



**Mendip Caving Group Newsletter**

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MENDIP CAVING GROUP NEWSLETTER No.116 MARCH,1976

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WEEKLY CLUB  
MEETINGS:

are held at the "Royal Oak" New Road, Brentford,  
Midlx, (behind Brentford Football Ground) every  
Thursday night until closing time.

COTTAGE

Stirrup Cup, Nordrach-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Somerset.

ACCOMMODATION

for over 30 people - all essential services.  
Guests charged 30p per night or day fee.  
Members Cottage fees are now 20p per night or  
day. Guest party bookings through the cottage  
warden.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

March 1976 brings another AGM round and the beginning of a year of; what is hoped, intense activity with regards to the cottage building programme. Everyones support is needed, financially and physically, to help make this project the success that it deserves to be. Please give all the support that you can.

I extend my apologies to Pete Lingwood for omitting to credit him for the photographs (last issue, this and the next) that he supplied for inclusion in the newsletter. THANK YOU PETE.

B.J.T.

## COTTAGE NEWS

The completion of the Conveyance of the site to the Group took place on the 20th February, 1976.

The old Axbridge hut has been removed and the site cleared and levelled. It was envisaged that the old hut could possibly be removed whole with the help of one of Jims tractors, some chains and many willing hands. I think a lot of people suspected that it might collapse like a pack of cards. Anyway after a lot of pulling and pushing, nothing happened - literally. The cottage was dismantled by hand and the assembled labour got splinters and chicken ticks for their trouble. I understand that Jim might allow us to keep some of our building materials and tools in the hut until we get more organised.

Work on the footings has commenced and surveying is still in progress. At this particular stage its a question of "many hands" rather than "Too many cooks" and the labour required is unskilled. So if you fancy helping with the footings in the very near future contact Wayne Hiscox.

## Fowl Happenings in Croydon

It was a dark winter's evening. Behind closed doors in an unimposing terraced house somewhere in Croydon, which we might call 91 St. Saviours Road, few would suspect that an important and highly secret meeting was in progress. A meeting which might decide the fate of the nation, at least gastronomically speaking. For the meeting to which I refer is attended by some of the country's leading authorities on the culinary arts. Travelling from as far afield as New Southgate and Wheathampstead they are meeting to decide upon the menu for the forthcoming Gastrospeleological Convention. The Convention has been held every year since the early 50s and is attended by anyone who is anyone in the field of cave dining.

The Cave Dining Group, as it is known, is a specialist organization drawing its ranks from amongst ordinary caving club members. It exists for cavers with a special interest in dining. In this little known branch of Cordon Blue Cookery we have seen

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## Fowl Happenings in Croydon, cont/...

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some truly remarkable dishes such as the sardine and O.K. sauce sandwich washed down with eight or nine pints of London Pride.

There is, of course, a great deal of jargon associated with cave dining much of which is a complete mystery to the ordinary club caver. A great deal of this specialist terminology is used in drawing up cave surveys. And here exploring and surveying new cave is one of the more useful roles performed by the C.D.G. At physical limits of exploration the explorer, naturally opens a can of self heating soup; marking the survey, thus, Soup 1, Soup 2 etc so that future cavers will know exactly how many cans to take on a particular trip. Similarly, surveys may be marked duck, jam, joint, straws etc, according to which delicacy the C.D.G. experts think appropriate - 'choke obviously is a pet name for artichoke, and is very popular amongst discerning speleogastronomers. The term "syphon" found on foreign surveys refers to the strange continental habit of drinking mineral waters. In much the same way as restaurants are rated on a star basis so good caves are described as Grade 1, Grade 2 etc.

But, we digress.... the soberness of the Croydon meeting was intense as the members studied the various proposed dishes. The delegate from New Southage Kindly pointed out that duck gave him wind; his fellows hurriedly scratched it off their lists. This left the favourite contender for the main course as Roast Norfolk Turkey. The new representative for Hayes Town expressed some alarm at this. It might be remembered that he is a leading authority on how other people should cook baked beans, and has long been noted for skill at scrounging free dinners from new members. Leaping to his feet he addressed the meeting. "If you stupid B.....ds choose turkey, then I think you're a load of peurile plebs. I'll throw up over the top table. Anyway, if we have turkey I'am going to resign". His fellows took sudden interest at this last remark. The member for Hayes continued "I don't see why we should have turkey, we had it last year, why should we have it again. I'd rather suck sh.t from an elephant's a..e". The chairman thanked the speaker, remarking that he had rarely heard such an eloquent and witty argument. The meeting voted; 'Turkey' was carried by an overwhelming vote, and, the Hayes member resigned.

