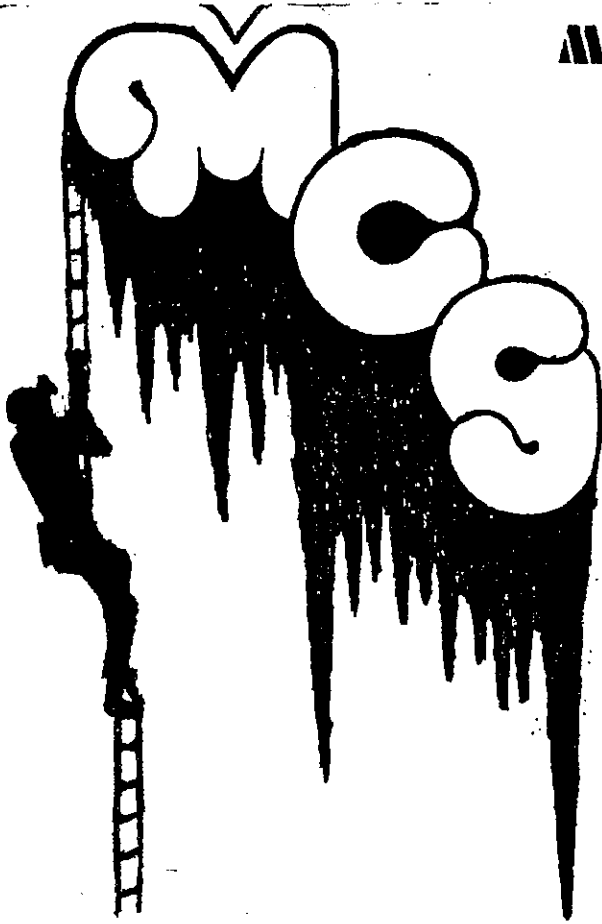


Mendip Caving Group Newsletter

June 1983

No. 164



'Whernside Frog' Rig.

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CAVING ACCOMMODATION is available at the MCG Cottage on Mendip. The address is:
Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6xw.
Map reference NGR 5147 5606 (OS 1:50000, first series sheet 182)
Bookings should be made with the Cottage warden.

WEEKLY MEETINGS are held every Thursday evening at 8.30 onwards at:
The Fox and Hounds and Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London W4.

NEXT NEWSLETTER is due on 28th July (with a bit of luck and a following wind).
Copy should reach the Editor before 22nd July to ensure inclusion.

MCG MEET PROGRAMME

Meet

Jul 2 OFD/ Dan-yr-Ogof	Denise Samuel	SWCC
Jul 16 Mendip Geology	Malcolm Cotter	MCG
Aug 13 Birks Fell	John Miriam	NPC
Aug 18-Sep 6 Pyrenees	Ian McKechnie	Camping
Sep 24 Rescue Practice		MCG
Oct 8 Penyghent Pot	Roger Wallington	NPC?
Oct 22 Half-Yearly Forum / 30th Party		MCG
Nov 12 Agen Allwedd	Roy Kempston	Whitewalls?
Dec 3 St Cuthberts Swallet	Tony Knibbs	MCG

ANCHOR MEETS are still happening on the 2nd Thursday of each month.
Until September, they will be dedicated to Pyrenees planning. (See next page.)

TREE MEETS take place every Tuesday evening, about 7pm onwards, behind the Editor's flat. The aim is to practise SRT, particularly for Pyrenees people. We have about 30ft free hang, and generally rig up a few rebelay's etc. If you plan to come along, please check beforehand, just in case we cancel a session. Bring your own beer - but tea's free!

A LAKES WEEKEND (West Lake District) is proposed for 25/26 February 1984.
anyone interested please contact Neil Hutchinson.

COVER PICTURE: (top l.) The draft chosen for sweatshirt logo.
(bottom r.) Bob Speleo demonstrates the Whernside 'frog' SRT rig.

