

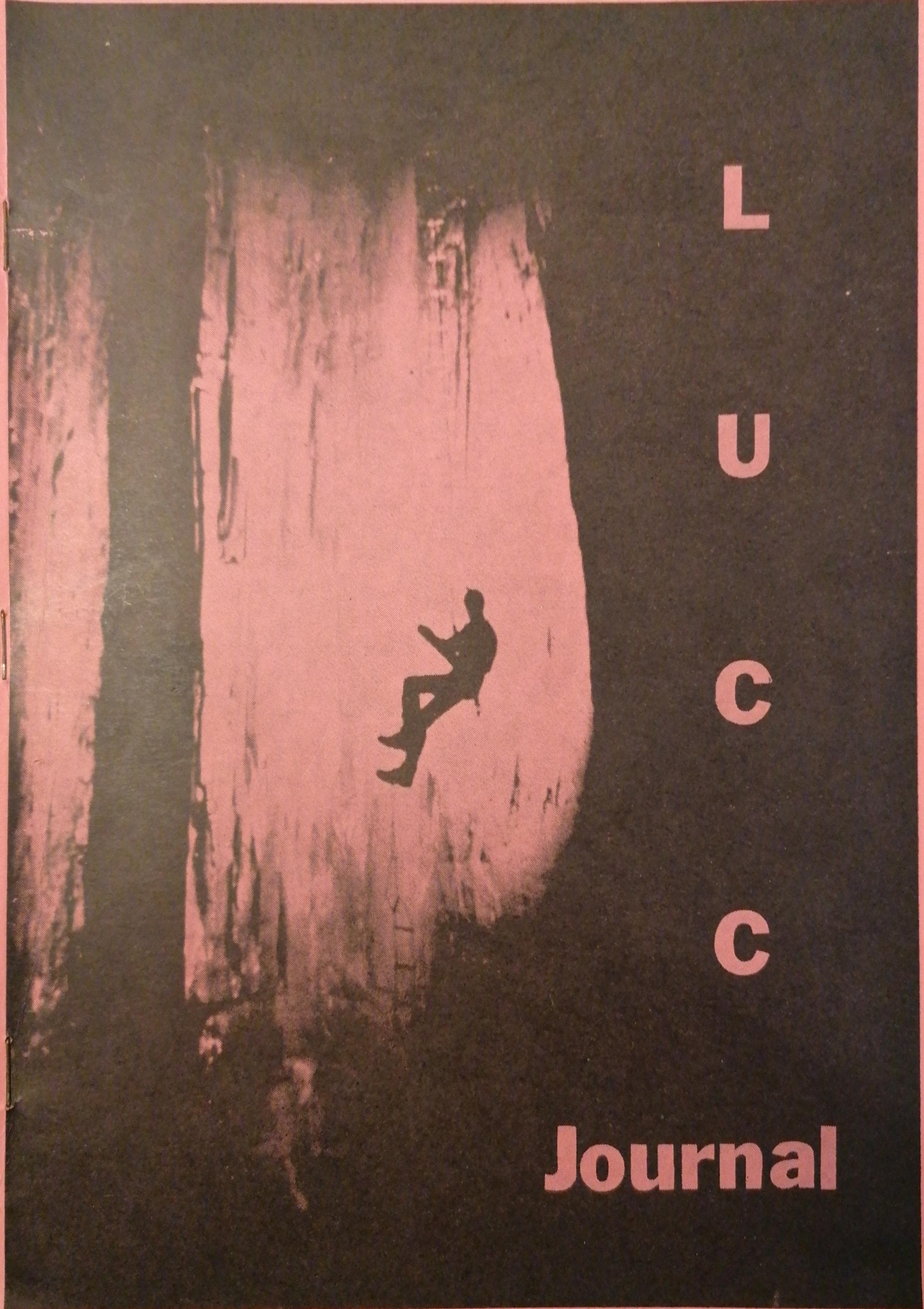
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Journal



THE JOURNAL
of the
LONDON UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUBS

CHELSEA COLLEGE CAVING CLUB
IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 13

Summer 1972

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PRICE 15p.

EDITORIAL

Metrication has been in the air now for a few years and at last cavers are beginning to feel the effects of it. The most noticeable of these has been the recent change in size of several caving publications. This has probably occurred due to a scarcity of Imperial sized paper rather than a desire to metricate as almost all the publications still quote distances in feet only. It is a pity that the only readily available metric paper sizes are A4 and A5, the former too large and the latter too small for a reasonable sized caving publication. This journal is produced on B5 paper, an intermediate metric size, and the ludicrousness of the supply situation is seen when we have to admit to having to buy Quarto size paper and cutting it down to B5. No wonder cavers are not willing to change.

It has been argued that the foot is an ideal unit for caving; but surely the decimetre is a better unit for surveying to, especially when distances are quoted exactly. How often does one see the term 'a 40° pitch', this usually means anywhere between 35 and 45 feet, by calling it a 12m pitch at least we know it is between 11.5 and 12.5m - at least a 100% improvement.

Metrication is here to stay, all scientific publications have been metricated for some years now and most of these have always been metric. This was one of the first caving journals to metricate it would be a good thing for caving if the others did too.

R. Bowser.

Many thanks to all the contributors for their articles and to the IC Geology Department for the surveys.

In addition to the Editor, R. J. Bowser, Chemical Engineering Dept., Imperial College, London, S.W.7 the following can supply copies of this journal:

Pen-y-ghent Cafe, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Settle, Yorkshire.
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Subscriptions (60p. per 4 copies inc. post) should be sent to Rog Bowser.

Cover photo: Juniper Gulf, Last pitch by-pass by Tony Waltham.

YORKSHIRE CAVING A LONG TIME AGO

I well remember my first visit to the caves of Yorkshire - it was 413,000 years ago.

England was a very different place then. The landscape was really very pleasant though more subdued than it is now. The summits of the Pennines rose to over 1000m but as a rolling upland area - not the dissected mountains we know today. And it was cold. Great ice caps in Scotland and on the Lake District were expanding slowly; the witch doctors were telling tales of woe - of "Ice Ages" when great glaciers would sweep across the country.

I reflected upon all this as I journeyed north to Ingletown where I met my guide for the weekend - Fred Flintstone. Fred welcomed me warmly and we set off straight away up the gentle slopes north of the village.

"We'll stay tonight in the club hut," said Fred, "its only a few miles from here at Braida Grot which is in the Kings Valley and you'll see some of the sights of the Pennines on the way."

No more than an hour's walk and at last we had limestone beneath our feet. We stood at the exit to the wide shallow Kings Valley. It was floored by limestone and there was no river running down it; Braida Grot stood on the valley floor halfway along its length. Each side the slopes rose gently and we could clearly see the top of the limestone no more than 55m above the valley floor. Above were endless slopes of shale and sandstone.

"The caves are all round the edge of the valley", said Fred as we walked slowly along. "All the streams sink when they meet

the limestone; and just look at this..." We rounded a bluff and below us lay a huge deep pool with the entire river Dozo flowing out of it, though no water entered it. "...All the streams come back to the surface here at Thornton Spring. The limestone extends a long way below the valley floor, and the waters flow at deep levels, unite and rise to the surface here. That pool is at least 30m deep but our plumb lines have never reached the bottom. There that fault we just crossed, the Craving Fault, has caused the spring because its not limestone to the south of it."

I was suitably impressed as we walked up to the Braida Grot hut. We retired early that night, first packing some bags of equipment for the morrow - a couple of spare reindeer skins (for the caves were very cold), a jar of woad in case we had to get wet, heather sprigs dipped in tallow to light our way beneath the ground, and a bag full of berries - for the sustenance of the inner man.

Soon after daybreak next morning we walked up the easy slope on the western side of the valley to where there was a broad bench at the top of the limestone. It was hard walking, for everywhere the surface was jagged broken blocks of limestone - almost no soil, and no clean rock surfaces; just endless broken stones. Groygarth Hill loomed above us as we walked across the limestone bench to where a stream flowed down off the shales. All the water cascaded down a great open hole at the edge of the limestone. The walls of this shaft were clean and a little undercut, a magnificent spectacle.

"Rowting Eye Hole, we call this one", said Fred. "We've been down it in periods of drought, but its only 49m down the one great rift to a lake. We couldn't see the bottom of it - the shaft walls continued straight down and the water level is the

same as at Thornton Spring, so there's not much hope."

We left the roaring cascade of Rowting Eye Hole behind as we walked along the hillside to the south west, past some tiny sinking streams until we came to another large stream.

"Now this is a peculiar one", mused Fred, as we walked up to a roomy cave entrance where the stream flowed gently into the limestone. "This stream is Swinstow Beck and we call this cave Turfors Rope Pot. Its not very long because there's only a few metres of passage down a series of cascades then it rounds a corner and drops down a 30m shaft and a short passage to a rather small sump. Now, we put some dye in here not long ago - we use dried mammoth blood - and of course it proved the connection to Thornton Spring. But two days after we put the dye in, a party was down Rowting Eye and the water in the lake there was a pale red colour. So at least some of the water goes 600m up the vale, presumably at high level, and only then joins the Rowting Eye water on its journey to greater depths, and then a couple of kilometres back down the valley to Thornton Spring."

From there we walked westwards over the slopes of Greygarth. The views were fine and the air was bracing. We thought we had the fells to ourselves but as we crossed the shoulder of Greygarth we saw three old men further up on the ridge. Then we descended again to the limestone on Luck Fell, for there lay the cave which we were to explore that day - Lost Jacks' Hole.

"We'll look around the fell this afternoon", said Fred, "but let's go down to the cave first - we'll only be a couple of hours." We each donned an extra skin; then, lighting up our tallow soaked torches we walked down the streambed and through a narrow slot into the underground world. The passage was only

just wide enough for comfortable travel, though it was nearly 3m high. The stream flowed smoothly over the polished limestone floor and we followed a winding course for some hundreds of metres. There were few stalactites unfortunately. But at one point I noticed a small proportion of the stream leaking off under the left hand wall.

Fred explained about this, "we think the water goes down here to a series of flooded caverns below the water table. Our water diviner has located a series of parallel water filled rifts just west of here - we've called them Domo, Contipodo and Battleaxe rifts."

More narrow meandering streamway - descending very gently and nearly all with its roof in one bedding plane - and we then came to a junction. We had arrived down the largest passage - South Inlet it was called and on our right a smaller stream added its flow to ours; but its passage soon divided upstream into impossibly small tributaries. The main downstream cave from the junction was called Short Drip Cavern and we walked side by side down its magnificent canyon passage. The occasional cascade gave the impression of descending to the depths on our long subterranean journey, but then we saw chinks of daylight coming in from the roof. Climbing over a few breakdown blocks we arrived at the sump. It was deep; the walls disappeared straight down into the water and the thin shafts of light from high overhead gave it an eerie appearance.

"Gravel sump and thats the end of the cave", said Fred, "look at that roof - one day this lot will be open to the surface. We can't get out here, but not to worry, there's an inlet not far upstream." And sure enough a hundred metres or so upstream we climbed round a corner, along a short dry roof passage

and up a narrow shaft to the surface and daylight once more.

The sun was still high so Fred persuaded me to take another slight diversion before our return to Braida Grot. First he started searching about on the limestone not far from where we had regained the surface. At last, "Over here". Fred pointed down to a narrow rift, only a few inches wide in the bedrock. He beckoned me to put my ear to the crack, and then I heard this dull rumbling far below - the noise of a great cave river.

"Come on there's better over here", called Fred as he walked over a slight rise to a huge, roaring, spray filled shaft - a truly magnificent spectacle. "Now this is Rumble Pot", he said, "4.5m deep but its sumped at the bottom. The water drains out down the fall, and we think its the same that you heard in Dead Head Rift - the rift you listened in at, because its on the same fault."

This awesome shaft was a grand finale to my day on the limestone of Groygarth. We walked slowly back over the hill to arrive at Braida Grot just as dusk crept round us, and well timed for our evening repast.

It was later that evening and Fred had been outside for a moment, coming back inside he said, "its getting really cold, I reckon we've got an Ice Age coming up." He was quiet in thought for a moment and then went on: "you know, I think" (for Fred was a very percceptive fellow) "that an ice age would be a very good thing for this area. It would deepen the valloys and drain out all the lower parts of the caves, so those great flooded tunnels would lie open for exploration. But then perhaps boulder clay would obscure many of the entrances.

"Aye", I said, "you're right. Perhaps even many of the caves may get blocked by washed in glacial debris. On the other hand though, the ice might clean away a lot of this broken rock on the fells and leave some clean smooth limestone pavements."

We sat back reminiscing and sipping our ale. "Anyway", we agreed, "the caves would certainly be different after a glaciation."

Anon.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE EXPEDITION TO THE HIGH ATLAS 1971

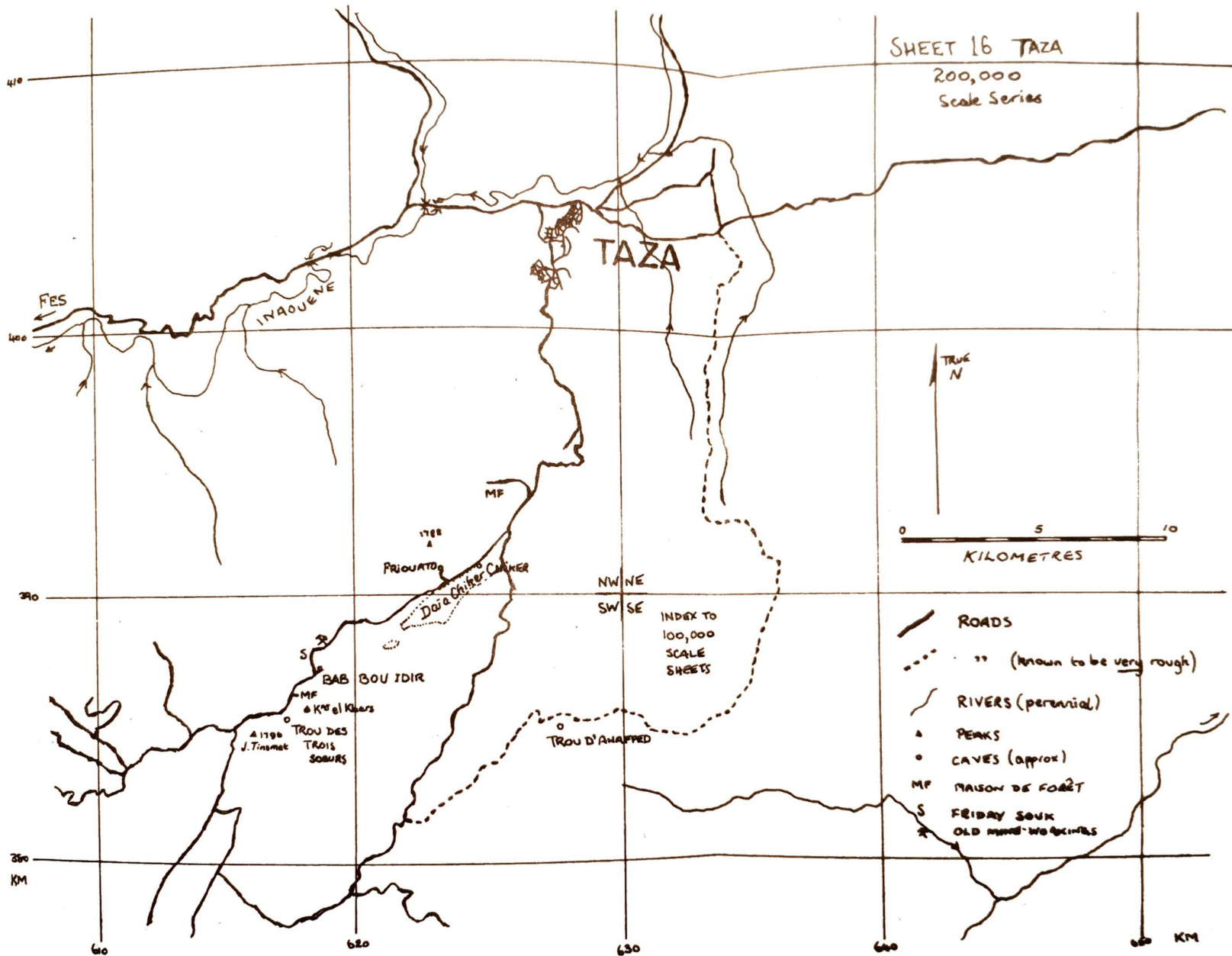
The object of the expedition was to explore an area in the High Atlas near Midelt for caves, the result of this was published in the last journal.

After two weeks in that area we decided to go the well known area of Taza in the Middle Atlas. Here we enjoyed several trips down the Chikkor and Friouata which were the objective of the 1969 British expedition to Morocco. Unfortunately those systems are still not connected after intensive effort, though it is obvious from the survey that they are part of the same system. In this region we surveyed two caves believed to have been discovered by Sheffield University in 1967 but for which there are no published surveys. We also looked at several other likely openings without much success. However the area is riddled with sinks and small caves and there must be plenty of opportunity for further exploration.

After three weeks in this area we decided to tour around the southern flank of the High Atlas and to look at one or two likely looking areas, especially in the gorges of Todra and

SHEET 16 TAZA

200,000
Scale Series



Dados. The Todra Gorge is easily accessible and occurs in limestone of the same age as that at Taza. It is an impressive gorge about twice as high as Cheddar and with completely vertical sides. Here unfortunately we found the locals somewhat unfriendly and catering for the rich American tourist, also we encountered a heavy rainstorm (who said it never rains in Morocco) which resulted in us beating a soggy retreat before the gorge flooded. However the area looked promising and would pay further attention. We were unable to get much further inland with our vehicle - 35cwt Ford Transit, but a truck or four wheel drive could do a complete circuit from Dodra to Dados. Unfortunately we could not get far enough up the Dados to find the gorge there.

There was no further limestone along the southern flank of the Atlas to Marrakosh, and from there we travelled NE to Beni Uellal area where we stopped for a few days at the artificial lake behind the Bin el Oudane dam. Here unfortunately with our time and money running out, a large cool lake and a hot sun distracted us from our exploring. However the hills rise steeply off the plain at Afouer where the geological map shows rocks of Lower Lias. Further explorations in this area may be rewarded.

There are many outcrops of Lower Lias in the Middle Atlas to the NE of Beni Uellal which would prove interesting. According to our researches and conversation with locals no other caving expedition had been in the High Atlas. With its relatively easy accessibility by Land Rover or truck I am sure other expeditions could find rewarding areas in the Atlas mountains.

L. Tunbridge.

TROU DES TROIS SOEURS

This was named and explored by the 1967 Sheffield expedition but no survey has been published. The cave is situated on the ridge between the summits of Kat el Khars and the J. Tinsmot above Bab Bou Idir. The entrance is in the side of a large shakohole about 30m wide. It is relatively small, being only 1m wide. 90m of ladder are required with a long belay to some boulders in the shakohole.

The pot is in relatively good limestone and fluting on the walls suggests that its origin was by erosion by water. The surveying was facilitated by ledges at regular 15m intervals. The upper part of the pot is quite large but not quite vertical and the ladder was on the wall most of the way down.

At the bottom the shaft is quite constricted where a small side shaft leads off the bottom of the main shaft. This leads to a boulder choke in the bottom which was found to be impassable and would be very difficult to clear.

The depth was surveyed at 91m, there being no side passages. All the ladder was against the wall except for about 9m which was free. However the abundance of ledges made the climb quite easy.

L. Tunbridge.

THE TROU D'ANAFED

This cave lies several kilometres SW of Bab Bou Idir, and is marked on the map as a stream sink. It can be approached to within 200m by road (preferably Land Rover). The cave was first

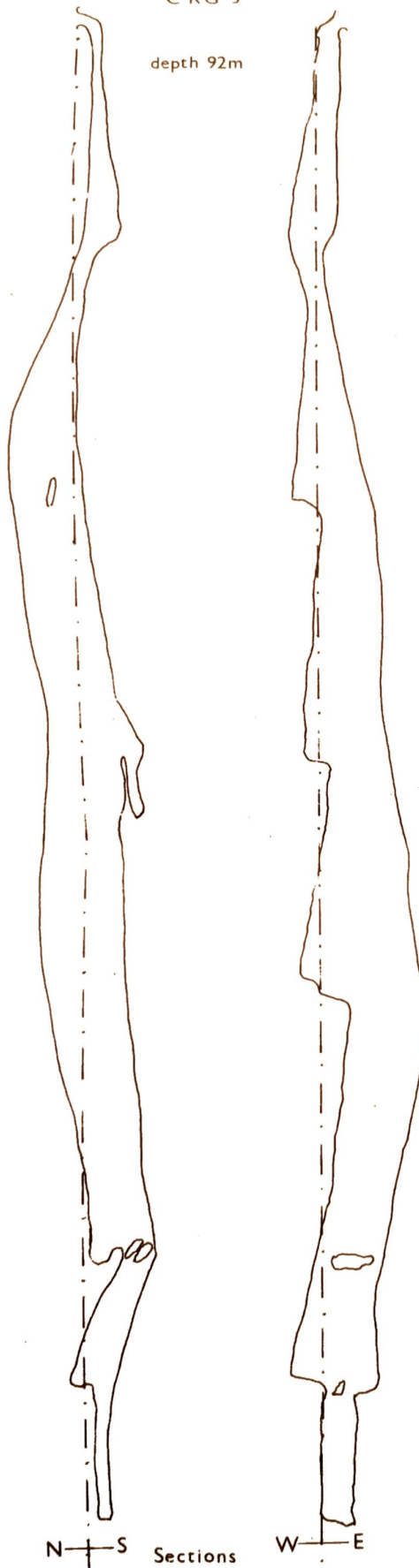
Trou des Trois Soeurs

Taza Morocco

CRG 3

depth 92m

Imperial College Caving Club Expedition to the High Atlas 1971



0m



15



30



45



60



76



85



Plans



explored in 1967 by Sheffield University but not surveyed, and had since remained undescended until our arrival.

We set off on Thursday 26th August without a map in search of the cave, several hours elapsed before we were asked by a local if we were looking for the cave. He then escorted us over a small hill to a dry stream bed which terminated in a shakohole with a large black slit at the bottom. A few rocks thrown down showed the entrance pitch as being quite large.

We returned the next day with the total expedition tackle, to be greeted by 40 or so interested locals. The pitch was laddered in the afternoon, (the delay being due to a puncture) and proved to be 108m deep giving a fine climb. The first 35m was down a very steep slope to a ledge giving sufficient room for two people to stand in comfort. The shaft now became vertical and elliptical in section with the ladder hanging down the wall at one end. After 20m or so the shaft became suddenly wider, due to intersecting another similar but wider shaft (the large inlet) and the ladder eventually left the wall leaving a magnificent last 30m suspended in a vast chamber. Little outside light filtered to the bottom because of the change in direction at the ledge. While others were descending the pitch a telephone system was set up, which proved useful for giving directions to the lifeliners on the surface. At this stage the SUSS telephone wire was unearthed and followed on down the cave.

The way on from the entrance chamber is a small passage littered with trees, leading after a few metres of stooping into a large chamber with boulders covering the floor. At the other end the roof gradually falls with boulders almost blocking further progress, however a route was seen dropping through the boulders and was followed for several metres until a couple of crawls

under boulders gave access to the top of the second pitch. At this point the telephone wire ended. Everyone then returned to the entrance and the exodus began after one of the ladders had been replaced because of a slipped rung. While this was taking place a route into the boulder chamber was found by climbing up to a large ledge 10m above the floor of the entrance pitch, and following a small meandering passage which leads to a 10m pitch into the chamber (this was not descended). Another sign of SUSS activity was found in the form of a fly spray can on the large ledge.

In view of the time taken in descending and ascending the pitch it was decided to leave the ladders and ropes belayed at the ledge, removing only the top section. Consequently we returned the next morning to a scene of destruction. The locals had indulged in the time honoured practice of trundling*, and every moveable rock (plus a few immovable ones and some trees) in the vicinity of the entrance had been hurled to the bottom causing considerable damage to our tackle. Several hours later we managed to descend and split into two groups, one surveying and one exploring.

The second pitch is fairly constricted at its top but opens out after a ledge giving an easy descent onto a calcite floor which drops away to form the third pitch. The glittering orange crystals of this section of the cave were a welcome relief from the somewhat muddy condition of the previous parts.

The calcite slope becomes steeper in its 15m drop into a tight vadose passage. This continues for a few metres until it shrinks to a few centimetres width which was assumed to be the end. A short climb up at this point leads to a small chamber with no obvious exit apart from a small hole in the floor communicating

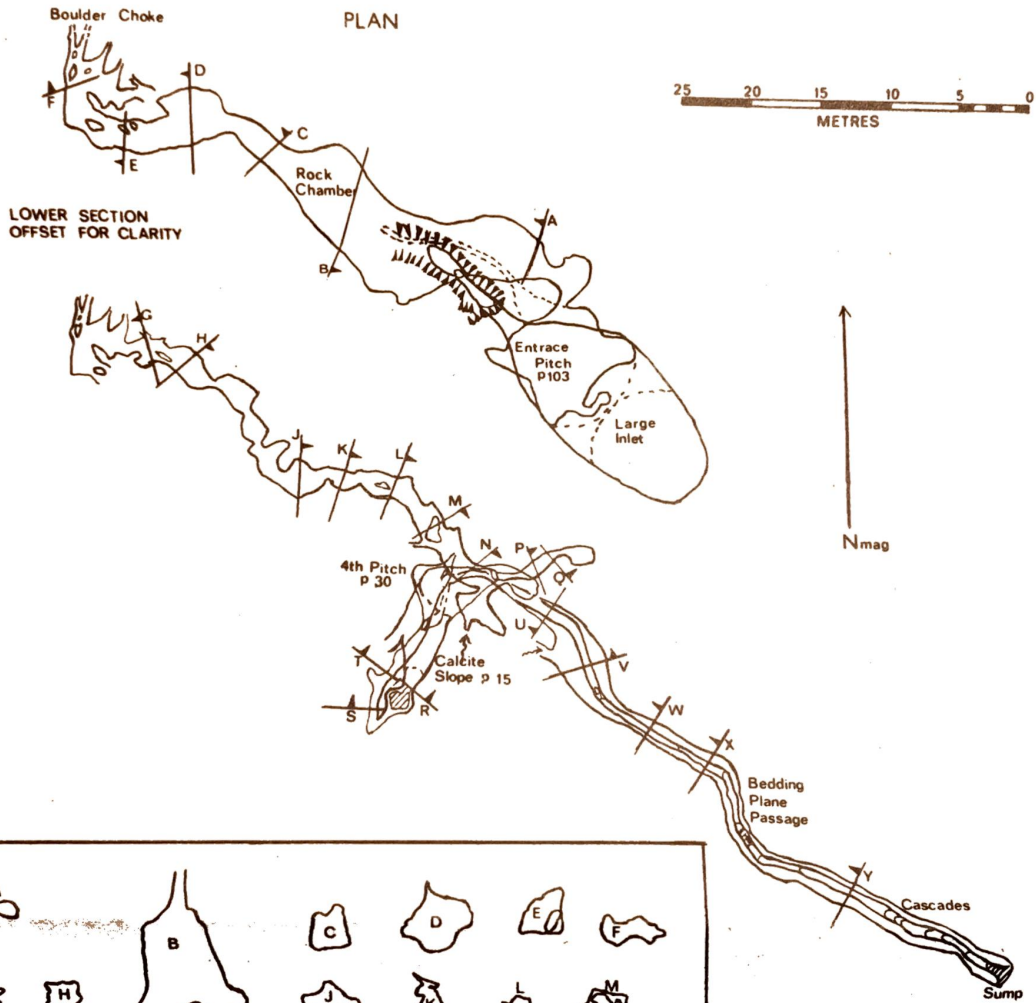
*ref. My Caves - N.Casteret p20 (Temple Press)

TROU D'ANAFFED

TAZA MAROC

TOTAL DEPTH 227 M

SURVEYED BY
IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB 1971
Entrance to 4th Pitch C.R.G. Grade 4
Remainder C.R.G. Grade 1



PASSAGE SECTIONS

TROU D'ANAFED

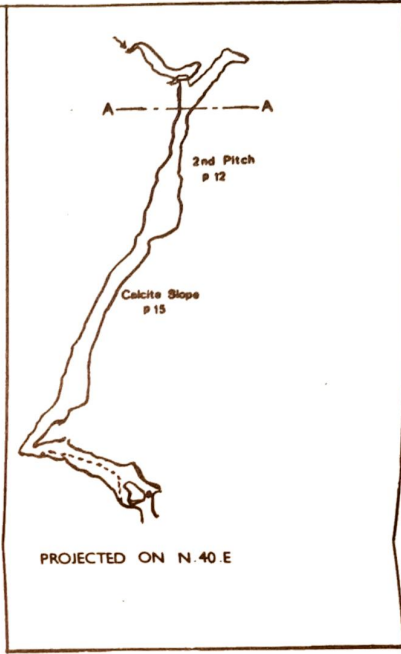
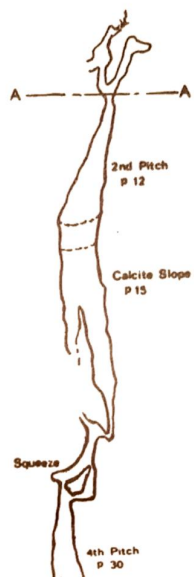
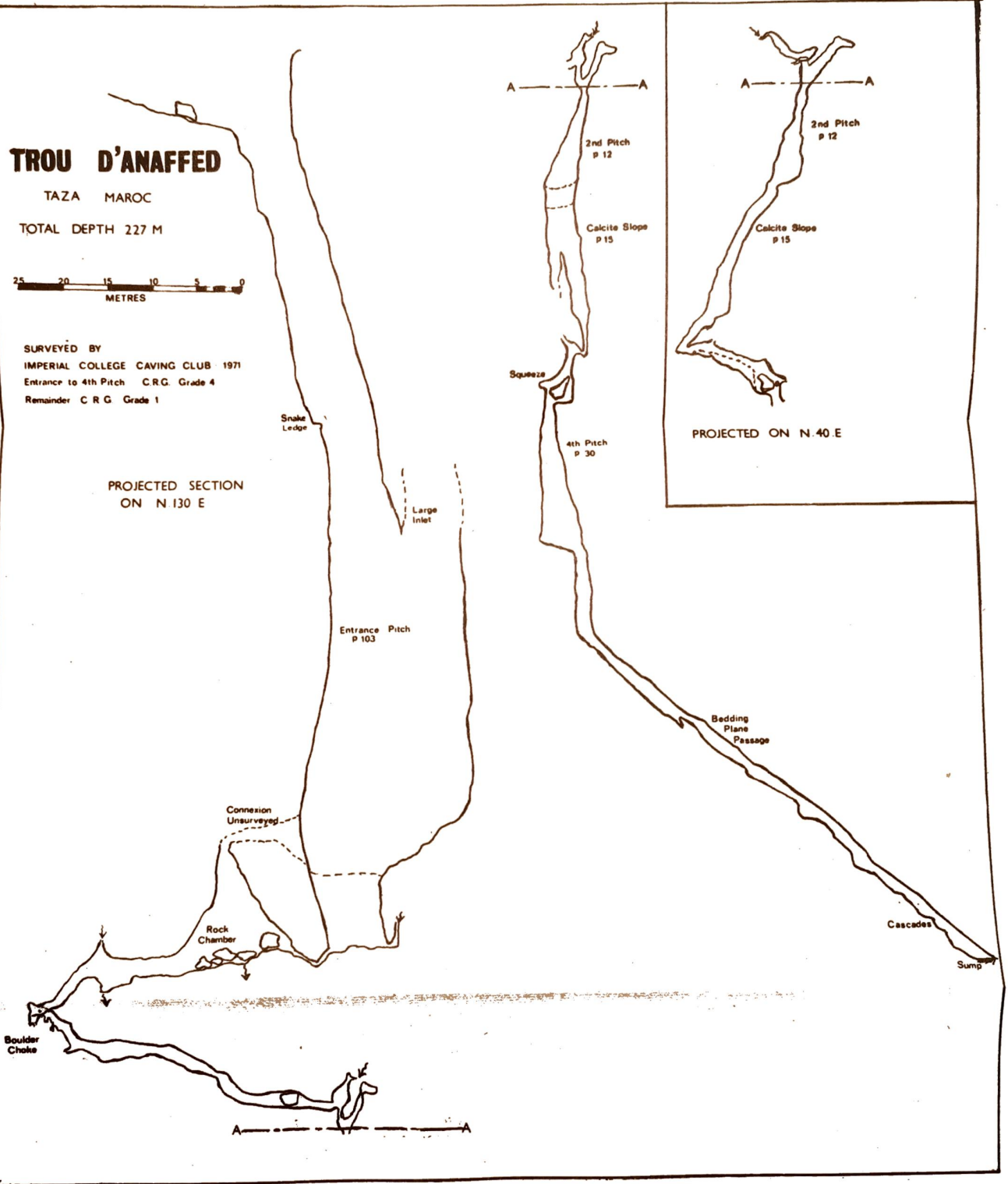
TAZA MAROC

TOTAL DEPTH 227 M



SURVEYED BY
IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB 1971
Entrance to 4th Pitch C.R.G. Grade 4
Remainder C.R.G. Grade 1

PROJECTED SECTION
ON N 130 E



with the lower passago.

This section was left laddered for the surveying party and an exit made. The surveying was progressing well but becoming more difficult in the boulder choke.

No caving was done on the next day because of the necessity of sending the van to Taza for petrol, however Dave and I spent an interesting day exploring the hills behind the campsite. These show all the usual karst features and have some interesting looking holes.

After a few days idleness everyone was keen to get down the cave again. Surveying was the order of the day with Dave and Paul tackling the entrance pitch while Miko, Lloyd and myself doing the main route down. By the time we reached the second pitch we felt quite exhausted and made our way out.

By this time it was obvious that the surveying was not progressing as quickly as had been hoped, consequently the next day was spent on a trip down the Chikkor. In the evening it was decided to send the members of the expedition who were not suffering from dysentery to camp by the cave until it was finished or they too caught dysentery. Three days supply was thought to be sufficient.

The next trip comprised Lloyd, Andy and Dennis surveying and Mike and I exploring the boulder choke. Several routes were followed to no obvious conclusion, and abandoned because of tightness or loose boulders. Lloyd and Co found that the 'end' of the cave was in fact the top of a large pitch but they were unable to enter because of the tight nature of the passage. The exit was more speedy than usual with all the tackle being left in place. Lloyd discovered a snake on the entrance pitch ledge

which he managed to mistake at first for a carbide lamp (I know they are supposed to be camouflaged but...).

We pitched the tent in the nearest convenient place which happened to be the middle of the road. This was OK until 3am when some Arabs on horses tripped over the guy wires.

Mike and I decided to take a look at the fourth pitch, and so we set off next morning with all the remaining ladder and the surveying gear. We spent some time threading the ladder down a small hole and I set off down. The tight section was only a metre or so long and then the pitch opens into a large cross rift giving a splendid free climb of 20m to a ledge, and a short further drop to a bedding plane with a vadose trench. This descends steeply for 150m in a series of dry cascades until a sump is encountered. The sump offered no signs of being short so I surveyed my way back to the pitch and we made our way out. The rest of the afternoon was spent in deladdering which proved to be a tiring job.

The total depth of 228m makes the Trou D'Anaffod the second deepest cave in North Africa. The entrance pitch has some quite interesting lifeforms, choughs, frogs, lizards, a centipede and a snake being observed. The cave is in two major sections, these being the entrance, boulder choke section and the lower series. The lower series is quite recent and was doubtless formed after the boulder choke section became blocked. There is plenty of scope for extensions in the boulder choke and good prospects of a large system rivalling the Chikker. The descent is very enjoyable and nowhere particularly difficult except at the top of the 4th pitch.

A.J.Gilbert.

KIRK POT

EASE GILL NGR SD662800

HWPCP Survey 1970

CRG Grade 4b

Length 180m, Depth 41m



Ease Gill Kirk
Entrance

3-4c

14-3p

2c

PROJECTED SECTION

WEST mag EAST

Ease Gill

Entrance

3-4c

14-3p

ENTRANCE SERIES

PROJECTED SECTION

NORTH mag SOUTH

Lower Streamway

2c

Sump

Sink

Pegleg
Pot

PLAN

N mag

Entrance

Lower Streamway
Pool

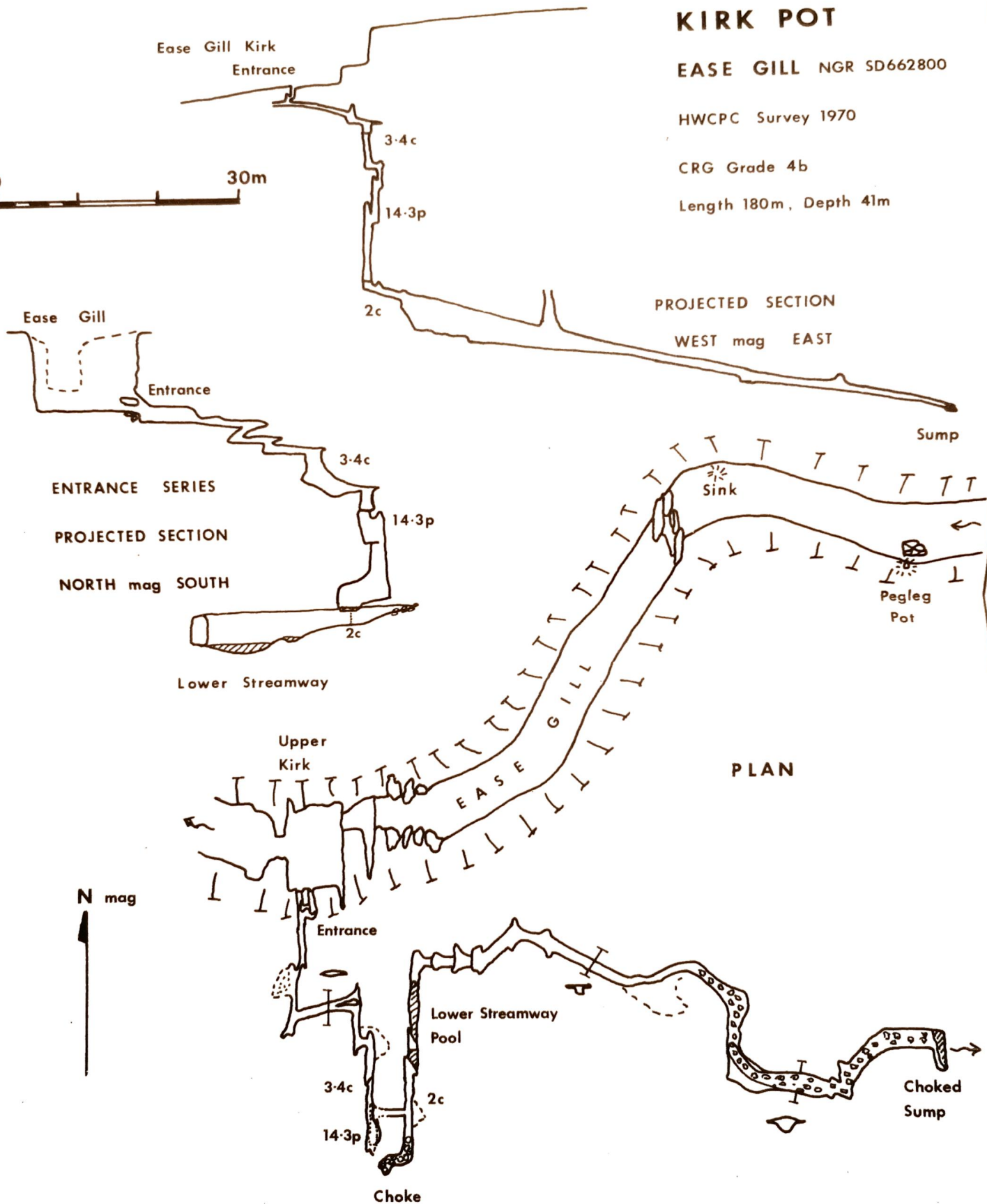
3-4c

14-3p

2c

Choke

Choked
Sump



KIRK POT

Though explored by the Red Rose many years ago there did not seem to be a survey available of Kirk Pot. We were still exploring Pippikin Hole in early summer 1970 and were already looking for back doors, so one Sunday Dave Cobley and Tony Waltham went for a quick look at Kirk Pot and other odds in Easgill.

What we found was a most impressive cave. Interesting little rifts and boddings in immaculately polished rock led us to an easy 16m pitch. And at the bottom of this the main streamway starts off with impressive dimensions but eventually ends in a choked sump - no hope for diving. Kirk Pot is well worth a visit, but only in good weather. Its normally a dry trip but fills, entirely, to the roof in minutes if any water starts down the Gill.

A.C.W.

SELF - LIFELINING: A SELF - RESCUE PROCEDURE

The practice of self-lifelining ladder pitches by means of a fixed rope and Clog seems to be increasing in popularity. The purpose of a lifeline is to prevent injuries or worse in the event of a ladder or bolay breakage, (falling off ladders being against most clubs' rules). Yet little thought seems to have been given to what the "dangling man" might do after a breakage if he is using a self-lifelining device. The man who self-lifelines is generally the last down or the first up a pitch and therefore can expect no help from the rest of the party below. Also, if the Clog is used by means of a crab connecting it to a waistlength rather than a sit-sling, then there is not a great conscious while left in which to decide what to do. Described below is a procedure which has been tried with the above thoughts in mind.

Lack of realism in the diagrams is due to an inability to draw and a wish to have the view of the rope unobstructed by the body.

Figure 1 is self explanatory. In figure 2 the victim has pulled up some of the slack rope from below the Clog and is tying an overhand knot in which to put one of his feet so as to take the weight of his body off his waistlength; figure 3. This position is quite relaxing and could be sustained for some time. Tying the overhand knot the correct distance down the rope warrants some practice.

In figure 4 the rope below the overhand knot is pulled up between the logs, another overhand knot is tied and is fixed to the crab connecting Clog and waistlength. The rope still hangs between the logs and in figure 5 our friend has reached down by his side and grabbed the rope, pulled it up round one hip across his chest and over the other shoulder so as to be in the classic abseiling position. In figure 6 the fine fellow has uncrabbed himself from his waistlength and is abseiling down, (slowly the posterior warms).

R.M.Thomson.

A STAR IS BORN

When I first saw Sid Perou's film "The Lost River of Gaping Gill" I was as much fascinated by the commentary as by the photography, and I began thinking of ways to work in phrases like "...only the fittest and most experienced cavers can hope to get through", when describing my last journey to the Easter series without letting the fact that it had been on the Freshers trip.

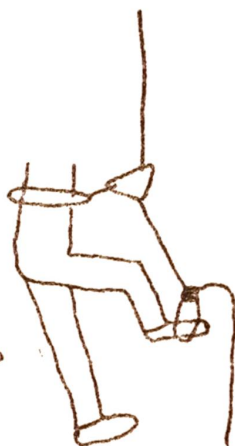
I am personally all in favour of acquiring a reputation for being tough and fearless by this method rather than by grovelling down



1: The ladder breaks



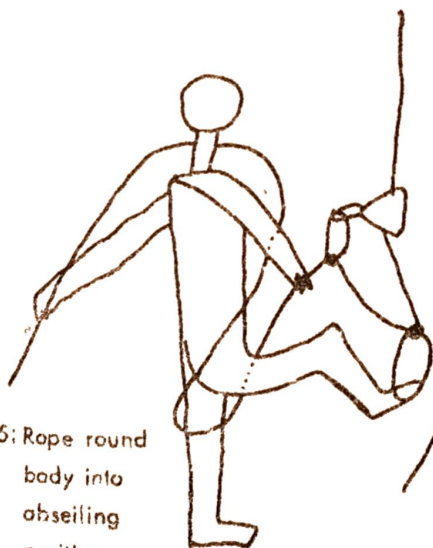
2: Tying the first overhand knot



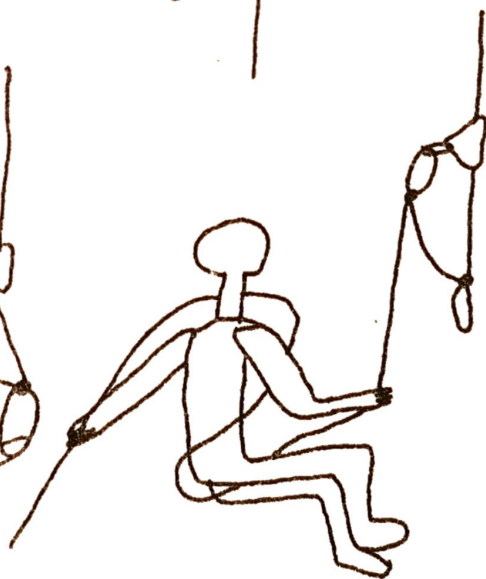
3: Foot into loop



4: Tying the second overhand knot



5: Rope round body into abseiling position



6: Abseiling down

nasty, dangerous, tedious super sevoros. Thus when I found that our President and tame CPC escapee Keith Preston had persuaded the college Film Society to make a film of us defying death in an epic Calf Holes - Browgill expedition I was very excited and began planning an accompanying commentary that would ensure me a contract to understudy Sean Connery.

Preparation for the trip was also a refreshing change from routine, rather than stand around in pubs drinking to try to get rid of a guilty feeling that I ought to be training I spent my evenings constructing a new belt out of bright orange webbing that would show up well on a colour film, and repairing my wot suit (the knees had worn out due to my practice of praying for strength at the bottom of long pitches).

Finally the great day arrived and found me standing around at the Calf Holes entrance with a comb in my helmet and trying to keep my best profile to the camera. I was a little taken aback to find that the cameraman had made no provision for lighting, I have noticed before that non-cavers find it curiously difficult to grasp the fact that there is no light at all underground. However he was shooting 16mm Ektachrome film uprated to 1100 ASA and we knew that the passages inside were small and light coloured so we took down a number of spare Nife cells and hoped for the best. A portable tape recorder was also making the trip to record any interesting drips, curses etc.

After taking some shots of the moor and of the entrance pitch in Kodachrome 2 we switched to Ektachrome for the passage a little downstream. This is fairly large, about 3m high and 5m wide, but we were able to bring all the cells into play. As we started up again I found to my horror that all the cells had been left for me to carry. My pleas having no effect I was forced to stagger

along beside the cameraman lighting up points of interest, this also meant that I did not get on the film myself at all.

A little footage was taken in Hainsworth crawl but unfortunately the climb down the waterfall following could not be filmed as the chamber was obviously too large. Finally at the Browgill entrance, growing tired of my constant whimpering the cameraman consented to film me walking out of the cave. But my belt had got all muddy and I had lost my comb, it just wasn't the same. We then gave the thing up for the day having shot 15 minutes of film in a two hour trip, certainly the fastest filming trip I ever heard of.

A few days later we heard the distressing news, very little of the underground shots had come out. The Calf Holes streamway had not although the bedding plane exit from Hainsworth crawl had and so had the Browgill streamway where it is narrow. The moorland and entrance pitch shots were all right of course, and the silhouette of the Browgill entrance from inside was very effective if corny. As these were not enough to make a stand-alone film the excerpts will be put into the College quarterly newsreel and may be good for publicity, but my hopes of lying on the Hollywood sands and staring at the stars (or vice versa) appear to be dashed for the time being.

Tony Reynolds.

CAVING IN PERU 1972

Following in the wake of Tony Waltham's Himalayan expedition Imperial College Caving Club are taking up a similar theme in the Peruvian Andes this summer. The area chosen is situated in Central Peru 120km NE of Lima and 25km south of Lage Junin. It consists of a plateau at 4000m on almost horizontally bedded

Mesozoic limestones and shales, the plateau is dissected by river valleys having floors between 3000 and 3500m. The plateau area is about 100km² and aerial photographs show that the drainage is all underground. They also show many other signs of karstification including dry valleys, pavement and a very large number of shakeholes many of which show elongation. The river valleys contain several springs and some of these give rise to large terraces of calcareous tufa. Many of the tufa terraces contain caves of their own, often taking the whole river flow.

The expedition will be in the field for three months and will carry out a comprehensive scientific programme. This consists of topographical and geological surveying, with some geomorphology. There will also be a hydrological programme with some water chemistry.

It is hoped to publish some preliminary results of the expedition of interest to cavers in the next issue of this journal, this will appear by December 1972; a complete report will follow.

R. Bowsor.

MAYPOLING IN ROWTEN POT

Sitting outside the club hut at Braida Garth on a gloriously warm summer Saturday (1969 actually), someone asks about the avon at the bottom of Rowten which is marked on DB's survey. So we all set off, taking a few bits of maypole for a look round.

Quickly down the main pitch, round the bypass, down the 6m pitch, missed out the 14m pitch (by using a 6m pitch instead, which is dry [it is possible to traverse out further and climb down avoiding the use of ladder]) and then we were at the bottom.

The sumps looked wet so we went along the rift to the aven. What aven? - We could see the roof 8m up, so we set off back upwards. Up the two 6m pitches and Dave Copley notices a narrow rift with a trickle of water coming down it. He masters a 5m climb, ladders it for the lesser mortals and disappears.

"An aven", he shouted back; in it, a bit of old pole from some previous attempt by persons unknown, who had just got this far. Our own poles were passed up and Maypole pitch was soon climbed, 6m with a narrow awkward climb off at the top. Just round the corner there is another aven but the poles were too short so we retreated for the day.

Sunday morning and we found another piece of pole under the hut. Pulled it out and the hut did not fall down so we set off once again for Rowton. We had been wondering where the water came from. The only known sink to the north is Green Laid's Pot, which John had blasted into the week before but it had become too tight at the bottom of the first pitch 9m down. Did the water go to Rowton along the joints at a high level? Consequently there was a large party down on the Sunday - John Southworth, Jim Cunningham, Jim (Oxfam) Farnworth, Dave Copley, Dave Fisher, Kenny Taylor, Tony Waltham and Dave Taylor - all Wanderers with a few visitors more on top.

The 9m aven was wet. We had tried lengthening our pole the previous day with a piece of old car found in the main shaft - hence Axle Pot - and though still short of the top we had seen the way on - straight up the water. But at least the water was warm - for we only had woolies on. Tony won the race to be first up the now longer pole and found a larger passage at the top. Everyone followed up and continued along the rift, up a climb into a wider chamber - Straw Chamber. A notch was cut round the floor of the chamber into a shale bed, which contains a profusion of short straws.

Climbing up the walls of the chamber revealed the water pouring down through masses of black gritstone boulders - no chance without desperate bang and run techniques. Jim forced the southbound rift to where he could hear water in the main route but could not get through. Dave Fisher was waved on the end of the pole up the aven below the 3m climb, but found it too tight. Oxfam and Tony surveyed out and also added the decorated Calcite Inlet and some floorless rifts near the main shaft to the survey.

The survey showed the top of our inlet to be almost below the entrance. Does the water leak in from the floor of the streamway in Rowten Cave or the open gully? Hence the name Leak Inlet. Oxfam had a look down the streambed but found no obvious sink. It may be worth a look one day, because if such a leakage does supply the water, banging may divert all the water down Leak Inlet and leave Rowten Pot a dry trip.

Tony Waltham.

The following article is reprinted from Canadian Caver, it can be obtained for 1 dollar (inc postage), from 'The Canadian Caver' Department of Geology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

ON ROPES AND LADDERS

On a typical English caving trip the party sets off with a great hoap of rope and ladder. At each pitch the ladder is thrown down and a double lifeline put on, usually round a pulloy. In America the party usually just carries rope and rappels and prusiks each pitch. Why the difference? Clearly the English system is inherently safer, but weighs and costs considerably more than the single rappel rope. On ladders one has two chances: failure of the ladder, belay or lifeline should

not be disastrous if the gear is being properly used. Tired cavers can be helped to climb the ladder or can be lowered to await rescue in comfort. On rappel, failure of the rope, belay point, seat sling or rack can all cause disaster. An exhausted caver on the rope may be unable to help himself or to be helped by his companions. However climbing ladders is more tiring than prusiking and it is possible to rest comfortably on prusik. Are Americans substituting cheapness and convenience for safety? Ladders are more costly than ropes. Good homemade ladder costs about 50c a foot, and with ropa at about 15c a foot, the ladder system costs five times as much as the single rappel rope. Ladders however last longer than ropes: some ladder made thirty years ago is still in regular use in England. One also has to consider the cost of individual prusik gear. A jumars rig with break bars costs 40 dollars or so - enough to pay for 80 foot of ladder.

Then there is the convenience of rappel ropes. You order a coil of rope and off you go. Ladders do take time to make, unless one is willing to spend 1.00 to 1.50 dollars a foot on constructed ladder of dubious quality. The other important point is the ease of climbing - on short pitches it is quicker and far more convenient to climb ladders. Prusiking a 20 foot pitch takes a fair time considering the time taken to get into the prusik gear. On wet pitches good cavers can run up ladders very fast, while the same pitch may be almost impossible on prusik. Conversely long pitches are best climbed on prusik - I would like to see someone ladder a 1000 foot pitch. This gives the best insight into the difference between English and American cavers. English caves tend to have many short and wet pitches. American caves, more especially, Mexican caves, have long, often dry, pitches. Thus Americans are not just lazy and thrifty; the prusik system is best for the caves they encounter. And when Americans do try

ladders occasionally they use ludicrous equipment. Thus I have seen 15 and even 20 inch spaced ladders being used while it is considered best to climb 10 inch ladder. Some people seem to substitute the ladder for the rope without using a lifeline which is a dangerous practice even on short pitches.

Cavers are basically conservative. Thus many English cavers consider prusiking to be unsafe while Americans often view ladders in the same way. They both seem to have their place, so here at McMaster we try to combine the two systems, using the ingrained ladder technique and the newly-tried prusiking system.

J.Coward.

AVAILABLE LIGHT IN AGEN ALLWEDD

In the days when I was young and fit I often used to take my camera underground. However I was constantly being disappointed when my pictures of subjects softly and subtly lit by carbides and Nifes turned out in stark black and white blocks. It occurred to my innocent young mind that this might be because I had let off a large coarse flashbulb at the time, and that it might be worthwhile to try taking pictures by 'available light', that is, just by the power of the headlamps.

Springing into action with my usual tiger-like speed, a mere six years found me standing like an idiot in my bedroom with my helmet and coll on, taking pictures of a wardrobe. The film/developer combination was the most powerful I could find and consisted of Kodak 2475 Recording film (nominally 1600 ASA) pushed with Maxitol and D76 for as far as I could get it, which turned out to be in the region of 12,800 ASA. This proved sufficient to get good pictures of a wardrobe at 3m with camera

settings of 1/125 at f1.4.

Encouraged by this I resolved to take my camera on the next meet, which was to Wales. As I would be shooting wide open and at slow speed I took a 28mm wide-angle lens to cut down camera shake and focusing problems, the maximum aperture however was only f3.5 but with a number of lights around I thought it would be sufficient. On our arrival at the entrance to Agon Allwodd it was raining, to everyones amazement, and we stood around in front of a small rusty door in a cliff waiting for Keith to arrive with the key. Keith finally appeared wearing a plastic mac over his boiler suit and carrying an umbrella. He let us in, all sixteen of us were going down at once as it was reputed to be a large cave. Just inside the entrance to my surprise (I haven't done much Welsh caving) there was a small wooden writing desk with a visitors book on it, and also some coat hooks on which Keith hung his mac and umbrella. After signing in we proceeded to make our way through the entrance series which was made only slightly more interesting by the fact that someone had stolen the telephone wire a few weeks earlier. We eventually arrived at the Main Passage, a kilometre or so of sandy railway tunnel extremely large and featureless. We trotted up this at a good pace, occasionally passing signs saying things like 'Keep Agon Allwodd Clean' until my eyes were only capable of registering sandy brown till Keith condescended to give us a rest. While I was taking a few more pictures, Leslie, a long haired poet with a death wish that impells him to do things like go caving and dice with tractors on narrow roads, began peeling off a little layered mud from the floor and eating it, claiming that it had the colour and consistency of milk chocolate. Soon we were all sitting round eating mud and agreeing that it was just like chocolate until the club Old Woman turned up and began lecturing us for consuming a feature of valuable scientific interest. Half

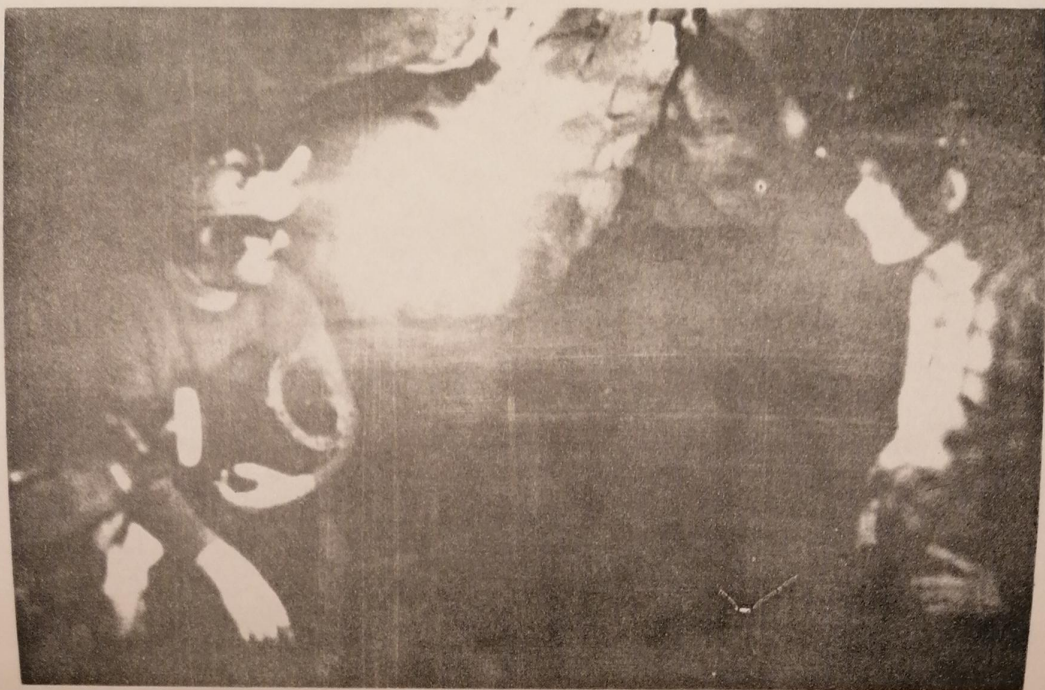
source is included in a picture, but this was worse than I had expected. A better coated lens than the Lydith might cut this down, but in general it seems that the best policy is to get the subjects to turn their beams on each other. Most of the pictures were taken at 1/15 or 1/30 at f3.5 at distances up to about 5m. With a larger aperture lens or in a small chamber (conspicuously lacking in Aggy) this might be increased to around 10m. The negatives were of good contrast and printed well on Agfa Normal paper, and although the results can hardly be said to be grainless I think they do tend to convey the atmosphere better than most flash shots.

I had taken the precaution of including Keith in the majority of the photographs and when I showed him the results he simpered a bit and suggested that a photographic trip might be a good idea some day, and could he come along? With luck I might even be able to get him to carry the camera.

Tony Reynolds.

LOST JOHNS' WET PITCH AREA

Over the last year or two Imperial College Caving Club and Chelsea College Caving Club have been rapidly approaching the record for the most descents of Lost Johns'. Unfortunately no significant progress was being made in the way of discoveries. Small jobs were done such as bolting up to the top of the large aven in Lyle Cavern looking for a passage which later appeared only 16m up on a ledge that we had already explored. Not to be beaten, we followed up an idea from Tony Waltham. He had noticed an aven about 10m above the stream near the bottom of Wet Pitch. As we had some maypole down Lost Johns' (courtesy of HWCPC) and with nothing but our virginity to lose it was



above, Agen Allwedd by available light



left, Lost Johns'; Lyle Cavern High Level Series-
Large Aven

decided to have a look at this aven.

The party consisted of Rog Bowsor, Bill Frost, Martin Loach, Viv Satchwell, Robin Thomson, Tony Waltham, John Walkington and Tony White. The maypoles were well hidden in the Master Cave just upstream of Groundsheet Junction - so well hidden that it took almost half an hour to find them. The journey to the bottom of Wet Pitch is not very long, probably just as well, as it does not do one much good to have a 3m maypole pushed up one's rear every minute or so.

As one descends from Wet Pitch, there is a traverse above the stream, which turns a right hand bend and follows the stream down to the top of Last Pitch. Just after this first corner there is a ledge to the right which seems to go nowhere. 6m of maypole and ladder were erected and yours truly being the smallest was told to get up. On reaching a small ledge I could see an opening another 6m above me. Another ladder was tied on and Robin came up to the ledge. The maypole was lifted up and pushed into the hole.

At the top there was a passage 1m wide and 3m high. There is a good belay point and the ladder was secured. While everyone clambered up we went on to explore. After about 15m of easy vadose passage we came to a 4m pitch, followed immediately by another pitch. Words travelled back for more ladder which was produced with remarkable speed. At the bottom of the first pitch we found a chamber with an oval shaped floor and a fissure in the roof. This was pushed but went nowhere. The chamber is about 6m high and 3m across with a floor of dry mud. Proceeding down the next pitch we descended into a slightly larger chamber with a damp mud floor and a crawl leading off. There are two impenetrable passages in the chamber: one bypassing the pitch

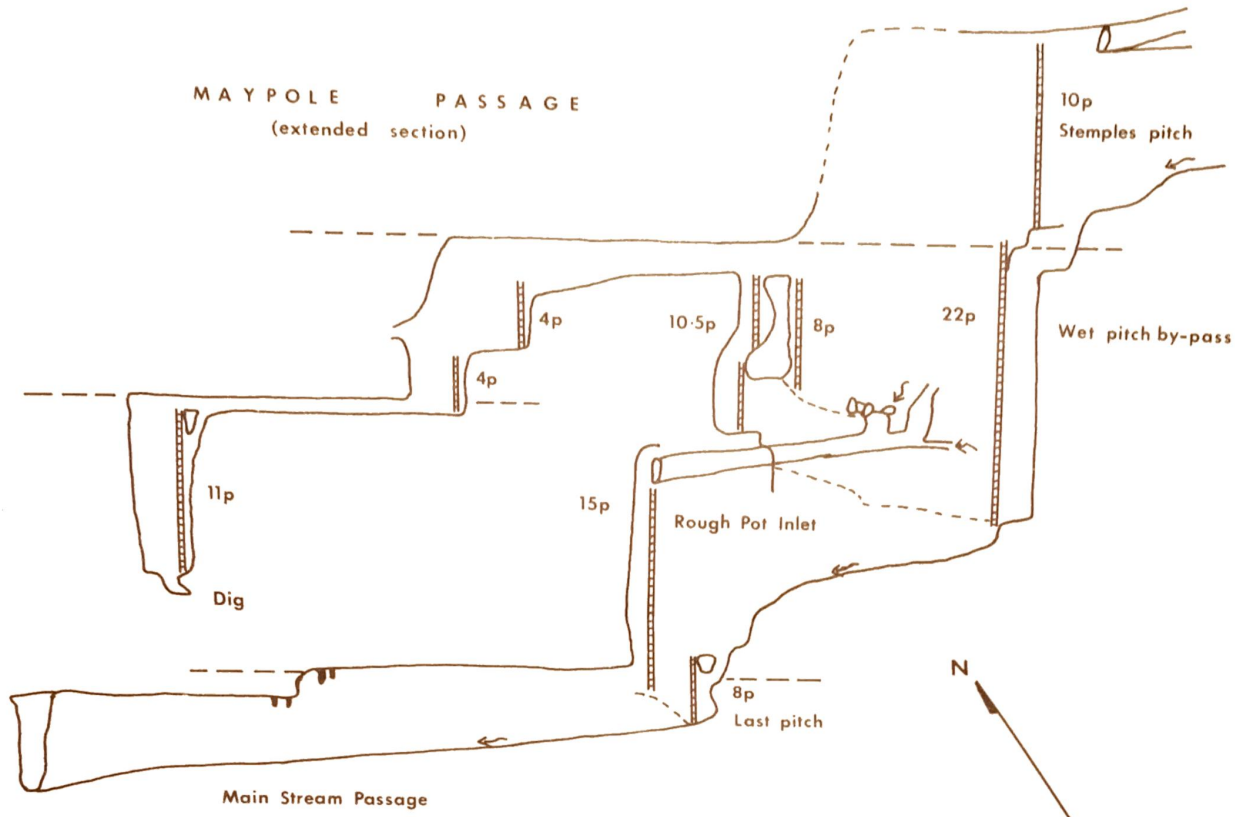
and the other leading down in the side of the chamber, through which the sound of running water can be heard.

We all assembled in the chamber to exchange impressions and views. Tony said this was where the stream originally went before it broke downwards to last pitch ie. along its present course. This seems about the only answer, unless of course there is an inlet somewhere above Battle Axe on the opposite side.

