak with the Rev. Gilpin who it may be recalled had also been seen near the cave on the fateful day. Holmes described his encounter with the vicar with some relish. He was an interesting although not particularly pleasant character.

"Although it was barely past 11 o'clock, he had clearly been sampling the communion wine for some hours. He was, it seems, an ex-army chaplain who had been some years, probably too many, in India, and had carried his military fondness for strong liquor and decimating the local wildlife back to his native Dales. Of quieter, more seemly pursuits he counted a passionate interest in local antiquities and local history. His current researches concerned the dissolution of the local monastery by Henry VIII in 1536. Of the old monastery only the central nave remained as the current parish church. On a subject in which he had some interest and knowledge he displayed an intelligent passion. He spoke at length of his studies and brought down from his bookshelves numerous ancient tomes to illustrate or authenticate a detail. The Clapton abbey, although never large had been of some wealth derived presumably from the large areas of upland sheep walk on Ingelborough. However, as he showed me, the inventory to the Crown at the dissolution listed only the church plate among the sequestered effects with a footnote that the abbot, even when put to the torture, would not or could not reveal the whereabouts of all the coin. The Rev, Gilpin was convinced that somewhere about his parish was a fortune in gold coin, and he was going to find it despite having no more idea of where to look than the officers of Henry VIII.

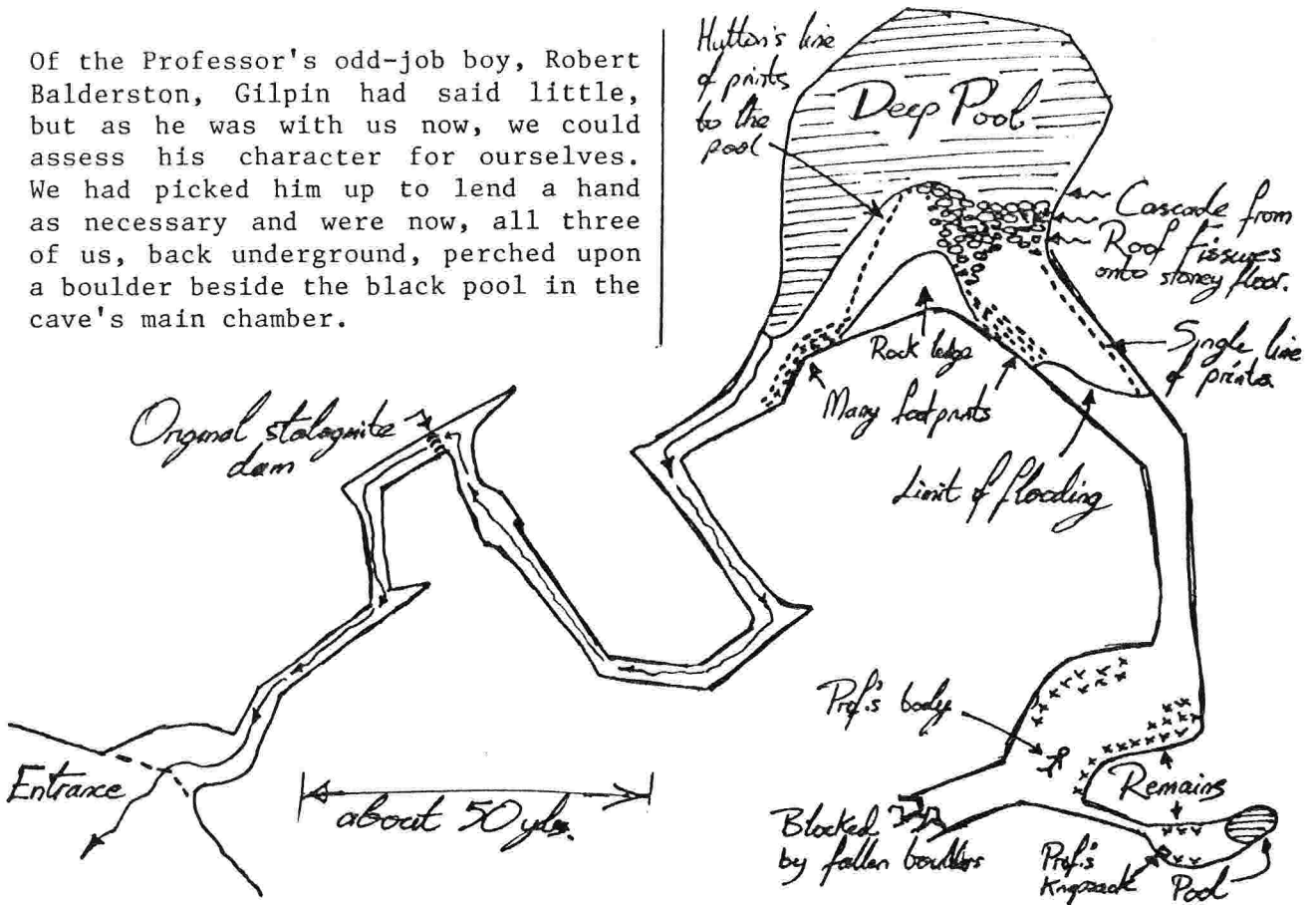
"When I mentioned Farer he became quite downcast and started a long litany about what a noble and intelligent, cultured man the deceased professor was. But when I incautiously commented on his fame as a palaeontologist he became suddenly animated and began denouncing him as a heathen, a "damned Darwinist" were his exact words. The man is certainly touched, though whether by God or some other, less Holy spirit, is not clear.