PYRENEES NOTES:

- (1) We are arranging BCRA insurance for the trip, which covers caving as well as travel for £16.50 per head. Please contact Tony Knibbs to say whether you want to be included or not. Note that anyone not caving will probably get a normal travel insurance more cheaply.
- (2) Anyone who has not been on the Whernside SRT course and would like to - contact Roy Kempston who may be arranging a repeat.
- (3) Note SRT practice, Tuesday evenings at 30 Brittain Road, Hersham. Check with Ian McKechnie in case of cancellation or change of venue.
- (4) I have produced a chart showing when everyone will be in the Pyrenees area - copies should have been distributed to each driver to confirm that we have the dates correct. This is necessary both for insurance purposes and to aid in planning. If you haven't seen one, or your dates are shown incorrectly, please contact IDM.
- (5) We now have a copy of a book giving detailed surveys of the Reseau Trombe. These have been copied and collated into one large sheet. Contact Tony Knibbs if you'd like to see it, but it should be available for view and discussion at the next planning meeting, 14.7.83.
- (6) The group has allocated the sum of £250 for the purchase of equipment and ropes for the expedition. This will not cover everything, however, and it is suggested that each caving member should pay about £10 into a kitty for this purpose. Geoff Barton has agreed to be expedition treasurer, and will give more details of the proposals at the next planning meeting.

A FILM should be available for the next armchair meet on 14th July at the Mawson Arms (further to the item on the previous page!). Unfortunately the editor's memory is not what it was, and he can't remember what the film is about. He is sure, however, that it is on a caving subject and he thought at the time that it sounded good. With a recommendation like that, who wouldn't want to come along?

MEMBERSHIP NEWS.

Another keen new probationary member has been accepted into the group since the last newsletter:

Gill Attwood, 24 St Barnabas Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4NP
Introduced by Clive Towner, Ian McKechnie.

Alan Mellon is now a full member.

Regretfully we remove the following names from the membership list: Stephen Bedford, Mike Brace, Graham Tozer, Pete Virgo, Andy Wynn.

CONGRATULATIONS to Phil and Helen Ingold on the birth of their first son, Simon Alexander, on 28th April. He weighed in at 8lb 2oz but has not yet been seen either down a cave or on a sailboard.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS The following have been recorded:

Bruce Dean, 13 Pennyhill Park, Penrith, Cumbria

Phil Eliot, 7 Oak Dene Road, Brockham, Betchworth Dorking Surrey

Greg Smith, 15 Church View, Gisburn, Lancs.

Mick Doan, 29 Bonner Hill Road, Kingston.

Chris Martin, 13 Greenford Road, Greenford, Middlesex.

Lesley Robbins, 9 London Road, Aston Clinton, Bucks

A PAIR OF LADIES STRETCH JEANS has gone astray in the cottage - they were left in the living room with a spare zip. If anyone picked them up by mistake or knows where they went, please contact Malcolm Cotter.

A SWEATSHIRT LOGO design has finally been chosen following a poll of membership one evening at the Mawson Arms. The draft design is shown elsewhere in this issue, and sweatshirts will be produced as soon as possible.

COVENANTS are still coming in very slowly. Please send yours in to Arthur Spain as soon as possible, to gain as much as advantage as possible from the taxman. And don't forget to sign and witness them - Arthur has had some back with neither. The witness should not be a relative.

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED a lack of newsletter last month. This was caused by an excess of holidays in conjunction with several "unforeseen circumstances." (Why should I make excuses anyway?). You'll be sorry to see things are now back to normal, and you have to put up with another of those MCG newsletters

THANKS to all those who have contributed material for the newsletter for the first time recently. Don't be discouraged if it hasn't appeared in print yet - it all goes in the file for future use. Just think of all the pleasure you give the editor every time he finds a letter on the doormat and discovers it isn't a bill!