At this juncture the delegate from Twickenham, who had been resting his brain, pointed out that as the Hayes member wasn't going to the covention there was now no point in having turkey. And that, believe it or not, is why you will be eating Roast Mendip Chicken at the Group Dinner.

Ogofwr Ddu.

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Its a fact that, under the Street Act if you have an erection on a public highway it must be properly illuminated.

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## CHARGING AN OLDHAM THROUGH THE HEADLAMP

This is by far the easiest and most convenient way of charging an Oldham and can be done quite easily after a few minutes work with a hacksaw and file.

SEE DIAGRAM A

The brass screw-head at the bottom of the headlamp is one terminal (positive on my lamp, but this will depend on how the terminals are connected on the top of the cell,) the other terminal is buried in the plastic of the headlamp shell and is connected to the charger by inserting a key in the keyhole and turning it 180° clockwise.

The only problem with this is - obtaining a key. The key in the diagram was made up from 1/8" mild steel and it works very well. Any suitable metal can be used as very little force is required to turn the key.

SEE DIAGRAM B

(not drawn to scale)

A length of appropriately coloured wire, is attached to the key by means of a nut and bolt and a solder tag. The other terminal can be connected to the charger with a crocodile clip. Crocodile clips on the other ends of the wire are also useful to connect the wires to the charger. The crocodile clip for the brass screw may need modifying slightly to make a reliable connection that won't slip off. One method of doing this is to bend the ends of the clip and filing them so they fit into the slot on the screw. Another method would be to replace the roundheaded nut with a hexagonal one. This of course would require the head lamp to be dismantled. The edges of the key will have to be filed to get a tailor made fit.

Wayne Hiscox.

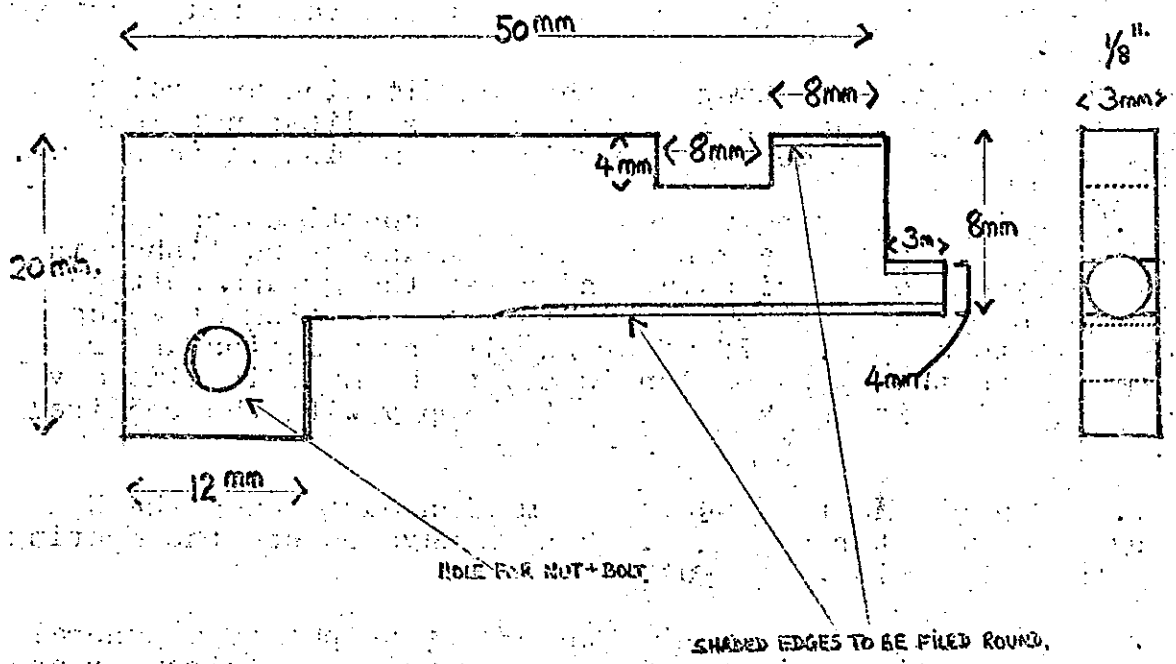
## LOW SCULPTURE

Those of you who have visited the cottage recently and have recovered from hypothermia, may be wondering where the fire bricks are. Well, I am about to enlighten you.

Many months ago in the northern wastes of What Ford?, a small hobbit-like creature, one Dregs Myth, was seen leaving his residence in the dead of night carrying a sack of fire-bricks. He padded south on his little furry feet towards town and slipped into the back entrance (no pun here, I assure you) of a well known art gallery. A furtive deal was clinched and a sum of gold changed hands. But, as always, the truth will out and Dregs fled west to a Druid cousin, alleged to be descendant of Merlin, who transformed the bricks to fit snugly inside their present secret hiding place. Dregs has now moved - see "changes of Address".

BJT

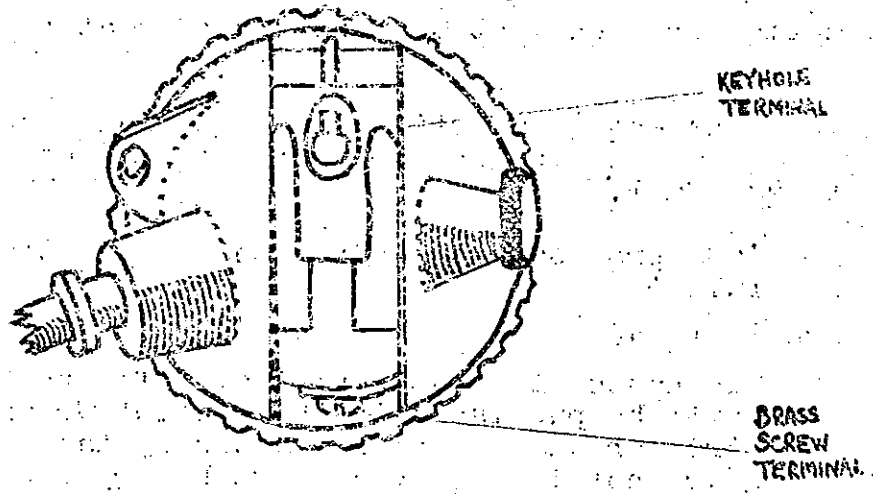
# CHARGING AN OLDHAM THROUGH THE HEADLAMP



HOLE FOR NUT+BOLT

SHADED EDGES TO BE FILED ROUND.

(A)



KEYHOLE TERMINAL

BRASS SCREW TERMINAL

REAR VIEW OF HEADLAMP.

(B)

The following suggestions were received for changes to the constitution from Malcolm Cotter.

Changes to constitution and rules.

96, delete wording of 1975 edition and replace as follows:

96, 84 days notice of a general meeting shall be published in this newsletter and or by circular and or on the groups cottage notice board.

11. A motion for a change to the constitution and rules must be submitted to the Hon Secretary and or Editor not less than 70 days before the meeting at which the motion is to be put.

11.1. A motion proposing a change to the constitution and rules shall not be put to a general meeting unless published in the newsletter and or by circular and or on the groups cottage notice board not less than 56 days before the meeting at which the motion is to be put. If after submitting a motion under 96 11 it appears that publication is not to be made in time any member may publish it as above so as to comply with the required notice.

1V. An amendment to a published motion must reach the Hon Secretary and or Editor not later than 42 days before the meeting at which the motion is to be put.

V. An amendment to a motion shall not be put to a general meeting unless published in the newsletter and or by circular and or on the group cottage notice board not less than 28 days before the meeting at which the motion is to be put. If it appears after submitting an amendment under 1V that publication is not to be made in time any member may publish it as above so as to comply with the required notice.

VI. A motion or amendment must be seconded at the relevant meeting

VII. An amendment to a motion should be taken before the motion and if passed the motion together with any other amendments it must fail.

d1 delete 'and proposals to change the constitution and rules'

change 21 to 42

add 11 the names of persons nominated for the committee shall be published in the newsletter and or by circular and or on the groups cottage notice board not less than 28 days before the meeting

f delete everything after committee and insert ' must grant a postal vote to any member who applies to the Hon Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting. The vote must be received at the relevant meeting to be counted.