"But as he seemed voluble I also took the opportunity of asking about some of his parishoners, in particular about the workmen who had been present when the cave was opened and who had accompanied the professor underground on the first exploration; the day before he was killed.

"Richard Poole was the verger of the church and at one time had looked likely to become the priest. The Pooles had been parsons for "as back as people can remember", indeed it had been an Abbot Poole who had resisted the rack in 1536. But the family had fallen on hard times and the line had broken a generation ago. Richard had worked for a while in the coal mines near Ingleton before moving back to the village of his birth, though not quite to the traditional family occupation. As verger he also acted as odd-job man to the parson and had helped him with his antiquarian studies. He seemed to harbour no grudge against Gilpin and was much liked by the parishoners.

"John Hutton was the smith's son. A solid, amiable, strong, dependable fellow, not overburdened with too much intelligence. In Gilpin's estimation he was a born follower, lacking the wit to shift for himself, or to see that he was being used by others. Whenever someone caught the local lads stealing apples, you could bet it would be John Hutton, left holding the loot while his fellows had disappeared. Nevertheless Gilpin knew him as a good God-fearing fellow although a little too fond of his ale, "but who can begrudge a man some little pleasure", he had said as poured himself yet another large glass of port".

Of the Professor's odd-job boy, Robert Balderston, Gilpin had said little, but as he was with us now, we could assess his character for ourselves. We had picked him up to lend a hand as necessary and were now, all three of us, back underground, perched upon a boulder beside the black pool in the cave's main chamber.



"Now Watson, what do you see?"

"Well, all footprints lead from the entrance passage round to that right-hand passage, that is, with the exception of those of Master Hutton's brief detour to the pool".

"True. Now what do you not see?"

Knowing how his mind worked I replied, "I can see no prints leading to or from the side passage direct to the pool's edge".

"And why not?"

"Because no-one's been there", I said with some confusion and then corrected myself, "or, like Hutton's prints, they have now been washed clear by the spray from the waterfall".

"So, someone could have walked from the pool to the side passage leaving no record of their journey", said Holmes, "provided they kept well over against the far wall, under the spray from the ceiling fissures".

"Well yes", I replied, "but I fail to see why you think anyone should opt to get deliberately rained upon". "Unless they wanted their boot prints to get washed away to hide the evidence of their passing", ventured Robert.

"Maybe so", replied Holmes, "but if that was the intention why leave this clear trace further up the passage?". He indicated the single line of prints running up the left-hand wall of the side passage.

"But are those not Hutton's marks, he's the only one to have wandered off the beaten track".

"I think not", countered Holmes. "Hutton's prints lead to the edge off the pool. This mysterious line of prints don't really seem to be in line. Besides, as you pointed out, why should he walk directly under the waterfall. No, I believe these marks record the passing of someone, at a time other than the two occasions we already know about".

"But if they weren't here on the first day with everyone else, or on the second with the professor, then there must be another way in, for the entrance was locked at all other times".

"Watson, you have I think, put your finger on it. There must indeed be another entrance. And, now I think of it, that would of course account for the leaves and twigs that came out in the flood debris. But, where then is this elusive second way in?"

We cast the powerful beam of the acetylene lamp around the chamber, for the prints suggested that here was to be found the point of ingress. The sculpted walls of the chamber fell sheer into the pool. There were no fissures or crevices: barely a hand-hold even by which they might be climbed. Overhead the ceiling was a flat arch rising to at least thirty feet above our heads. In the dark there were few features to catch the eye other than a short fringe of white stalactites, each slender dagger ending in an incongruous blob at the same height above the pool. Other than these inelegant formations there were no other features of note. Eventually we even waded around the pool's edge to thoroughly examine the walls but found nothing to suggest a way in.

"It might be underwater", hazarded Robert.

"Underwater? HmMMM. Yes! Exactly! The stalactites. We are underwater."

Robert and myself exchanged glances: had he lost his senses? But Holmes persisted.