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

July

2 Kingston Poly(5)
9
16 Members (Mendip Geology)
23 Kingston Poly (5)
30

September

3
10
17 Barnet C.G
24 Members w/e

August

6 Pete Bulling + 12
13
20
27

October

1
8 Kingston (10) + Westminster (14)
15 Northern Pennine
22 MCG 30th Birthday
29

CAVING NOTES

A DANGEROUS EQUIPMENT NOTICE has been issued by Lyon Ladders, concerning certain Petzl caving harnesses supplied in the past. It has been found that some elements of Petzl Polyester caving harnesses have been mistakenly made of polyamide (nylon). This means that they are not acid-resistant as they should be and will fall apart soon after contact with battery acid. The items affected are Petzl "Avanti", "Rapide", and "Croll" harnesses sold as acid-resistant polyester models, and recognisable by the tape used in their construction - WHITE with a CENTRAL BLACK STRIPE. They should be returned to Lyon Ladders or your supplier for free replacement.

RAPPEL RACKS have their potential dangers too, as you are probably aware. It is all too easy to thread your rack incorrectly, with probably fatal results. Caving

Supplies racks now have modified second and centre bars to prevent this problem, and replacement bars of the new type are available to modify your rack. For further details, see National Caving Association information report no. 2 (copy in the library) or contact Caving Supplies.

IN VIEW OF the ever-increasing difficulty of choosing the right colour of caving gear, so that it won't clash with your other gear / other peoples gear / club ropes etc. , we have found it necessary to appoint a Colour Coordination Adviser to assist the committee with some of their more important decisions. Her first task was to advise on the type of SRT rope to use in the Pyrenees. We will be buying that nice off-white rope with the black flecks - so practical, it will go with almost anything!

(Pity she wasn't around when AJK bought his sit-harness!)

NETHERWOOD DIG has featured in the log quite a bit recently. Here's an Extract: After about an hour, JR noticed a small crack against one side of the depression. This gradually extended to produce a large boulder weighing 350lbs or so. By using a pulley on a tripod, and putting footloops in the rope, the combined weight of 3 people was just enough to raise the boulder off the bottom of the depression. The only problem then was what to do with 3 people and a 350lb boulder all suspended from one karabiner. There was only one answer - take a photograph! After further gymnastic efforts involving a 8' steel pole the boulder was raised onto the grass slope and with all four people hauling it finally reached the top. The Manor Farm party then arrived, just too late to help! One more boulder was raised, about 100lbs, and then we called it a day and covered the hole in metal sheeting. This should be removed before continuing digging as it hides a shaft about 150' deep (well, 10' deep anyway).

COTTAGE NOTES

COTTAGE FEES should be paid promptly, before you leave at the end of the weekend.

Please note that it is up to all members to ensure that fees are collected. It is best if one person takes it upon himself (herself) to collect fees on a given weekend. It doesn't have to be a committee member - any member can do it. Make sure all the fees are collected, and the amount entered against each name on the booking list, count your takings, and make sure they agree. Then pocket the cash and write a cheque for the amount, payable to Mendip Caving Group, pop it along with the booking form into one of the preaddressed envelopes you will find in the lecturn, and post it without delay to Arthur Spain.

A COAL BUNKER should be down at the cottage ready for erection. Any volunteers..?

UBLEY HILL POT now has a lid! (Thanks to Pat Walsh).

NETHER WOOD DIG is being piped and capped on the weekend of 6th/7th August. This will require lots of willing volunteers - please contact Arthur Spain for further details, or just turn up on the weekend.

CHARTERHOUSE PERMITS now cost 30p instead of 25p. Please remember this next time you collect any permit fees on Mendip.

A 30th ANIVERSARY ISSUE of the Newsletter will appear in October, to commemorate the MCG's 30th birthday, The Editor is now collecting material for this special edition. If you are able to provide anything appropriate, please send it in. If not - start thinking now!