9g An emergency meeting with motions to alter the constitution and rules may be called as under 9a. The authority calling this meeting must give 21 days notice of the meeting and any motion published in the newsletter

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Changes to constitution and rules.

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and or by circular and or on the group cottage notice board. Any motion must be voted on as put there being no time for amendment.

Amendment to 9g  
Alter 21 days to 7  
" " " " 14  
" " " " 28

delete and or on the group cottage notice board.

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NEWS ROUNDABOUT

In August, two members of the BEC found a higher entrance to the Pierre Saint-Marten system. This system is now 1328 metres deep.

At about the same time Christopher Murray, a member of Wessex was killed whilst prussiking in the Cueva De Liordes in the Picos De Europa. The rope parted from above when he was about ten metres up a forty metre pitch. We offer our sympathies to both his parents and the Wessex.

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Last summer a party from Pegasus reached the terminal sump in the Grotte de la Cigalere - the third party ever to do so. James Cobbett dived the sump but it became too tight for further progress.

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Hubert Kyrs lives at Kralova 24,61600, CSSR and would like to hear from his friends who visited Czechoslovakia last summer. He would appreciate any letters, articles, magazines etc as he is studying English.

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O.D. is able to report that he has some news of interest to fans of that phenominal fat freak Crikey Mollins. Rumours leaking out of the Nutters and Ranters Club suggest that the muddled Mollins is betrothed. Is this the end of the road for Crikey or will batman save him in the nick of time. In any event I would like to offer my congratulations to the happy couple.

OGOFWR DDU.

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CLUB NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS go to Joan & Pete Goddard for their third addition, Simon weighing in at 51b 1oz. Born on the 21st December, 1975.

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CLUB NEWS Cont/...

Changes of Address.

Greg Smith & Bruce Dean  
now both reside at,

16 Nield Road,  
Hayes,  
Middx. PHONE 01 848 3340

Prospective Members.

Jonathan Roberts  
17 Kent Avenue,  
W.13 Phone 01 997 2916

Martin Philips  
4 Sutherland Mansions,  
Park Lane,  
Whitchurch,  
Cardiff.

David Thackray  
5 Bath Street,  
Frome,  
Somerset.

SUBS REMINDER

Will members who have not yet paid their subscriptions please note that they are now overdue.

DIARY DATES

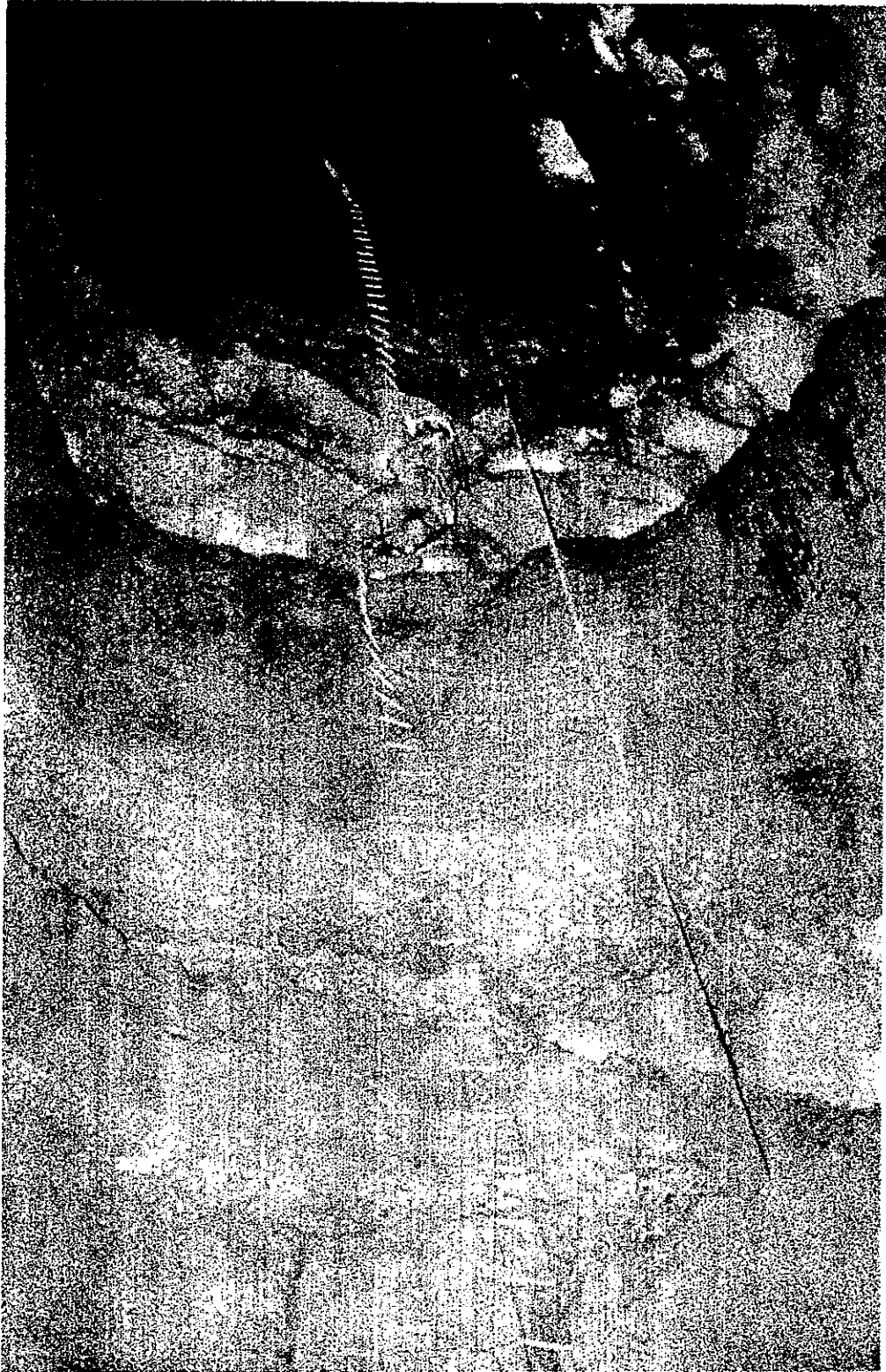
BCRA SUMMER MEETING 1976 to be held in Wells, Saturday, 5th June.

7th INTERNATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL CONGRESS  
to be held in Sheffield,  
September 10th - 17th 1977.

The seaman came home after a years' absence to find his wife sick. He took her to the doctor, who told him confidentially that his wife was pregnant.

"Why that's impossible", said the seaman, "I've been at sea for more than a year!"

"Yes, I know," said the doctor, "We call it a grudge pregnancy, You see, someone had it in for you".



110 ft. PITCH BAR POT  
GAPING GILL

## PALAEOLITHIC CAVE ART

The Upper Palaeolithic Aurignacian and Magdalenian cultures are characterised by extraordinary engravings and paintings found in many of the once inhabited caves. Between 15,000 and 25,000 years ago, there was a sudden development of this art in the limestone areas of S.W. France and N.E. Spain.

The Old Stone Age lasted from about 1,000,000 to 10,000 BC, and is divided into Lower, Middle and Upper. About 40,000 BC during the Upper period, Homo Sapiens superceded Neanderthal Man. The Oldest culture whose cave art has come down to us is the Aurignacian, from about 35,000 to 25,000 BC. This was followed by the Solutrian, from 25,000 to 20,000 BC. Then the Magdalenian which lasted until about 10,000 BC. The cave art of France and Spain spans all these periods.

Prehistoric pictorial art was first discovered in 1880 at Altmira in Spain, but it was not until the early 1900's that it was accepted as genuine. Indeed, when first discovered they appeared to be only a century or so old. This was because, through the years the deserted caves were covered with deposits or blocked by debris. This prevented any damage by man or atmospheric conditions and served to keep the paintings in what must be almost their original condition. The discovery in 1940 of the cave at Lascaux in France raised public admiration for prehistoric art to a high pitch. The paintings in the caves of the Périgord district of France are believed to be the oldest in existence.

Usually, engravings and paintings are found in the remote and dark places of the caves, suggesting that the artist must have provided illumination for himself, either from torches or fat-burning stone lamps. Some of the art is also curiously positioned on lofty ceilings, under low overhangs and in narrow passages.

The artists tools and materials were very simple. For paint brushes he used his fingers, or feathers or perhaps twigs. His spectrum was limited to black, brown, yellow and red. The black was obtained from soot, charcoal or manganese ore. The other colours he got from ochres. There were no blues or greens in his palette. These pigments were reduced to powder and then mixed with a binding agent. Stone saucers or shell palettes have been found in which colours were mixed with fat, blood, water or albumen. Sometimes the colours were finely ground and simply blown onto the surface, much as the Aborigines do in Australia even today. He also used stone implements to engrave pictures on the walls and sometimes he made sculptures from clay or carved from rock.

The earliest pictures are meandering lines drawn with fingers in wet clay, referred to as "macaroni". Gradually these lines evolved into recognisable pictures of animals. Also among the earliest art are hands, sometimes strangely mutilated, shown outlined in red or black.

In the first pictures, "twisted perspective" is used, so that although the animal is depicted side on, the horns and hoofs are shown from a frontal viewpoint. Later portrayals, however, show the animal wholly in perspective.

The animals are mostly mammoths, woolly rhinoceroses, bison,

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reindeer and horses. Some paintings are tiny, some are enormous some are in outline only, some shaded, some colour-washed, some multicoloured. Some are female and pregnant and some are shown wounded or dying. A few are badly drawn, but most are amazingly well drawn exhibiting an impressive realism.

Hunting and dancing scenes with human figures are rarer: the painting at Lascaux, however, shows a bison wounded by a long arrow with the hunter falling in front of the animal. It is interesting to note that human figures shown in attitudes of movement in the cave paintings at Cogul in E. Spain are precisely the same as those depicted at Saltadora in the Levant and Domboshawa in S. Rhodesia. Similarly, drawings in the famous bison fresco of Altamira are comparable with those of eland at Khostá, Lesotho.

Many eminent prehistorians agree that cave art was not "art for art's sake" but had a purpose. As the paintings consist mainly of animals it may indicate a strong belief in sympathetic magic; that Palaeolithic man believed that if he painted then he would gain power over them when hunting. It may be that they had a sacred meaning.

To the first Homo Sapiens animals were all important. Their skins clothed him, their flesh and blood fed him. He used their intestines to make string and thread, and their bones for tools and weapons. He needed an endless supply to ensure survival. Other animals were also important, by reason of being dangerous such as bears and lions. His life was inextricably interwoven with animals so it is hardly surprising that he depicted them in the only way he knew possible.

There are many caves to visit, although Lascaux the most famous is now closed to the general public. This is because the artificial light and microbacteria from the breath of countless visitors has started to affect the organic matter in the paintings. However, faithful replicas of the originals using the same materials and method are on display. Work continues to, arrest and restore the originals. But there is Altira and Pampallo in Spain and Rouffignac and other caves around Les Eyzines, Pech-Merle and Niaux in France to name but a few.

It is a strange and awe inspiring experience to see this cave art which links us across eons of time with the dawn of civilisation. Momentarily we see, as Stone Age Man saw all those countless years ago.

Bryan Terry /  
Ron Saunders

## HOW TO SURVIVE IN 1976.

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Do not enter any public building which has been erected according to a novel or revolutionary principle of architecture: contains any materials hitherto unused on such a scale, has the largest unsupported roof of its kind: has been awarded a prize for outstanding design.

Do not sit next to strangers on public transport. Those in buses and trains have colds and flu; those in aircraft have cholera, smallpox, anthrax, or lassa fever.

Do not strike matches near the English Channel.

Do not cross roads by the subway. You will either be mugged see something nasty or have to paddle through a mixture of urine and last weeks rainwater.

Do not rub your scalp, bosom, or armpits with any Amazing Scientific Discovery.

Do not take sauna baths - Finland has more deaths from cardiac arrest than any other country.

Do not mince about on commons or heaths after dark.

Do not ride on last buses and tubes.

When being overtaken by a Long Vehicle drive onto the verge or into a hedge to avoid being crushed by its rear wheel.

Do not wear tight pants or take hot baths - How many times must you be told what they do to you!

Avoid smart resturants in european capitals, particularly Paris and Brussels, Even if the food has no ill effects, the bill can prove fatal.

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Who's the bravest man in the world?

The peanut vendor .... he whistles while his nuts are roasting.

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