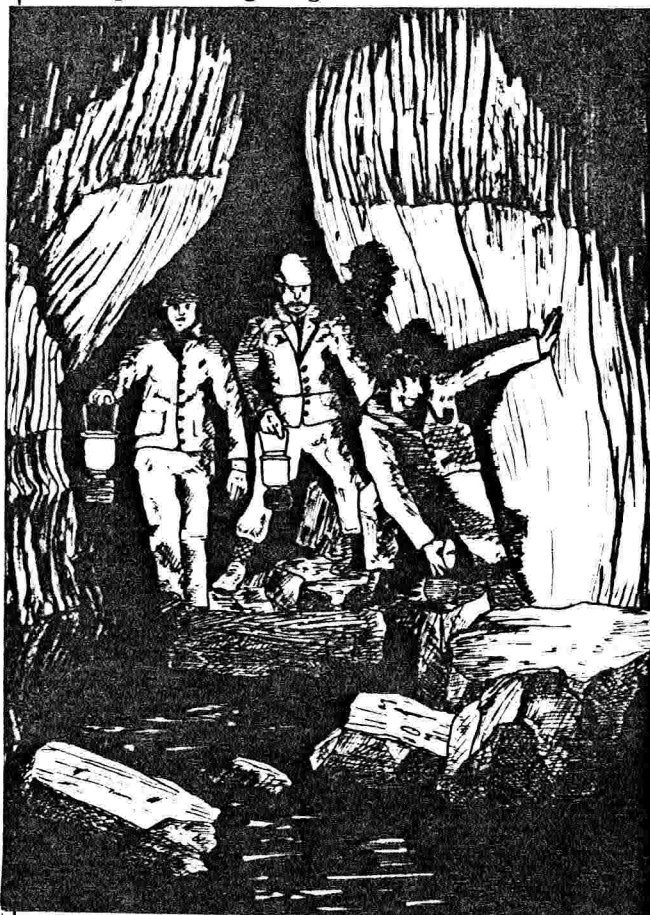
"We are underwater, or at least we would have been a week ago before the cave was drained. We've been looking around the walls. We should have been looking fifteen to twenty feet up, and at a point in direct line of the mysterious prints. There!"

Towards the far wall was the fringe of odd-shaped formations. It was clear, now, that each had grown downwards until they had met the surface of the pool, up to a week ago some fifteen feet above our heads. Now, looking very carefully at the spot you could just make out a black void behind the calcite veil.

By dint of what I believe are called "combined tactics" we managed to get up into the small opening at the cost only of a soaking for poor Robert. At its entrance it was a ledge about three feet wide and only a foot and a half high. However a few feet in the ceiling rose much higher and we were in a narrow rift. The floor of the ledge was covered by a layer of fine silt and would have been under about a foot of water when the cave was flooded. A single line of prints, or rather hands-and-knees marks, led from the dry rift to the edge and back. Holmes carefully inspected these marks before spaddling across them and of necessity obliterating them.

In the dry rift we could stand with ease. The floor was smeared and scuffed but there were no distinct marks until an isolated puddle showed ample evidence of people passing in its muddy bottom.

"As I suspected", mused Holmes. "Now, I wish to call your attention very particularly to this. On the ledge there was but one set of prints leading to the edge and back. Here, some fifty yards back up the same passage, innumerable feet have passed in either direction". We stepped over this puddle with its tale of numerous comings and goings, and carried on.



The rift was rising steadily and in a few more turns we came to a tumble of boulders, earth and roots seemingly blocking the passage. However by shielding our lamps we located several chinks of light in the roof a few yards further back. A brief scramble upwards and we pushed through brushwood which even I could tell had been deliberately placed so as to obscure the entrance. We were out into daylight, but not for long. We paused only to recharge our lamps and then returned again to the dark underworld. Holmes led us back the way we'd come; back down into the chamber and then into the side passage. Back to the scene of the murder.

All looked as undisturbed as before. "There must be some reason", muttered Holmes. He tracked back and forth inspecting everything, but after half an hours meticulous search was still apparently at a loss. Together we sat down in the blind fissure which ended in the shallow, clear pool, and with the small pile of debris and bones at the side.

"Oh, if only these skulls could talk!" "Watson, you've studied anatomy. What animals are these?"

"Rabbit mostly, and that's a dog you've got there I think. Actually its more feline, but too big for a domestic or wild cat, probably a lynx. Yes that'll be it. On the continent, where they still have lynx, they'll eat any small mammal such as rabbit and they often make lairs in caves. It probably got in here by some small hole long since blocked up since they've been extinct since at least Roman times if not a lot before. Oh! Hang on, Holmes, something's wrong. You can't get lynx mixed with rabbits. Rabbits were only introduced by the Normans, who in turn got them from India, and even then they were kept domesticated. These bones are all mixed up in age. Someone's been digging!"

We both looked at the pool as clear and seemingly undisturbed as always. Holmes picked up the spade from the professor's archaeological toolbag and then gently pushed its blade into the mud. It yielded with hardly any resistance. The spade sank to a depth of about a foot without reaching any substantial bottom. As it slid still deeper and deeper into the mud, small clouds of silt billowed up. What we had taken to be a reasonably solid clay-floored pool was in reality floored by an unknown depth of the finest till. Further, as we watched, the silt settled out again to give a smooth, flat and seemingly solid floor.

"I'll wager that buried in the mud of this little pool is something of considerable value".

"So valuable that people might kill for it?", I asked.

"Very possibly, Watson. Very possibly". Holmes hefted the spade in his hands and then hesitated.

"But I think it would be wrong to do yet more damage. To disturb these sediments in a site of proven archaeological importance would be to destroy much of the evidence for other great detectives of the likes of Monsieur Le Mart and his fellow speleologists. Besides I doubt if a cursory probe would reveal much. I suspect it would require either a prolonged effort or a great deal of luck to find anything. Pass me that bit of sacking would you Robert".

He turned the muddy bag inside out and using the relatively clean inner surface began to wipe the clawing silt from his hands.