During the recent MCG trip to Damp Link Swildons, we encountered 2 scouts on the way out at the 20' ladder. One was OK, but the other was reluctant to attempt the pitch which was very, very wet. The third member of their team, an experienced caver of many years from the Shepton Mallet area, had gone for help. Rather than waste time waiting for the MRO, we offered to assist the lad, and began to rig a line and harness. Everything was under control when six cavers with MRO lamps arrived and proceeded to take control of the situation. However, if I had known they were not MRO, I would have told them to bugger off in view of the way they handled things. They treated the scouts like tackle-bags, manhandling them about, and "recuing" the second scout who didn't even need help! None of the hauling party was lifelined, possibly putting the scouts in even greater danger. Once up the pitch, they insisted on continuing to manhandle the tackle bags (sorry, scouts) out of the cave. This was a blatant case of a group of cavers glory hunting and making a rescue out of nothing. All that was needed was an extra pull on the lifeline. We later found out they just happened to be in the cave and had hired the MRO lamps.

We were not the only ones peeved - the leader was upset, not to say angry about the whole incident. And the scouts probably won't want to go caving for a while.

The only point I want to make is this: if asked to help someone in difficulty don't go over the top. Give help when it's needed, but be prepared to let the caver make his own way out if he can.

DAMP LINK

by Martin Rowe

or

On having gone through sump 4 an even number of times.

(credit to Wessex Jnl. for the sub-title).

As I hadn't done any caving since last August, I didn't really relish a visit to Swildons nine and the Damp Link connection to Shatter Pot. Mendip Underground describes the trip as "one of the most sporting in Britain" and Complete Caves says "rescue from (Damp) Link would be impossible" - not the sort of place to visit if you are unfit. However, Steve Lane (who organised the trip), was unable to find any other MCG members willing to join him, so I wouldn't disappoint him.

Joined by Deb Armstrong, we left the cottage at 10.00am, with the neoprene glue holding my wetsuit together still setting. By 11.00 we were underground and made good progress in high water conditions down to St Pauls and the beginning of the Short Round Trip. The mud sump was easily passed and we were soon at the top of the Shatter Pot. Steve rigged a 25' ladder for use on the way out from Damp Link, and we continued up the Greasy Chimney and down Blue Pencil and back into the Mainstreamway Ugh! The smell! Cowsh Aven was living up to its name today, and sump 4 made the contents of our cess pit look like Perrier Water.. I've been to four many times, but never seen it as filthy as this.

Sump 4 proved to be an easy dive as usual and we pressed on to Sump 5, anxious to escape from the cowsh. Steve and Deb dived sump 5, I preferred to treat it as a series of ducks, disturbing alarming quantities of gasses on the way (not a place for carbides!). The final duck in sump 5 was very nearly sumped and I could only pass this by a dive of about 5' long. On balance, I think sump 5 is better treated as a sump rather than successive ducks (NB Mendip Underground warns against diving sump 5).

Damp Link begins on the left soon after sump 5. However, after about 100' of awkward ascending crawls, the way on is blocked by Gloop Sump. This has a length of tubing which we used to begin sump 5. We returned to the streamway and continued down towards Sump 9.

In Sump 6 bypass I was beginning to feel tired, especially in my arms, and the short duck at the end of the 200ft crawl finally beat me. Although fairly dry, it was a tight squeeze (in fact, it had silted up since my last visit a year ago) and I was able to use this as an excuse to give up. This spot is only about 20'

from Swildons seven which in turn is not far from sump 9 so it was a shame to stop here. But it was a long way back to Shatter Pot.

Gloop Sump was still sumped when we returned but Steve soon bailed it 'dry'. In fact, dry is completely the wrong word. Dehydrated would be nearer, as although water had gone, the most revolting mess was left behind. Have you ever mixed concrete? Well, this looked like brownish red concrete. To pass the sump requires you to begin on your back, and turn over onto your stomach, thereby becoming covered from head to foot in pseudo-concrete, Oh Hell! What if it should set? The words from Complete Caves came back to me "rescue impossible....." Fortunately my dilemma was short lived. Before the goo could set, we entered an ascending 40' crawl which forcibly removed the contents of Gloop Sump. An uphill and difficult squeeze followed, then a long rift which had to be passed by crawling on my side and using my right arm to keep me 18' above the lower and much tighter part of the passage.

By now, I was almost exhausted - this short section after Gloop seemed to take me hours to pass. However, it brought us to Grit Sump which was bailed out, the water running back down the rift to fill Gloop Sump and stop the concrete from setting (clever these people who design caves). It also cut off our escape route to Swildons Six. (".....rescue impossible....."). Grit Sump proved to be easier to pass than expected, but I am a short ~~and~~ legged caver. The Jon Scrimblehanks of this world would find it difficult as it has a sharp bend at the lowest point in a squeeze.

And then more ascending crawling. 250' of it, all hard work. The passage is never high enough to kneel, nor wide enough to swing a cat (who the hell would bring a cat down here anyway!), and the floor is covered in small pebbles (you know, the sort you mix into concrete). Agony would be a good way to describe it. That was the longest 250' of my life. Well, all good things come to an end and we eventually reached a hole in the floor and found ourselves in Shatter. Alive. (Just). Shattered. (Very.) (Thinks - is that why it's called Shatter?) After a brief rest, we pushed on. A series of squeezes and a duck brought us to a 7' drop aided by a loose bar, and on into a passage large enough to swing a cat (20' x 30') before we came to Shatter Pot and the ladder Steve had put down earlier in the day. As I was very tired by now, we decided to abandon the trip! Instead of coming out via Double Troubles and Sump One, we made a rapid exit through the Mud Sump and St Pauls.

At the ladder, we met two scouts in need of assistance, as described earlier. We finally made it to the surface at 7.00pm (after 8hrs underground). I never want to do it again! Well, not until the next time at least. Anyone interested?

NEW BONE HOLE DISCOVERY

by Malcolm Cotter

Yet again the statement that familiarity breeds contempt may be applied to the latest find. It is amazing how frequently a feature which has been overlooked on numerous occasions, will give up its secrets to a new eye. Thus many finds small and large have been made through the years.

In such wise it was on Sunday 3rd March when a small party of diggers consisting of John Miriam, Jon Roberts and myself descended Bone Hole to continue with the work there. Our object was to examine and clear the results of the previous bang. We commenced work but could not move much as we required a bucket for the mass of scalplings which had been produced. John Miriam then decided to improve the shoring in the very unstable area.

While John M. was thus engaged, I suggested to Jon R. that this being his first visit below the West Rift he should see the rest of the cave. After pointing out the usual features to him, we returned to the Dirt Aven chamber. JR was looking at the trend of the only bedrock wall when he noticed the rift near the southern limit of the wall. (West Rift is not named because it trends to the west, but because it occurs to the west of Skull slope). This small rift is partially blocked by a wedged rock. I had previously poked my head behind the rock and seen to the end of another narrow crack. JR, however, took the trouble to look upwards as well and noticed that there was a cavity.

Fortunately, John persisted in his line of approach so I decided to go for a hammer and chisel to break up the obstructing rock. On my return, I discovered that John had squeezed past the blockage without much difficulty and was in the process of digging through to a larger void. Within a very short time he was through, and I followed. We found ourselves in a section with a rising scree floor and a turn to the left into a rift which then unfortunately closed down. The walls of the rift had a mass of pin head calcite, while on the floor were numerous translucent snail shells. Another low passage, just beyond the breakthrough, also came to an end. By this time we were joined by John M. to make his third new exploration in the cave.

Although small, the extension shows that finds may still be made with a minimum of effort. There remain numerous holes in the boulder choke in the cave.

WHERNSIDE SRT WEEKEND JUNE 10/11

by Ian McKechnie

Present: Tony Knibbs, