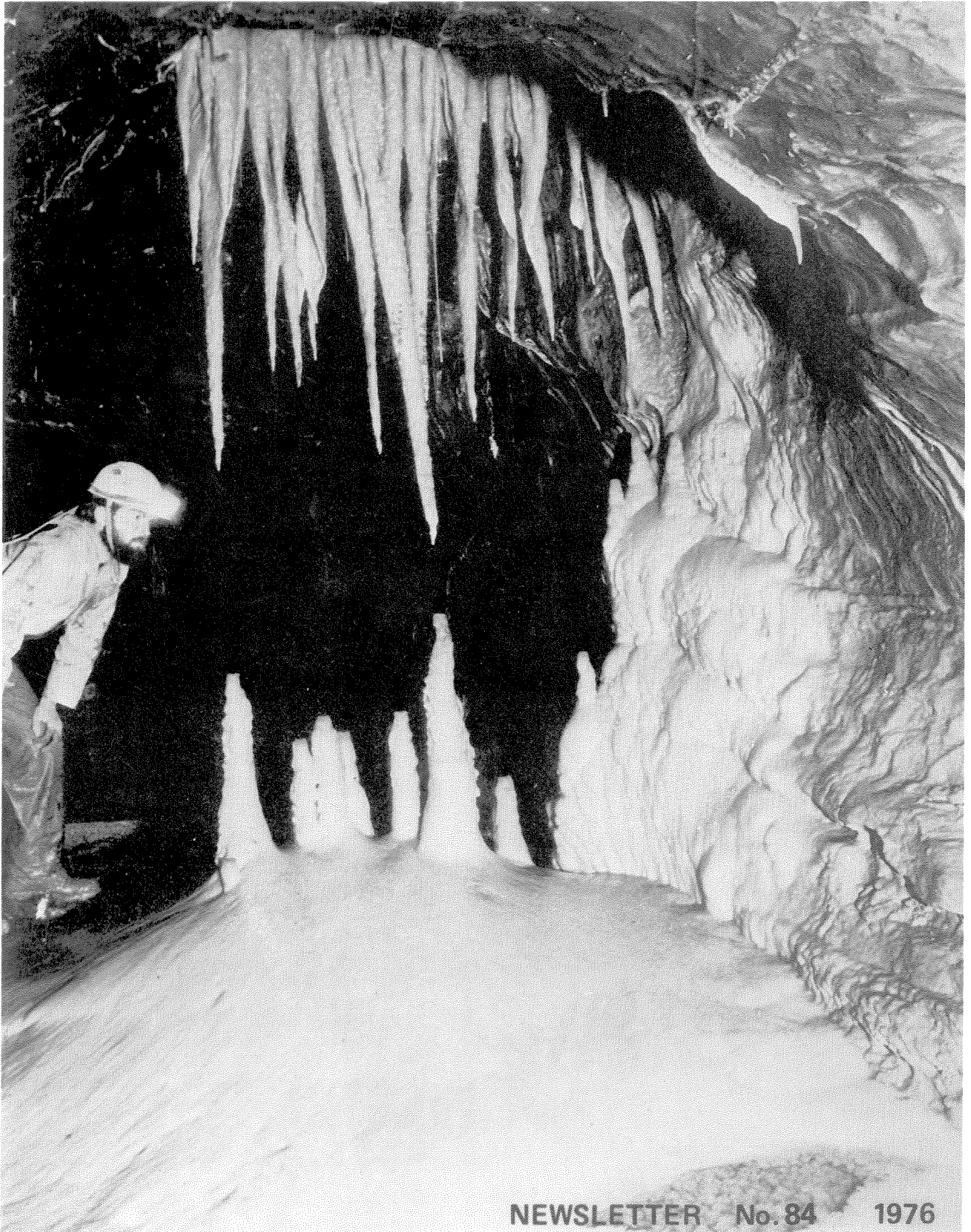


SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



ONLY TIME CAN TELL

June, 1976

As of late, Langcliffe Pot, Kettlewell, in the upper Wharfedale area of Yorkshire, still rates as one of the classics amongst grade fives at over five miles in length and three hundred feet deep complete with many obstacles and stands as the most serious undertaking in British caving.

Activity here had stagnated recently due to bad weather and the usual access restrictions. Brushing formalities aside in our usual way we thought it was time to solve the Black Keld - Langcliffe Mystery, once and for all. Optimistically.

Inspiration came initially from Martyn Farr who, with dedicated help from Cardiff University (Nigel Dibben and J. Burton), planned a trip for May 15th, meeting at Kettlewell.

Due to prolonged rain a substantial trip was ruled out. We ferried all the gear to the second pitch which is about two thirds of the way down and emerged with something of a deluge to overcome at the entrance pitch; the trip had taken eight hours. Fortunately the burden was made easier the pitch having been rigged the day before by the EGONS boys, Geoff and Andy.

Returning on the 14th June with (Bomber) alias Rod Beaumont and the hard core Mendip boys from B.E.C. Graham John and Sparrow, we reached the Agora, with the diving kit but due to lack of morale and dwindling carbide supplies we were forced to turn back after a brief inspection of the 2,000 ft. passage leading towards the sump. Although, to reach this point we had spent 1½ hours digging the second Nemesis choke. On our way out we were somewhat suprised to see the Eldon boys entering the choke to assist with the removal of our kit. Yet another trip, this one lasting 12 hours, ended and we had still failed in diving the terminal sump 'Dementor' and a sump in a tributary called Poseidon.

26th June, third time lucky with the weather very settled and optimism running very high. Supported by that motley crew of Irish fame, Pete Francis, Butterscotch, Ian, and Steve West we reached the terminal sump only to find that it choked after only 50 ft. A disappointed Martyn returned to dive the tributary sump only to find it was a boulder strewn pool. With all hopes dashed of finding an extension via the sumps we made our way out assisted now by Andy Freeman and his friend, de-tackling as we retreated, the trip took 13 hours.