"Well, well, well," he turned to show me. In the bottom of the sack, caught in the rough-sewn hem, were various pieces of grit and small stones. He teased one particularly large lump out and held it in the flat of his hand.

"Now what do you make of that?"

"Why Homes," I replied promptly, for I was beginning finally to think along the same lines as he, "that is slate, and not of roofing quality, whilst here of course we are on, or rather in, carboniferous limestone".

"Excellently put my friend. So by luck we now have a geological fingerprint for our man", then he added rather more obtusely, "Let's look for some rhododendrons".

Back at the village Holmes lost no time in contacting the police who were conducting their enquires in the public bar of the New Inn in Clapton. It says much for Holmes' strength of character - and for that of the constabulary - that they obeyed him and abandoned the pub, almost without question. They arrested Poole as he was tidying up in his garden shed set among the rhododendrons in the churchyard. He was brought to the doctor's house so that all could be made clear, for I admit that in this, I, as well as most others concerned, were still in stygian darkness. We assembled in the doctor's drawing room. Only then did Holmes explain himself.

" I have to admit that in this case I have not been particularly efficient. Now that I have finally solved the problem it is clear to me that, had I but been sharper in my wits, I would have noticed from the very start many small details, all pointing inexorably to the answer: that this unfortunate man before you killed Prof. Farer.

Unless we are prepared to believe in miracles then someone must have had independent access to the cave: either via a different entrance or by possession of a key. To me, given the hollow nature of these limestone hills, a second entrance seemed the more likely. But until I had studied the footprints within the cave I was not certain of this. When the cave was first entered it is known that all, save Hutton, had filed around the right-hand wall. Similarly when we entered on the day after the murder, we all trod in the existing tracks. One set alone erred from the beaten track which I initially thought was Hutton's as he returned from the pool. But, why deliberately go out of your way and get soaked by walking under a waterfall. Clearly someone had come in from a different direction and was following the left-hand wall. This led us to finally locate the second way in: a small hole some 15 feet up the wall at the far side of the pool. Here was access for someone else to get into the locked cave and commit murder.

Now recall if you will the Professor's body. He had been stabbed in the chest and had died almost instantly. There was a lot of blood on the chest and down over the abdomen, but the hands were unbloodied. Also a finger nail was snagged in such a manner that no-one would have been able to ignore it for long. The implication is that there had been a struggle and that he'd died standing up clasped to his assailant. Might then we not expect there to be a lot of blood over his attacker? Now recall the morning I and Watson visited the cave with Poole, Balderston and Hutton. It was our first time, their second, obviously so since they were dressed in the same soiled clothes. All that is except Poole who had an unmuddied jacket. This single fact should have alerted me. However it

wasn't until we found the piece of slate that my attention was drawn to the churchyard and Poole its gardener, and then did everything else fall into place.

But why did he do it? I mentioned that there is a second way into the cave. Let me now describe what we found there. Immediately inside the small opening into the main chamber is a muddy ledge which would have been under water when the cave was flooded. A single line of prints went to the edge and back. These were those of Poole when he entered, killed Farer and came out again. Further up the rift is a muddy puddle which shows many tracks going both in and out. Unless many people had accompanied Poole, then he himself must have been in the passage many times. But why just the single track actually entering the cave? Because on all earlier occasions the ledge had been under water and he'd used a boat or raft to enter the flooded cavern thereby leaving no trace of his passing.

Imagine if you can the first time he entered: alone in the dark, floating through a passage with barely six inches of airspace then out across that underground lake. I admire your courage, Poole, few would have been brave enough to do this once but you did it many times. What prompted you to make these dangerous underground trips? Clearly you were either searching for something valuable or were slowly recovering it. One clue was the report of a clipped silver coin in the flood debris. Clipping coins either legally to correct their weight or illegally, was common up to the sixteenth century when better minting came into use. A clipped silver coin then was clearly old. Now Poole had been assisting the Reverend Gilpin with his historical studies and in particular the fate of the abbey's lost treasure. I believe Poole had found among the vicar's papers something to indicate that the money was hidden in the cave. Using his local knowledge, he had found another way in, had located the treasure and was slowly dredging it up from that little pool.

And then the cave was drained and Farer made his own, prehistoric discoveries.

On the day Farer entered, Poole was also underground anxious to hide the evidence of his digging and so preserve his secret. The temptation to try his luck once more was too great, and so he was still there, grubbing in the pool, when the professor discovered him. Enraged at someone disturbing the priceless prehistoric remains, Farer rushed at him wielding a spade. Poole defended himself with whatever came first to hand - an ancient antler pick. In the struggle he hit back and got in a lucky blow. Or rather I should say an unlucky blow, for it killed Farer dead."

We were settled in a compartment of the London train as it rattled its way through the West Riding countryside. "Well that's another crime you've solved, eh Holmes?"

"Have I?" he retorted, "You see I'm not sure any crime was ever committed". "Oh Homes, sometimes you really are too much. A man was killed by a self-confessed thief and you say no crime was committed!"

"Well put it this way. Was there any breaking and entering? No, the cave had always been open. Farer might have been the landowner but he didn't hold the mineral rights. Treasure trove? Possibly it should be declared as such but the original owners were the abbey and Poole as virtually hereditary priest probably had as good a claim as any. As for the charge of murder, well we've already discussed a good case for self defence. But Watson, I'm not really concerned about such legal niceties. Leave those to the quibbling lawyers. I'm a scientist, I just search after the truth."

Postscript

C.M.O.1993

Although all the characters are fictional and no intended reference is made to any persons living or dead, the modern Holmes might like to deduce the origins of the names of the people and places. Despite being fiction, most of people and places have taken names after real precedents. Some are a lot more obvious than others depending on the depth of your knowledge of caving trivia. 20 points each if you can deduce the who, and the where, they were named after.

Clapton with its railway station and adjacent "Flying Horeshoe Inn", is obviously Clapham, which was indeed linked by the North-West and Midland Railway by the turn of the century, although the line was, and still is, Leeds-Lancaster, not the more scenic Settle-Carlisle as I stated.

Dr Bannister is of course the renown doctor of Dr Bannister's Handbasin in Long Churn Cave. Who the real Dr B was is not known, although the pool was already known by his name as long ago as 1780.

The Farer Estate is clearly that of the Farrers of Clapham who indeed owned all the dale including Ingelborough Cave, up to "where it opens up onto the slopes of the Hill". Reginald Farrer was a renown botanist and the estate still contains many interesting plants collected from around the world during his travels between 1900 and 1920. The grounds are cut by the North Craven fault which brings slate outcropping at the surface near the end of the lake and the fault line can indeed be traced by the limit of the lime-hating rhododendrons.

The Cave - Ingelborough Cave in reality was extended by breaking down a stalagmite barrier in 1837 by one of the early Farrers. Internally the fictional cave bears little resemblance to the real thing. To my knowledge no remains - either mesolithic or monastic - have been found. Nor is there another easy way in from the hill above. Moreover no-one has ever been murdered in it.

Troll Gill of fiction is Trow Gill of fact. A trow is a type of Scandinavian troll and the fictional name also recalls a similar gorge in Nidderdale, Troller's Gill, named after its mythical inhabitant.

The Rev. Gilpin is named after a noted late 18th century caving vicar of the same name who seems to have explored and described almost all of the country's then known caves, despite seemingly having a deep dislike of them. His gloomy pronouncement on Peak Cavern after a visit in 1772 can be taken as typical of his writings on caves:

"A combination of more horrid ideas is rarely found than this place affords, and, at last, the idea growing too infernal, we were glad to return to the surface". I'd be very surprised if he wasn't a devout creationist.

The Frenchman Le Mart is clearly an anagram of the great Eduoard Martel himself, who actually visited the dales (and made the first full descent of Gaping Gill) in 1895 - 2 years after the tale was set.

Of the three labourers: John Hutton takes his name from a cleric of Kendal who explored many Dale's caves and recorded his impressions and descriptions in his "Tour to the Caves" published in 1781.

Robert Balderston (a tricky one this) was actually a Dales' schoolmaster who published a book, "Ingelton Past and Present", in 1888 in which he devoted no less than 50 pages to the area's caves. Until the publication of "Pennine Underground" this was the best cave guide to the region. And Margaret his sweet-heart? In reality Robert Balderston married a Margaret and she shared his explorations and co-wrote the book.

And the villain?

Richard Poole; though his christian name is not recorded, Poole was a notorious highwayman who, during the reign of Henry IV, hid out in the Derbyshire cave that still bears his name.

You see, given a good general knowledge of caving you could probably made a "Wild Stab in the Dark" and picked the murderer without having to read all that gibberish !!

Chasms, Caverns, Hollows & Holes

Once again, can you identify the following fictional troglodytic characters? In which books, films etc. do they appear, and who are the authors?

1. Who lived in a hole (right):
"Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat."?



2. This secret agent breaks into the Russian Embassy in Istanbul to steal their coding machine. He escapes (for the time being) via the vast network of underground chambers and ancient water cisterns under the city. Who is he?

3. Who & where? "The ground had caved in where the whale had hit it revealing a network of galleries and passages, now largely obstructed by collapsed rubble and entrails. Dank air wafted out of its dark recesses, and as he shone a torch into it, little was visible in the dusty gloom.

'According to the legends, he said, 'the Magratheans lived most of their lives underground.'

'Why's that?' said Arthur. 'Did the surface become too polluted or overpopulated?'

'No, I don't think so. I think they just didn't like it very much'."

4. "Once well underground," he said, "you know exactly where you are. Nothing can get at you. You're entirely your own master, and you don't have to consult anybody or mind what they say. Things go on all the same overhead and you let 'em, and don't bother about 'em. When you want to, up you go, and there the things are, waiting for you." The badger simply beamed at him. "That's exactly what I say", he replied. "There's no security, or peace and tranquility, except underground."



5. Which family, shipwrecked on an island discovered a cave (left):

"The vaulted roof was covered with stalactites, while many formed stately pillars, which seemed as though supporting the roof. The floor was strewn with fine snow white earth, which I felt convinced was fuller's earth."