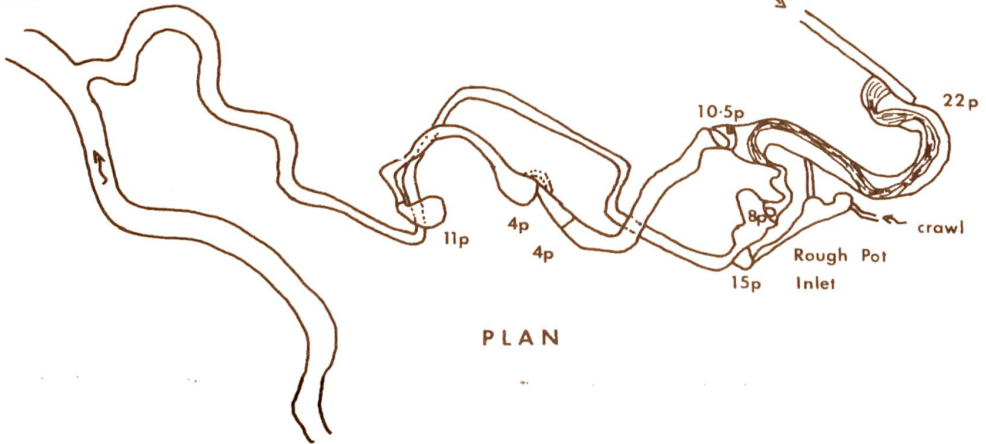
To return to the gathering, excitement was still running high so we proceeded along the crawl. It started off as a hands and knees crawl but soon descended to flat out. The mud floor is very dry with 6cm cracks. The first obstacle was an old gower which was soon demolished with my Nife cell, trouble was that it demolished my Nife cell also. Quick fiddling restored about 50% intensity. Pressing on for about another 3m we came to another gower, this one more resilient than the other. Nife cells prove futile so a lump hammer was produced and the gower broken down to a squeeze. Another 2m further on led to an 11m pitch with an extremely hairy take-off. The pitch leads into a chamber with a mud floor and a small hole about 10cm diameter winding its way into the mud. The chamber itself is about 12m high with quite extensive calcite formations on the walls. The floor of the chamber is being dug at the moment.

John Walkington.

Since the above article was written there has been another development in the area. Preston Caving Club have scaled the Rough Pot Inlet and discovered a short series of avens and crawls, see survey. The crawls have yet to be pushed to a conclusion but they don't seem to hold out much hope for extensions. The Rough Pot water was dyo tested and seemed to leak back into the Lost



Groundsheet
Junction



PLAN



LOST JOHNS'
Maypole Passage Extension
 LUCC Survey 1972
 CRG Grade 4

Johns' stream rather than come down the Rough Pot Inlet, perhaps it needs renaming.

On a recent trip to the area we made an interesting discovery. By maypoling back into our new extension and then laddering down the other side of the lodge leading to Maypole passage, an 8m pitch led to a ledge in the main stream passage about 12m up. At the end of this ledge a short climb gave a small passage leading into the Rough Pot Inlet, see survey.

Rog Bowser.

ENTRANCE HEIGHTS ON LECK FELL

After the publication of Tony Waltham's Leck Fell Survey it became obvious that either the survey must be wrong or the altitudes given on the 6" Ordnance Survey maps were in error, assuming that Lost Johns' resurges at Leck Beck Head. The latter point was cleared up by a successful dye test and so a surface survey was called for. The survey was carried out from Ordnance Survey Bench Marks on the road going up the fell. These were levelled at the beginning of this century and the heights obtained from that date have been corrected for change in mean sea level. Bench Marks were chosen as near as possible to the expected entrance height in order to cut down the number of sights necessary. Levelling was done by Autoset and the traverses were unclosed, though there is no reason to expect an error especially on the short traverses. Reference points were chiseled at the entrances levelled, these are in the shape of a T and were levelled to the horizontal bar. It would be useful if future surveyors could tie their surveys in to these reference points. The survey details are shown below and it is expected that the traverses will be closed in the near future.

Lost Johns^o

OS bench mark SD669786 1147.0^o OD

Ref point on right hand wall of Lost Johns' stream near pool
5m from entrance. Altitude 352.87m (1157.7^o) OD.

Notts Pot

OS bench mark SD673788 1233.9^o OD

Ref point on top of limestone outcrop to the right of the stake
above the pitch. Altitude 370.52m (1215.6^o) OD.

Gavel Pot

OS bench mark SD667785 1098.1^o OD

Ref point on limestone block at top of gully outside fence.
Altitude 328.12m (1076.5^o) OD

Leck Beck Head

OS bench mark SD656776 209.58m OD

Ref point on outcrop on left hand side of Beck between normal
and flood resurgences. Altitude 215.49m (707.0^o) OD
Level of water at normal resurgence 213.34m (699.9^o) OD.

One or two interesting points arise from this data. Lost Johns^o
can only be 139.5m deep (458^o), hence it is probable that there
is a 10% error in the Leck Fell survey. If one accepts the error
in the survey and assume that it is in the entrance series then
the Rumbling Hole inlet ties in nicely with Rumbling Hole without
having to postulate a pitch. However it would be useful if
Rumbling Hole entrance were levelled. The altitude of the Notts
sump is then 249m OD and the Gavel sump 219m OD, so that diving
upstream in Gavel should lead to a passage with 30m of height to
gain before reaching Notts. Downstream Gavel is less interesting
being only 6m above Leck Beck Head.

Rog Bowser.

REVIEWS

Northern Caves Volume 1 - Wharfedale.
by D.Brook, R.G.Coe, G.M.Davies and M.H.Long.
Dalesman Books 144pp pbk 90p

The first of a three volume series to replace Pennine Underground - and a universal familiarity with P.U. makes comparison the best criticism.

The greater size (8 x 12.5cm) and paper cover renders N.C.1. less of a pocket book than P.U., but it's not too big and paperbacks are cheapest.

The area covered by N.C.1., "Nidderdale, Upper Wharfedale, Littondale and Malhamdale and the hills between these dalos" is divided into twelve areas, and the caves of each area are described together in alphabetical order. This is a major improvement over P.U. An index refers one to the page numbers of the cave descriptions. It would have been nice though if the name of the area had been printed at the top of every page.

The descriptions follow the P.U. style and format, but every measurement, in both descriptions and tackle lists, is given in feet and metres. I found this offputting when reading the descriptions. A novel and nice feature is line plans for the major systems.

There is a total area map at the beginning covering two pages and the two pages are in the wrong order. A resulting suspicion of bad editing does not seem to be borne out by the remainder of the book.

This spool is a waste of time; if you've bought this journal you'll certainly buy N.C.1. It's good, and the three volumes should make a worthy successor to P.U. - though as to the price of the next volume, your guess is as good as mine, unless it's 90p.

R.M.T.

Journal of the Craven Pothole Club, 1971 (Vol 4, No 5)

65p from J.J. Waterfall, 10 Sheep St., Skipton, Yorkshire.

Nearly every year the CPC produces one of the best of the caving journals. 1971 is no exception and its value is excellent with 60 pages, 8 photographs and twelve surveys, even at the rather high price. There is a good proportion of well written articles on Yorkshire caves, including original exploration, and that in Robin Hood's Cave is most interesting. A long article describes the successes of the Norway expedition and shorter articles concern caves in Ireland, Iran and the Himalaya. A most illuminating description of the weaknesses of some ladder ferrules should provide considerable food for thought.

It is unfortunate that such an excellently presented journal should be marred by features of some of the surveys. Six of them are included as loose sheets - a wretched nuisance to all except the printer; but two could easily be reduced to single pages and three more could go in the pages with only minimal cartographic planning. Also some surveys have "physical measurements" included on them - such data is wasted on the survey and should be annotated in the text. Finally two surveys are of extensions to caves, yet give no relationship to the rest of the cave except "old cave" written at one end of the survey. Particularly in the case of simple systems, as both these are, at least a small outline inset survey of the whole, extended, system should be

included.

Perhaps those criticisms are hard - they are really aimed at journal editors in general and not just at this one. And the 1971 CPC journal is undeniably one of the best caving publications available - this is meant to be read as a good review.

A.C.W.

The Caves of the Alum Pot Area by A.J.Milner.

25p from the Distribution Manager, ULSA, University Union, Leeds 2

The Caves of the Alum Pot Area is a new departure in caving publications from ULSA. It provides a complete description of a caving area together with hydrological information, photographs and a survey. It is well set out and provides a useful contribution to caving literature. It is however not above criticism, the quality of reproduction of the photographs is extremely poor and though this may not be the fault of the author it reflects on the publication as a whole. The survey is up to the usual high Leeds standard but the cartographer has made the cardinal sin of drawing true north on a 100m National Grid line, admittedly in the Alum Pot Area true north is only 18°E of grid north but in some areas the difference is far larger than the survey error.

R.J.B.

University of Leeds Speleological Association Reviews Nos 9,10.

25p each from ULSA -- address above.

It usually as much as a normal club can do to produce one journal but Leeds, not being a normal club, have produced two at once.

ULSA Reviews 9 and 10 reflect the activities of Northern clubs over the last year. Review 9 is mainly concerned with descriptions of new passage in the Three Counties system - a valuable article on the Earby extensions in Lancaster Hole and a useful description of Pippikin Hole.

Review 10 centres on the club's activities in France last summer and the Berger article makes amusing and illuminating reading. The Reviews contain photographs for the first time and their quality is surprisingly good for an inexpensive caving publication.

R.J.B.

The Canadian Caver No 5

1 dollar from "The Canadian Caver", Dept. of Geology,
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. (+50c post)
A4 62pp litho 8 photographs 8 surveys.

Though not of direct interest to cavers in this country the Canadian Caver is a must for anyone interested in world-wide speleology. The editorial content is good and includes descriptions of major cave systems in Canada as well as historical accounts of caving in Canada. A considerable proportion of the Canadian caving population is of British origin and this is reflected in the names of some of the caves and the CRG standard surveys. Altogether a good buy, especially for a forward looking club library.

R.J.B.