We still need to know where the water goes before we can solve the Black Keld - Langcliffe Mystery. The potential of finding more cave is high but a route avoiding the fault, thought to be the Craven Fault, needs to be found before we reach the undiscovered miles of passages.

D. MORRIS.

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CAVE RESCUE

First Aid and Hot Drink Packs

The packs are primarily for use on searches. They are used in pairs and there are 5 each, on a board, in rescue. The packs are converted Miners Self Rescuers and are worn on the belt. A seal has been fitted to the closing strap to prevent accidental opening, when caving. If the pack is opened the seal should be refitted. The packs are also waterproof and are no trouble when caving.

A search party equipped with a pair of these packs can treat both minor injuries and tired cavers.

Contents

First Aid Pack

1 triangular bandage.
1 roll bandage.
1 roll of adhesive.
1 wound dressing.
1 'Space' blanket.
Safety pins, cotton tipped swabs (wound/eye cleaning etc),
antiseptic cream and a razor blade.

Hot Drink Pack

1 folding stove.
1 packet of solid fuel (5 pieces).
1 tin of matches with a striker in the lid.
6 Oxo cubes.
Dextrose or glucose tablets and a piece of cloth.

The first aid pack should need no explaining. The hot drink pack is used as follows:

The contents of the bottom half of the container are removed and the stove is assembled. To do this the legs are evenly spaced and the disc fitted. The slots in the disc must engage the legs firmly. A single piece of fuel is placed on the disc and ignited. The bottom half of the container is used as a pot and will boil in about 4 minutes. The closing strap may be used as a handle or simply wrap the cloth around the pot. Be careful not to give a scalding drink.

Please note that the solid fuel is in the small plastic container and the Dextrose is in the lid of the pack! Dextrose is hard to light and solid fuel tastes bloody foul.

If the packs are taken underground but not used please return them to the rack. If they are used please place them under the rack and put a note on the notice board. I can replace used items sooner if this is done.

I chose Oxo as the best all round drink. It is warming and has

a high energy value. In the future I intend to include tea or coffee and powdered soup if possible. I would welcome any suggestions to changes in the contents of either pack. I would also like to hear comments from anybody using a pack.

B. JOPLING.

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RESCUE PRACTICE IN D.Y.O. 15 May, 1976

The object of the practice was to evacuate a victim from the bottom of the Abyss and to try out polythene to reduce friction in the Long Crawl.

The rescue party was split into 5 groups; Abyss to Green Canal, Green Canal, Green Canal to the Long Crawl, Long Crawl, Shower Aven out. At Gerrard Platten Hall there was a coffee and soup kitchen. Telephone contact was established from the entrance to the Green Canal.

The haul up the Abyss was straightforward. There are plenty of natural belays also quite a lot of loose stuff. The victim had been placed in the neoprene exposure bag, the zip causing problems which were to recur later. The team had a few problems sorting out the Clarke stretcher but once these were sorted out the haul went smoothly, if a little quickly. The 'clog' method was used but with another clog in opposition as the belay, instead of the Fig. 8. I think that this could cause severe problems if the stretcher had to be lowered, e.g. a worsening in the victims condition in a vertical position.

The carry to the Green Canal caused no problems, where a new team took over. The victim was taken out of the Clarke and put into the floating stretcher and floated across. The floating stretcher worked well, as it always seems to. When he was transferred the victim became cold. The Clarke stretcher fits into the floating stretcher and it would have been better to do this as it would have also saved time. After the victim had been returned to the Clarke the 3rd team took over.

This team was a little ad-hoc, a combination of observers, cooks and telephone layers. The carry to Gerrard Platten Hall caused no problems and the formations easily avoided. At G.P. Hall the victim was fed and watered. At this point it was intended that the Thomas splint would be fitted but the neoprene bag gave trouble again. It simply would not unzip! Everything was tried. Hot water, cold water, candle grease and brute force all to no avail. In a live situation this could prevent a doctor from getting to the victim. With time pressing it was decided to press ahead, and the victim was put into the drag stretcher.

The haul into the Long Crawl was awkward. There is too much friction for a double rope haul and the only natural belay at the top of the ladder failed. Fortunately it failed before the full weight of the stretcher was taken up. We then rigged for a direct haul from the top. The problem here is that only 3 people can get into the small chamber at the end of the crawl. The other haulers were spread along the climb and had to change from hauling to pushing as the stretcher came up. At least the confines of the tube meant that it was difficult to fall out! The short vertical section, at the top, was the most difficult part of this section, but nothing compared to the first section of the Long Crawl.

The 4th team took over. As mentioned we wanted to try out polythene in the crawl in an effort to reduce drag. This it did, but it also meant that the lead hauler could get no purchase. The team found that the drag stretcher caught up on the carry loops and that the neoprene suit adds far too much bulk to the victim. So much depends on the type of injury that it is difficult to suggest one way to tackle the Long Crawl. It may be better to put the victim into a dry suit, fill him full of painkiller and get him through as fast as possible. On this practice the victim thought that if he had not been uninjured and had his arms out, he would not have been dragged through. A sobering thought.

All of the problems came before the S bend, particularly the winding section with the slot in the floor. At this stage the team thought that they would have to cut the victim out of the bag to make progress. After the S bend things went a lot easier and the 5th team took over at Shower Aven. There were no problems to Boulder Chamber and the practice was ended here.

The telephones worked well but the line from G.P. Hall on is in need of replacement (this line to Bat Chamber was never intended as a rescue line).

Approx. 30 cavers took part in the practice with members of W.B.C.R.T., S.M.C., Gwent C.R.T., and the M.C.R.O. The practice lasted from 9.45 a.m. until 8.45 p.m. with 4 hours in the Long Crawl.

Our thanks to all, especially Rick, the victim.

Conclusion

If you are going to break a leg, don't do it on the other side of the Long Crawl.

B. JOPLING.

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THE CAVES OF NORTHERN SPAIN

The holiday season being upon us we decided to return to the Picos de Europa and planned to visit the prehistoric caves of northern Spain, 19 of which are within 30 miles of Santander, including Altamira.

Due to the contamination now by bacteria, entry to the main cave at Altamira is restricted to 500 persons only per day and in the height of the season this quota can apparently be filled in about an hour, after queuing in some cases for 2 hours previously (Altamira opens to the public at 10 a.m.).

There is no point in describing in detail the incredibly natural, well publicised paintings. Sufficient to say that no photograph or film can give the two dimensional effect of seeing them 'live'.

Construction is under way at present of television viewing rooms, and when these are completed, it is envisaged that the main painted cavern will be closed to the public - so we are glad we took the opportunity of seeing it 'in the flesh' while we could.

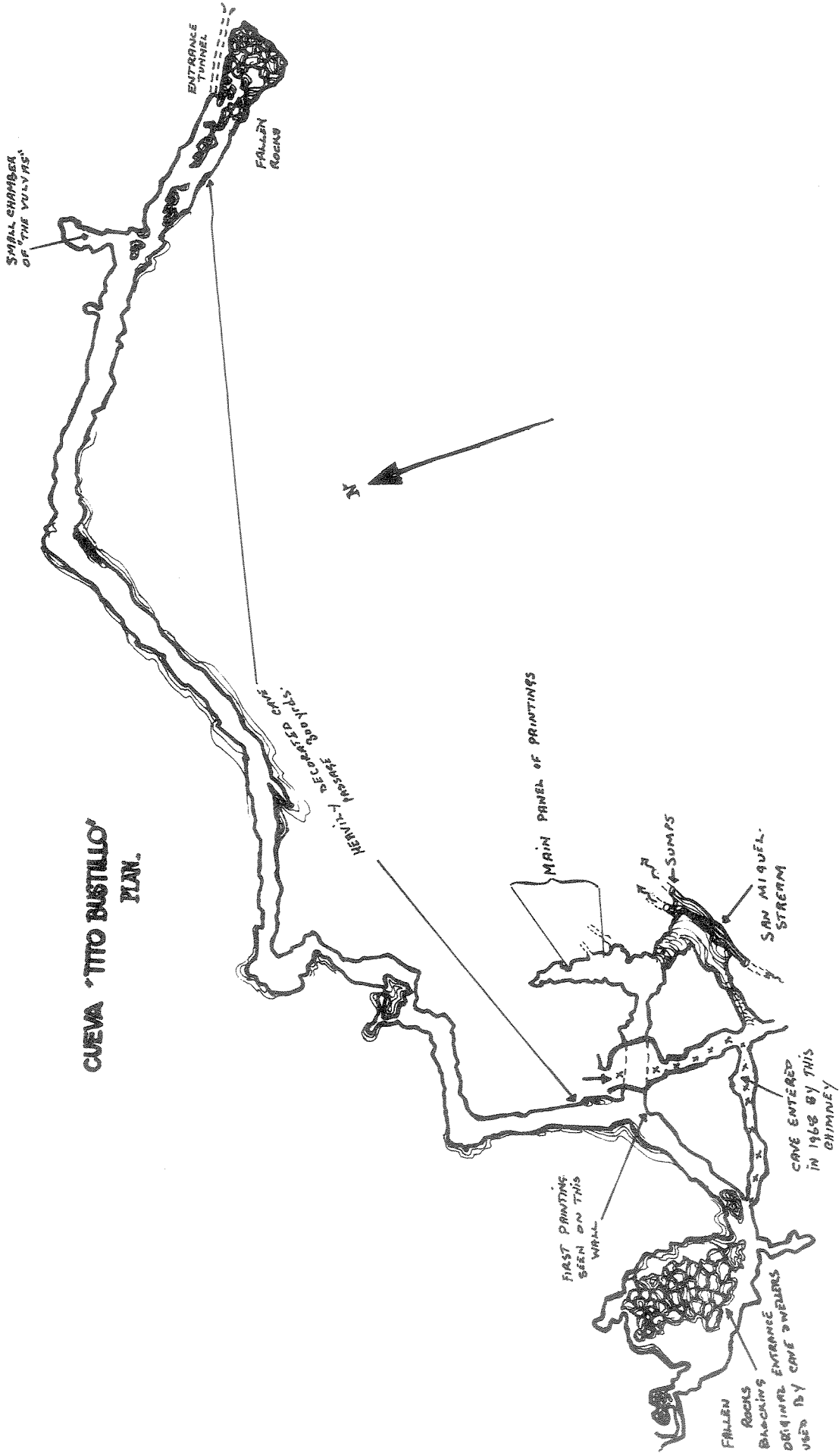
Cueva de Tito Bustillo

Caving in Asturias is very organised under the direction of the C.E.S.A. (the Asturian Subterranean Exploration Group) which has a School and Director of Caving Studies. There are many groups forming C.E.S.A. and it was one of these groups the 'Torreblanca' which discovered the cave and its paintings at Ribadesella.

On 12th April 1968 the group set out to explore a huge crack in the limestone at the top of a plateau above the River Sella at Ribadesella. They descended this crack for about 120 feet to reach a ledge covered in thick sticky mud. This led on through a partly concealed opening down a steeply sloping muddy chimney for about 300 or so feet. Having reached the bottom of this chimney they found a large hall about 60 feet high and 40 feet wide x 40 feet long with a sandy floor. At this point one of the group's carbide lamp failed (Tito Bustillo) and as he was close to the wall of the chamber he squatted down whilst relighting his lamp. As the lamp burst into life it illuminated a painting of a horse? in deep red and outlined in black, approximately 6 feet long on a slightly overhanging rock face before him. He excitedly called his companions over to look; one of them rubbed the painting with his finger and finding the paint came off, declared it a 'recent job'. However, further exploration revealed masses of paintings of horses, bison, ox, cows and deer, all on one long wall in an area which has proved to be the main living area of prehistoric cavemen. Further off in a small chamber up in the roof of a passage were found red outlines said to represent womens' vulvas. The now exhilarated group returned to the surface and reported their find to the Director of the C.E.S.A. School, Professor Magin Berenguer. A full scale exploration of the cave was mounted on 21st April and a team of 32 assembled. Nine days later on 30th April, Tito Bustillo was killed climbing in the Picos de Europa. He was 18 years old and, in his memory, the cave was named.

The cave has recently been opened as a show cave, with a 40

CUEVA 'TITO BUSTILLO' PLAN.



peseta entrance fee per person (about 35p). The tour lasts 1 hour approximately and the guides only speak Spanish.

Marilyn and I visited the cave in early September and access is now by a blasted 180 yards long tunnel sealed by three massive steel doors, said to help keep the air at a constant temperature and dry. They will also keep dedicated lock blasters away! The tunnel leads into a massive chamber with a fine sand floor and is literally stuffed from floor to ceiling with incredibly contorted formations; so full in fact the pathway winds its way through the formations for about 300 yards. The visit was worth every penny just to see these. At the far end of the formations the path leads up a sandy bank to the main painted area. At first sight from about 20 yards we could see a yellowish rock face on which it appeared someone had beaten out a school blackboard duster, just a mass of red and black, but as soon as we were within 6 feet of the wall it was easy to see

- 1) the outline in black of a horse's head about 3 feet from muzzle to ear tip
- 2) the antlers, head and chest of a reindeer in black outline with red patches and zebra like lines on its neck
- 3) immediately above this a horse with its chest against the antlers of the reindeer, also in red and black.

The guide was able to indicate more paintings in less distinct form, some painted, some engraved and some a little of each. Immediately below the painting the floor has been excavated to reveal rhinoceros bones and a few flint tools and spears with engravings and some seashells with the remains of colour in them.

Cueva de El Pindal

Situated some thirty five miles east of Ribadesella north off the N.634 and up the steep hill to the village of Pimiango where it is necessary to ask for the guide and/or the key at a house on the far, seaward, side of the village. Carry on towards the sea and aim for the lighthouse near the bottom of the hill. Just before road climbs again to lighthouse track turns right, and it is possible to park by ruined houses. A small footpath leads to the cave mouth which is only 150 feet or so from the sea which can be a bit menacing in rough weather. The cave is a huge long chamber (300 yards or so) with some fair formations and a sandy floor with a small stream in very wet weather. The main panel of paintings and engravings is on the right hand wall about 220 yards from the entrance and comprises hinds, a bison (part engraved and part painted), horses, an engraved fish with three red patches on its belly and the outline of a mastodon with an area of red on its shoulder/heart area. The bisons, ox and several of the painted animals have what could be spears or arrows sticking into them. There are many odd daubs and one negative outline of a hand possibly made by paint being blown onto a hand covering the rock.

Photography and serious exploration in Tito Bustillo and El Pindal caves we were told was only possible if the C.E.S.A. and Professor Magin Berenguer of Oviedo had given permission, and this apparently applies to all caves in the province of Asturias.

CLUB NOTES

Many Club members have been overseas this summer, Spain, France, Belgium, Austria, Yorkshire and Mendip, to name but a few; in fact several brave folk went to Ecuador which is so far away no one even knew the name of the capital city, and no one knew enough about it to write an article for the Newsletter EITHER! I am told that they didn't find the fabled garage for the Chariot of the Gods, neither did they find radio-active gold or a 100 mile long cave! They did manage to lose Club tackle, OUR Club tackle, and have very generously agreed to replace it. Some folk also managed to lose the President's own personal skyhook, the one he hangs his kazoo on! The President had to go looking for it underground all by himself. Other than providing a bad example, the President's solo trip does illustrate that he does go caving and does encourage a lot of work now in progress (the usual form the encouragement takes is to turn up underground, eat all available grub and scarp off before doing any work, usually in the company of G. Saunders of broken leg fame, sustained whilst traversing dangerous Belgian cobbled streets).

We are now going to lay a new water pipe.

There have been several dog rescues but no humans, although several parties have been (like some young ladies we know), long overdue.

N.B. The Pete Smart article on dye-testing will appear in the next issue.

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL CONGRESS

This is to be held in the U.K. during Sept.1977 and will require volunteers from the Club to show foreign delegates around our caves. People interested should contact the Editor.

FROM THE LOG

Digging seems to be very much in vogue lately. Several digs have been started and others re-opened. Of the new digs the one behind Llygad Llwchwr looks to be promising.

Pete Francis' dig is going well and requires aid (see article), so does the Cwm Dwr dig. Due to diggers a small cave has been found on Gower - no details yet.

In D.Y.O. the Tutt-Foster consortium have blown themselves an even larger bit of tunnel but a shaky roof is holding things up (maybe because nothing is holding the roof up!). Also in D.Y.O. the famous bending rawlbolt on the risings ladder is having another hole drilled for it-hopefully to be completed soon. The tools for this job are in situ and anyone going that way should give a minute or two to enlarge the newly drilled hole. The Green Canal flotation aid has been removed but the various bits of home-made boat should be brought out by anyone going in. To complete the news on D.Y.O., people should beware of the underwater entanglements newly installed by the management on the L.H. side of Lake I.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Brian Major, 8 Holly Lane, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.
Simon Kelly, 1a Whiteheads Lane, Bradford on Avon, Wilts.

ADDITIONAL LEADERS

D.Y.O. - P. Quill; D. Poolton.
O.F.D.I. - Brian Major; A. Wood; S. Perry; A. Pritchard.

Please note that mid-week trips to OFD I should be pre-arranged with John Barrows in order that he can draw drinking water beforehand.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Colin Graham, Hillcrest, Camomile Green, Upper Lydbrook, Glos, GL17 9QA
Brian Jorgenson, Matlock Coll.of Education, Stoneycroft, Cavendish Rd,
Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3FW
Denise Samuels, 4A The Broadway, W. Ealing, London, W.13.



SPLASH INLET EXTENSION

Last summer Pete Smart carried out a dye test in the dry valley between Hobb's Quarry and the old tramway. This was intended to prove or disprove the existence of cave passage in the area draining into OFD. A smell of diesel oil had been noticed in the main streamway so some drainage from the direction of Hobbs was expected.

As it happened, the dye-tracing was carried out under unusually dry conditions and a wider 'spread' was also expected. The dye arrived in the Cwm Dwr streamway, site of Bob Hall & Co's dig, and also in smaller quantities at Splash Inlet. Those who have frequented Splash Inlet in the past will know that a lot of water came into that place at one time and that the Splash Inlet stream arrives via an ugly, impassable (?) boulder choke tactfully marked 'Aven' on the map.

Several attempts were made to bypass the 'Aven' and eventually after several prolonged trips in the area of the small tubes in upper Oxbow series a hole down was found that 'went'. How far it went was difficult to say as lack of spare lights and an un-lifeline 60' pitch made us decide to return better equipped later.

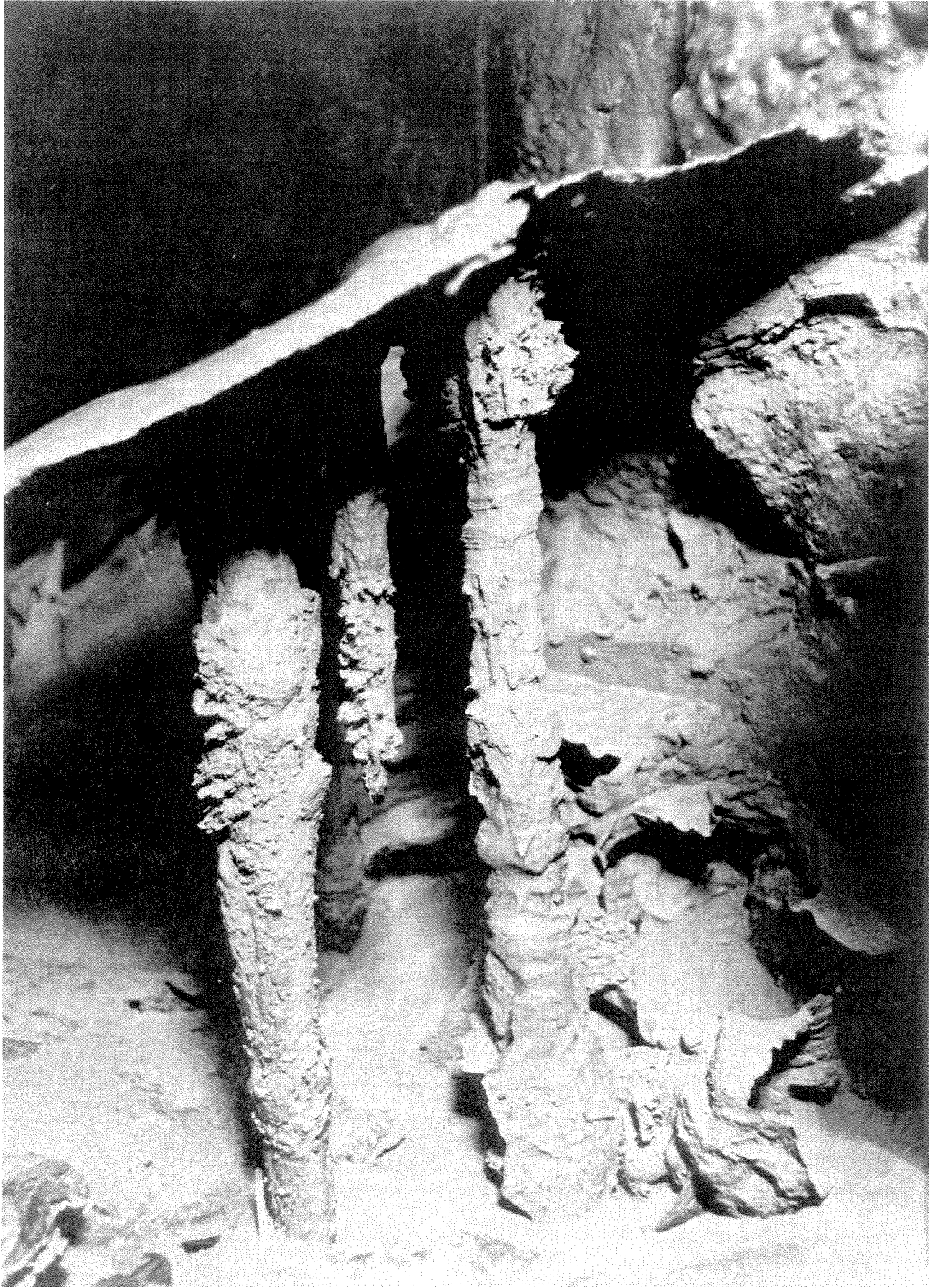
On the second trip to 'the hole' we found a series of inter-connecting tube and rift passages which eventually led us to what could only have been a continuation of the Splash Inlet stream. This flowed in a waist-deep canal section to a small (10'0") waterfall then on to sink in boulders. The stream was followed upstream to a sump (which has yet to be investigated). Passages led into the stream from several directions and there were spectacular mud formations in many of these which prevented any further exploration until some record of them had been made. Also several avens required climbing equipment.

A photographic party was organised and on this trip a considerable number of side passages were added to those already known. The largest of the avens was scaled but continued higher than the upper Oxbow series that we had originally dropped out of. The aven became muddy towards the top, increasingly difficult, and soon closed down into a small phreatic tube with signs of grit boulders. (One reason for these avens could be the change in drainage due to the breakdown of the grit above).

The area is a very interesting one as it represents a continuation of the OFD II upper series complex towards Hobb's dry valley area, and as such it has a great deal of potential in providing the long looked for route to the system which must exist beyond the known areas of Cwm Dwr.

Access to the system is via the awkward traverses at the end of Midnight passage. This takes one 90ft above the main stream along ledges to what is marked on the map as a 25' chimney up. One then goes via a series of rifts, north east to another awkward traverse leading to a pit down. This requires a 70' ladder, lifeline and long belay. It should be noted, however, that the area is very well decorated, many formations are mud and very delicate, only those people considering a structured exploration of the area should go there as little can be found on a single trip. (The traverses and climbs will no doubt help to preserve the place). Hopefully.

G.K. JONES.



THE UPSTREAM CHOKE IN CWM DWR JAMA

Several years ago Clive Jones wrote an article suggesting a theory for the formation of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu with particular reference to the role of Cwm Dwr. The article mentioned several possible sites for digs, one of which was the choke through which the stream first appears in the Jama. Enthused by this Pete Cardy and I started to prod around in various places in the choke but all we succeeded in moving were a few bones in Pete's wrist! A month or two later with the help of Bruce's banger we made some slight progress following the stream but our enthusiasm soon waned and the project lapsed.

Early this year Roger Smith arranged a dye test in the dry valley behind Hobbs and the result of this was that dye was seen the following day in the Jama. Pete Smart from Bristol University who conducted the test considers that Cwm Dwr drains the whole area between the quarries and the tramway (see article by him elsewhere). Clearly the upstream end of Cwm Dwr has great potential. At Easter, Pete, S. Moore (S.A.M.) and Dick Grace en route for OFD II pulled a few boulders out of the choke and the project was alive again.

During the course of the Easter fortnight S.A.M., John Lister and myself with help from various other people had nearly twenty trips to the choke often working two shifts a day, firing on both trips and leaving the fumes plenty of time to clear. This continuous assault paid off with an advance of over twenty feet into the choke. After the holiday progress fell off, Eric Inson and Bruce Foster became the leading diggers, whilst S.A.M. and I worked for exams. Despite their efforts progress was slow and by August there was demand for another prolonged siege. Over the Bank Holiday various permutations of 'banger men' attacked the choke which was becoming very unstable and at its worst we lost about 8 ft after a loz bang - the rocks landing just where I had been lying whilst placing the charge! This collapse exposed a large black space above, we had high hopes! The next trip gave us access to the chamber, room for two, or more had we felt it safe to touch the walls. We were in a very loose area and attempts to progress were immediately foiled by the chamber reducing to half its size - fortunately whilst being dug by remote electrical control. The next few trips only succeeded in consolidating the collapse. We are now in the process of digging through this and things are looking up again, volunteers are always welcome, and the prospects are very good indeed.

BOB HALL.

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THE PETE FRANCIS DIG

Work has recently been restarted at the Pete Francis dig above the Byfre, after a lay-off of a year or so. The site is a water-worn shaft filled mainly with rock fragments of varying sizes and some mud fill which has come from the upper part of the dig.

Removal of spoils done with a bucket and a pulley system on a semi-permanent tripod. Two pulleys are used and a hauling team

of five has successfully removed a boulder estimated at 5-6 cwt, from a depth of 20 feet. Progress has been rapid, and on the last two occasions when a party of 4 or 5 has been available, better than 6'0" has been gained. Thus in the last two months the shaft has been deepened from 15 to 30'0" approximately.

Because of the fragmented nature of the spoil this is a very easy dig, with voidage accounting for around 30% of the shaft volume. Small rocks can be heard to fall several feet through the holes in the floor and it is very easy to haul out large quantities of rock.

Very satisfying progress can be made by a party of 4 or 5 people who are prepared to spend 3 hours or so digging, and I would urge members who feel in need of light exercise to go up on a Sunday, perhaps. All that is required is a saw, in case timbering is necessary and a helmet and cell. In anticipation of your co-operation, therefore, I thank you for your help.

S.A.M.

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CAVING IN THE DACHSTEINS

The village of Hallstatt lies at the foot of the limestone range of the Dachsteins in the Salzkammergut of Austria. The district is dominated by the huge peak of the Krippenstein, behind which lies the Hallstatter glacier leading up to the highest peak of all, the Hoher Dachstein (2993 m.).

The hydrology of the area is complex and closely linked to the glacier and its meltwater. This summer Gary and I stayed for several days at the Simonyhutte at the edge of the glacial moraine, from where we were able to explore the glacier. There was no evidence of the usual glacier 'door' and only a small stream emerged to sink almost immediately in the moraine debris. A large amount of water could however be heard flowing under the ice. There were several inviting small ice caves in the glacier tongue but most were part of old crevasses now eroded away. None of these caves seemed to go deep enough to reach water or rock, but most probably melt-water was sinking below the glacier itself - out of sight.

Bad weather prevented us visiting the south face of the Hoher Dachstein where we were told of one cave, in the limestone which seemed, from its description, as if it went under the glacier like a miniature Castleguard. It would have been interesting to have visited this cave to have seen the effect of glaciation immediately above a cave.

Water sinking on the tops originally resurged at the Mammuthöle and Eishöle at 1329m, (where we spent several days at another hut). Since glaciation cut the Hallstatt valley, however, these caves have been left high and dry. The water now resurges at the Hallstatt lake

level, 512m. The Mammuthöle and Eishöle both contain spectacular permanent ice but have no streams and few calcite formations. Trips are very impressive though, as passages are vast and interconnect with equally enormous halls and shafts. One series of shafts, a 280m cleft in the rock takes one down to one of the Austrian cavers' latest discovery, a 150m length of active streamway totally uncharacteristic of the rest of the cave. It is probably part of the meltwater of the glacier on its way to the lake and runs in a rift of darker limestone which is man sized for only a short way. The water flows rapidly - in fact it takes little under four hours to travel all the way from glacier to resurgence, so the resurgences have a rise and fall dependent on the sunlight falling on the icefield. Needless to say the water is ice-cold; though the major part of the cave remains above freezing except near the surface where there are even small underground glaciers - making caving there a little different than at Penwyllt, ice axe and crampons are a useful addition to usual caving kit!!.

Siegfried Gamsjäger who was our guide for the caves and also manages the show-caves will be visiting South Wales during the 1977 Congress camp and if anyone is going to Austria, he would be delighted to chat to anyone from the Club.

LIZ JONES

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IDIOT ABROAD

As a caver in the middle of New Guinea, most people in the know would be under the impression that I would be in some kind of heaven. However, any dreams that I had about dashing away down virgin caves and pots every five minutes quickly faded shortly after arriving in this part of the world.

Although I found myself in an area where the peaks rose to 10,000 feet, all around there was an acute shortage of caves in the area and an even greater shortage of idiots with the same outlook on life to go caving with.

However, the area did have some quite good alluvial gold, so the carbide lamp was quickly exchanged for the sluice box, until rumours of a cave 50 miles away arrived at the same time as a wandering American bum, and suddenly a caving trip was born.

The American, Paul Wotjkowski and I left Bulolo one Saturday afternoon, together with a middle-aged Australian couple, to go to investigate the rumours of a cave on one of the tributaries of the Snake River near a village called Marpos about half way between Bulolo and Lae as the crow flies. We travelled down the 'Main Road' to Lae, (bad dirt and potholes), to the small village of Muming and then turned off to follow up the Snake River Valley.

The track crossed and re-crossed the river as we made our way up, making it necessary to ford the river and its tributaries

several times; the longest crossing being about 300 feet and 3'0" - 3'6" deep. As we progressed up the valley the scenery became more and more fantastic with vast cliffs and hills rising up to 2,000ft. on either side. At one point a vast, un-named waterfall dropped a 1,000ft. clear into a valley to the side of us, and here and there we saw the tell-tale signs of limestone. The country at this point looks like parts of North Wales and not a bit like the 'steaming green hell' that most people imagine New Guinea to be.

At last we reached the limit that we could take the vehicle and set up camp by the side of the river. The caves and the Marpos village being at this point about 1½ hours walk away, and up a fairly steep ridge. It was our intention, therefore, to camp away from the village, and do the climb at first light and in the cool of the morning.

As a plan it worked well and 7 o'clock next morning saw us in the village surrounded by a large group of children, all eager to show us to the caves. Their elders, however, were far more switched on; they charged us 50 toca, (about 35p) each as an entrance fee for the caves; thus proving to me that they have come a long way from the stone-age in one short generation.

The caves, which were a fifteen minute walk from the village, consisted of one cave proper & a series of rock shelters and overhangs which had been used for burial purposes. Looking at the burial caves first we found that they consisted of a series of ledges and erosion scollops in the wall of a small river gorge. On these had been piled a vast amount of bones and partly mummified bodies. Every small crack and ledge had its pile of bones and skulls, mostly bleached white with age, although the dried remains of flesh still stuck to some bones, even though they had been there beyond the memory of even the eldest man in the village. Covering the gleaming white walls above the bones the rockfaces had been painted with figures, crosses and strange patterns, no doubt telling the story of the place, but these too, like the bodies were so old that the locals couldn't tell the story in the pictures.

Having covered the rock shelters Paul and I made our way over to the 'cave proper', leaving the Australian couple to take their gold pans off into the hills.

The cave consisted of a rift entrance giving access to a low phreatic passage which, after a few yards opened out into a fairly large chamber with some nice large formations. Going down the chamber for a couple of hundred feet we came across a small hole in the L.H. wall out of which came the lovely sound of water. A short low passage brought us to the head of a pitch of about 8m. which was quickly descended into a fantastic stream passage in a white limestone that was almost like marble. Near the base of the ladder the stream fell in a solid mass down a shaft of 5 or 6 metres with enough force to make the climb down very difficult; however, a rift opening out a few feet from the bottom of the ladder gave access to a beautifully decorated dry oxbow which bypassed the wet pitch and the pool below. From there the stream flowed at right angles through a series of rifts, finally roaring through a series of cracks too small to permit entry. However a small tube gave further access until it developed into a rift dropping down into still green water. This, I would say



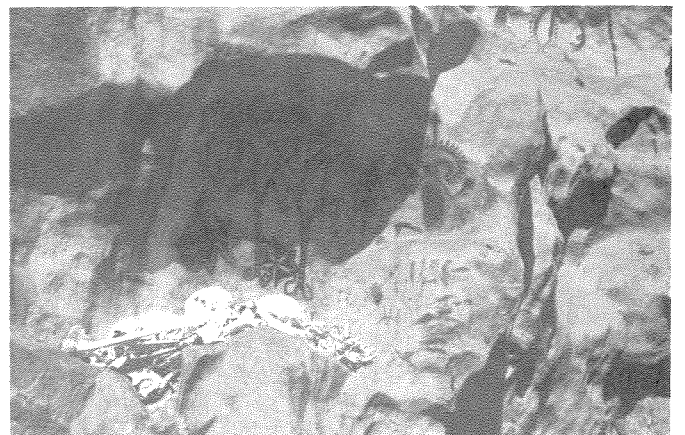
WATERFALL 1,000FT SNAKE
RIVER VALLEY



FEMALE BODY, PARTLY MUMMIFIED
IN ROCK SHELTER



COLLECTION OF SKULLS JAMMED
IN CAVE ENTRANCE, SNAKE RIVER.



DRAWINGS OF 'SPIRITS' IN ROCK
FACE OVER 'NEST' OF BONES &
SKULLS, MARPOS CAVES, NEW GUINEA.

was the level of the local river and we had reached the water table.