6. An old man brings his meddlesome city ways to the Scottish countryside when he retires to become a hermit in a cave. Constructing a heated bath he manages to flood and smoke out the community of pixie-like Gorms who live under the earth making flowers. Only through their example does he eventually learn to respect the countryside. Who is he?

7. Which film?

An aerial robbery misfires, with three suitcases of cash scattered across a mountain range. The hero must prevent the bad guys from picking up their loot - a plot which allows for much cat-and-mouse stalking, gun fights, martial arts, lots of mountaineering stunts and even some potholing. Fighting in the cave the hero impales the baddie on a stalactite. Yes that's right, not a stalagMITE - a stalactITE. I mean anyone can push a villain down onto a stalagmite, but this guy has to thrust someone up onto a calcite spike from below! Who is he?

8. It is the fifth century. Britain is in chaos after the Roman withdrawal, divided into innumerable petty principdoms. The illegitimate son of a Welsh princess, ignored and despised at home, is riding through the hills of South Wales and finds a cave: Galapas' Cave. Deep inside he comes upon a hidden chamber lined with glittering crystal. Here he discovers that he has a rare gift: The Sight. In the sparkling grotto he can see what is happening far away and what will happen in the future. His name "is Myrddin Emrys, though they call me" . What do they call him?

9. Trying to recover a magical gem, these two children discover that it is also coveted by the forces of evil. They escape from the house of the evil Selina Place via a secret lift which deposits them in the middle of a vast cave system under Alderney Edge:

"Losing their pursuers was an easy task. It seemed that they were in an intricate system of caverns connected by innumerable tunnels and shafts. The walls curved upwards to form roofs as high as cathedrals, and the distance between the walls was often so great that, at the centre of a cavern they could imagine themselves to be trudging along a sandy beach on a windless and starless night. The loose sand killed all noise of movement and helped the silence to prey on their nerves."

10. Having journeyed many miles through darkest Africa, these adventurers finally arrive at the object of their quest: a mine reputed to contain a fortune in gems. They enter the caverns and pass through huge chambers lined with massive calcite columns before reaching a more sinister grotto. Round a stone table sit the bodies of generations of kings. Each is under the drip of a stalactite and each is being slowly covered with calcite. The latest addition has just a thin glistening coat: the oldest is already a solid, squat stalactite (right).

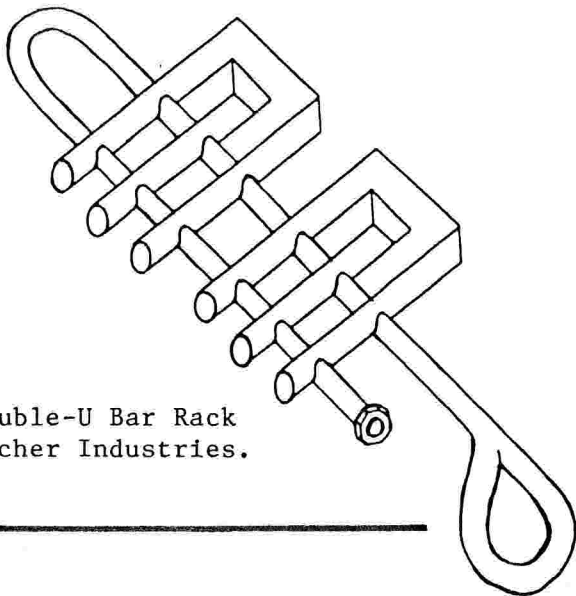


11. Which TV personality is describing his childhood in (and under) No. 6 Margaret Street, Kogarah, Australia?

"Over the next few years the backyard started looking like the Ypres Salient. I would dig complicated networks of trenches, roof them over, and continued tunnelling from inside, honey-combing the clay all the way down to the water table. Other boys in the street were fascinated. Suddenly I had friends. Finally half the small boys in the district were spending the whole weekend somewhere under our backyard. I overdid it when I started letting the little kids down there. Little kids, I should have known, ruin things. Geoffry Teichman was only about 4 years old. Crawling somewhere down around Level 7 leading off Shaft 4, he brushed against one of the fruit-case slats I used for pit props. The whole system fell on him. Parents arrived from everywhere to dig the little twerp out. And that was the end of that."

12. Which cartoon character made famous the immortal line:

"If you know of a better 'ole - go to it!"



Double-U Bar Rack
Escher Industries.

All the Vice Girls Love an Abseiler

Next time you meet a group of girls underground in OFD, ask if they're going all the way at your peril. They just might be a group of prostitutes in search of "adventure". In a scheme launched in the summer, the girls of vice from Cardiff's notorious Tiger Bay area, are being encouraged to swop their stockings and stilettos for stout walking shoes, and the red lights for Petzl Zooms, on outward bound weekends in the Brecon Beacons.

The outings are arranged by Fairbridge, a charity offering personal development training to disadvantaged people. "This is all about fun. We are taking the girls away from the inner-city environment", said Judy Curry, the Fairbridge team manager. "It will give them a taste of something different". (Although being lashed together for rock-climbing, clad in rubber for canoeing or strapped in a harness for caving, is surely like business as usual - except without the High Court Judge!!!).

Linda, one of the women booked on the first outing said her colleagues were very excited about the break because they often worked '24-hour days': "They gave us a choice of things to do, so we had a meeting

999

The Fourth Emergency Service ??

Since its formation in 1935, the **Cave Rescue Organisation** has attended 1,358 incidents. These have involved 2,163 people (aged from 5 months to 84 years), 150 lambs, 128 sheep, 47 dogs, 9 ducks, 9 calves, 7 cows, 1 bullock & 1 cat, plus the recovery of a wide variety of objects. Of these 1,358 incidents only 35% have been caving related.

From CRO statistics for 1992.

and went for canoeing and rock-climbing", she said. "We said no to abseiling because we thought it meant being pulled in a boat. We've since been told it means dropping down a cliff on a rope. I wouldn't mind but some of the girls are a bit on the big side and the rope might not be strong enough".

They are told to bring just £3 and a lunch box (hope they don't misunderstand that one). A Cardiff police sergeant commented: "With the amount of money these girls charge, they could afford their own day out". Wonder how he knows how much they charge?



(Culled from "The Independent" and "The Sun", 4 May 1993).

Chasms, Caverns, Hollows & Holes

1. Goblins.... and Gollum. "The Hobbit" by JRR Tolkien.
2. Harry Lime "The Third Man" by Graham Greene.
3. Jessica Atreides, on the desert world of Arrakis. "Dune" by Frank Herbert.
4. Princess Leia, Han Solo, Chewi & CP30 aboard the 'Millenium Falcon'. "The Empire Strikes Back" - Star Wars by George Lucas.
5. Prof. Lindenbrock with his nephew Axel and Hans the guide. "Journey to the Centre of the Earth" by Jules Verne.
6. King Arthur and his Knights. "Monty Python and the Holy Grail".
7. Det Insp. Ronnie Craven (played by Bob Peck) in "Edge of Darkness" by Troy Kennedy Martin [Where does Imperial College get a mention?? On the back of a photo in Emma's boyfriend's London flat, which looks very like Evelyn Gdns. It shows a group of Students & is entitled "Gaia-Imperial College '84". Emma presumably got her physics degree from IC in the mid 80s.
8. Jim Pryce in "Killer Mine". Hammond Innes.
9. Lok in "The Inheritors" by William Golding.
10. Leo Spinoso (trapped) & Chuck Tatham in "Ace in the Hole" B Wilder.
11. Odysseus in Homer's "Odyssey".
12. "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll.



Quote - Unquote

"The hardest task on any rescue is to be the victim."

J Lovelock
"Caving", 1969

Bat Catastrophe

Celebrations in June by scientists and naturalists who had found a very rare Bechstein's bat at Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, were suddenly cut short when the castle cat ate it.



Jean BELUGOU
Spelunca n° 48



Aggie get your gun

In 1909 a Yorkshire Ramblers' Club group got marooned down the bottom of Gaping Ghyll for 36 hours by a flood. The telephone line was broken, so the underground party;

"...used their revolvers at frequent intervals to attract attention."

The surface group, not to be outdone, promptly began blasting away down the shaft with a shot gun.

Miraculously no-one got hurt, but why this caving group was so heavily armed is not clear.

(recorded in Trans CRG 13 (2) 1971).

From your northern digging correspondent...

I do hope this personal problem of becoming a digger sorts itself out soon. I have been digging again, down another two metres last weekend and it still hasn't quite gone yet.

The *Pooh-mine* is now very dodgy, so it is being shored this week. The dig is grim, it has no solid sides or roof (or floor for that matter), and is full of log. There are lots of boulders, all called Dougherty, the smaller ones being "son off" and the smallest "seed of". The roar of the stream is incredible, we must be close now. Just a few more buckets to go. The dig is now generously sponsored by Inglesport, who gave us some midge repellent. You need it at this secret location even in mid winter. The field has a herd of large furry highland moose in it, complete with horns, and a big black papa of a bull. Two weekends ago I was innocently changing beside the road when a bunch of parsnip sharpers went past and admired my bottom. You can't even change into your caving shreddies in peace nowadays. Bring back the birch that's what I say; most of them went in for that sort of thing at school anyway. You would love it I'm sure....

The main passage (there is only one), has been named "*Le Metro*", in honour of those grand galleries in the classic French caves; which is isn't. The hope is that some illustrious French speleo will read of the great breakthrough, *le magnifique grand galerie*, go potholing in the *Pooh-mine* and get really muddy.

The aim of the dig is to connect two caves in Chaple-le-Dale, Joint and Midge, and so create a truly grim horrible dives for those underwater potholing types. It is 7 metres deep, perhaps a little longer. Progress is mainly made by jemmying out the dougherties and then removing the log by hand. Occasionally, larger dougherties have to be winched out by hand. The unstable nature of the dig means that bang cannot be used, as the whole thing would fall in with the slightest provocation.

When a hard days digging is over, the team retreats for tea and medals in Mr. Inglesport's excellent cafe. This is particularly pleasurable as it is clean and tidy and we are not. The added bonus is that if you time it right, normally about 6-30 p.m., you get given all the surplus tea and coffee at the end of the day. This is useful training for would be divers, since the main qualifications seem to be a propensity to rant and the ability to drink a gallon of tea *without visiting the toilets*.

Other digging news. Chris and Harry are investigating some interesting prospects on Wild Warthog Fell. This area has been prospected by someone else, who apparently hadn't thought of looking in the shakeholes, as you do. The current secret location, not named yet, has a dead sheep in the bottom. This is barring the route to glory, so has to be removed. The designer way to do this is to cover the aforementioned putrefying animal in petrol, retreat to a safe distance, and drop in a match. Alas, september has been a rather wet month, so this option was not possible. This meant Harry was stripped down to his thermals in the driving rain gingerly picking out bits of sheep carcass. Oh to be in the forefront of Yorkshire caving!



Table 1: Dictionary of Northern Pennine Terms

Term	Translation (reasons sometimes not given due to unprintability/ likeliness to offend)
Bang	Explosives.
Brew	Tea.
Clag	Cloud, low flying, especially fog
Dog emptier	Person who drives from Leeds to the dales, lets dog out of car to relieve itself, and then returns to Leeds.
Dougherty	Large boulder blocking way on in dig.
Just another few more buckets	A blatant lie.
Log	Mud (various).
Moose	Cow/female caver; normally romantically attached.
Parsnip sharpener	Mountain biker.
Rock fairy	Rock climber.
Secret location A-Z	Current dig, secret only to the intelligence services.
Shed dragger	Caravan towing vehicle.
Shreddies	Caving Underwear, normally M+S; normal social behaviour is to wash these occasionally, Mr. President.
Tea and medals	Ranting session held traditionally in Inglesport Cafe; used to discuss the days exploits loudly over tea and chocolate fudge cake.
Thor	20 lb. sledge hammer, used to make caves and play tea cup cricket.
Wind	Compressed air tanks favoured by divers to prevent drowning.

BY PETE HAMBLEY



GREAT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF EXPLORATION

THREE celebrated explorers were invited to dinner at the Geographical Club in London.

Sir Vivian Fuchs had explored Greenland and East Africa and led the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1955-58.

Dr John Hemming was director of the Royal Geographical Society and a member of the 1961 Brazilian Expedition.

Robin Hanbury-Tenison had crossed South America in a small boat and explored the Indonesian islands, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and the mountains of southern Sahara

They met at the Royal Geographical Society, just a quarter of a mile from their final destination. Within a mere fifteen minutes they were spectacularly lost in the back streets of Kensington.

FROM: "THE RETURN OF HEROIC FAILURES"
STEPHEN PILE (1988)

Dirty Old Rhyme

I met my pals down the caving stores
Drove up north in a clapped out van
At the Watford Gap stopped and bought a mag
Dirty old mag, dirty old mag.

We drove from there to the NPC
Had a smoke and a cup of tea
laid our heads on the filthy beds
Dirty old beds, dirty old beds.

Woke on the morn with a stonking horn
ate my beans, bacon and sweetcorn
dropped a log in the stinking bog
Dirty old bog, dirty old bog.

Then planned our day from a stained survey
packed our ropes in the tackle bags
Hurled abuse at the clubs old lags
Dirty old lags, dirty old lags.

Drove to the cave, it was 4 o'clock
A little late but who gave a fuck
We emptied our bags and strewn around our legs, was
Dirty old kegs, dirty old kegs.

Sighted the hole in the suns last ray
Rigged it fast without delay
Had a dump at the terminal sump
Dirty old sump, dirty old sump.

We were nearly out when we heard a shout
went back to see who it could be
at the final pitch was some poor bitch
Dirty old bitch, dirty old bitch.

We finally got changed and headed to the Pub
Drank some beer and ate some grub
Eyed the dames during silly games
Dirty old games, dirty old games.

Time to go home on a Sunday night
Packed the van had a final shite
So till next time when we sing this rhyme
Dirty old rhyme, dirty old rhyme
Dirty old rhyme, dirty old rhyme.

Just a little dig!

One unexpected bonus for those Polytechnics that have recently become Universities is the opportunity to wipe dirty slates clean.

In their 1993 Students' Handbook, Kingston University Caving Club state that:

"We have an impeccable safety record whilst still managing to bottom some of the toughest cave systems in the UK and France."

They also seem to have short memories.

But no! It was of course Kingston Polytechnic Caving Club who had the misfortune to be blazoned across the nation's newspapers when 12 of them were involved in 3 separate "nurse-maid" rescue operations in one night (26 Jan 1980). This action attracted much publicity and did much to cultivate the poor image of "bloody stupid potholing students".

Mind you, in the 13 years since then IC³ has not been without a few minor incidents. And to indulge in too much schadenfreude would be to seriously tempt fate. Let's just strive to maintain our own very good safety record.

AND FINALLY.....

In Issue 17's article "Caverns Measureless to Man" I stated that Hillary and Tenzing climbed Everest in 1956. But of course they actually did it in 1953 - a mistake made all the more shameful because N/L 17 came out in mid-summer 1993 when the 40th anniversary of the climb was being widely celebrated.

Personally I blame the typist: I put it down to a miss-spelt youth and being, as the Rev Spooner would say, a bit of a bird watcher. And for that I deserve to be hung, drawn and quoted!