Going back upstream beyond the ladder we made our way up a fantastic stream passage with small dry oxbows here and there until the way was blocked by a sump. A prod through with my feet revealed that it was only a couple of feet long and easily dived. As this was Paul's first caving trip I expected that he might draw a line at the sump, but he dived through without comment or hesitation, putting the status of Americans up in my estimation.

The stream passage continued for another 100ft or so with its flow of water dividing, half coming out of a small rat hole lined with sharp rocks and the other half coming out of a narrow, silted sump against one wall of a small chamber.

With no way on, we retreated down back through the sump and up the ladder into the chamber in the upper entrance series. Pushing along this for a few minutes the passage narrowed before opening out on the edge of a 5-6 metre pitch down which thundered our old friend the stream again. (This flowed out of a passage opposite us at the head of the pitch). Laddering down the pitch into a large pool and under the weight of the waterfall, the stream was pushed for only a few yards to where the flow, having split in two, sumped into a big deep rift and also flowed down a small rat hole too small to permit both water and a body. These were almost certainly the upstream sides of the lower stream passage sumps.

Returning up the pitch we traversed across the shaft and into the stream passage on the other side and pushed on up a large and beautiful gallery. The passage was nicely decorated and a number of large dry passages were noted opening off at the sides. Continuing on to where the stream came up from a deep sump a passage over this gave access to a couple of nicely decorated boulder chambers, before dropping down into the stream once more. The passage continued, getting lower, until in a low crawl the roof met the water. However this turned out to be only a low duck and was passed by an easy dive to give access to a second duck after a few yards. After this the stream passage returned to a comfortable size and we pressed on at high speed to where the stream came out of a jumble of sharp boulders. From here a crawl down a narrow rift enabled us to get up into 2 large, very shattered, boulder filled chambers before dropping us back into the stream passage again.

A short waterfall was easily climbed and the stream passage, smaller in size but still carrying its full load of water was pushed for several hundred yards to a large, dank chamber. The air here was still and the stream came up at an angle of about 15-20° out of a narrow muddy sump. We probed around but no obvious way on could be found. In view of the late hour (we had been underground for over six hours), we moved out of the cave taking no more than a quick glance at the numerous side passages. No attempt was made at a survey, but on pacing it out on the way out we reckoned that even at a very conservative estimate the passages we had covered were nearly 2,000 metres long.

On getting out of the cave Paul walked down the river bed and about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile below the cave found several large cracks on the bed of the river, out of which came a large volume of water. Undoubtedly our stream from the cave again. Having found where it came out, all we have to do now is find where it goes in and then find a bit more cave to connect the two ends.

PIPPIKIN POT. (AN INITIATION TO YORKSHIRE, OR HOW NOT TO CAVE)

O.K. so its a silly title; its also a rather silly pot to do as your first trip in Yorkshire. Alright purists, so its in Lancashire! Or is it Westmorland? In true guide book style the cave entrance is about 200 miles up the M1 and turn left at Leeds, along the A.65 to Cowan Bridge and then turn right and ask. Well I had to, so why shouldn't you. About $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Leck Fell House in N.W. direction, a not unpleasant downhill walk across the moor, and there's the hole.

The party decided to split in two, the first to carry in the tackle and rig the pitches and a more sensible party, some of whom didn't really relish the prospect of caving anyway. You're in the former, but reckon that carrying in is better than de-rigging and carrying out. So rig the first pitch and throw down the ladder, only 20 feet so you don't bother with a life line, and down you go, pitch black and can't see a thing yet but fumble on down the ladder. SHIT!! the ladder is 5 feet short. Scramble down the remainder of the pitch and call up to send the rest of the tackle down. CRUMP!! a lightning dive and hide under a boulder whilst hurling abuse back up the pitch. With the first party at the bottom we start in, down on your stomach and crawl and squeeze, then across Cellar Pot, 'don't drop any ladder' - CRASH!! Oh well, good job we have a spare length of ladder, and back on your stomach, crawl and squeeze again. Is this the 'tight squeeze' the book talks about? No such luck and you've come in head first instead of feet first. It's not easy climbing down 7 feet head first. Stand up for a few minutes and then back on your stomach again and crawl and squeeze to the next pitch. Rig the pitch, climb down and then crawl and squeeze again to the next pitch. Rig the pitch and down you go again. Hello! I think we've reached the tight squeeze the book talks about, a vertical crack about 10 feet high, and only about 7 inches wide, but it doesn't look as bad as you had imagined. Start to squeeze through standing up, 3 feet and then you're stuck - back out and try it head first, 5 feet and then you're stuck again. Right, let's try it feet first about 5 feet off the floor - 12 feet this time and then stuck again, but this time really stuck. Every time you move you slip down lower and get more firmly wedged. By now your blood curdling screams of agony have convinced those who weren't keen anyway that they ought to head back for the surface. Eventually you make it back out of the crack, 45 minutes stuck and you collapse in a quivering heap wondering why you're there anyway.

Now you sit and watch the others try, six fail to get through out of nine and you don't feel quite so bad, also you've now worked out what you did wrong, (you got out of bed this morning). There's no point sitting around waiting so you head for the surface; all those squeezes you passed going in seem worse and the ladder in the entrance pitch is still 5 feet short, but you're out. Now comes the worst bit. Remember that 'not unpleasant downhill walk across the moor?', this time it's uphill, it's baking hot and you're thirsty and knackered, stop every 40 yards and collapse, but after about an hour you're back at the car and there's only one thing left to do. Get changed and head for the pub. Two hours and six pints later you're feeling on top of the world again and threatening to have another crack at it on Sunday but fortunately sanity returns by the morning. I haven't said very much about Pippikin Pot but then you can't write very much about a cave in which you get 'stuck' in the entrance series!

R. GRACE.

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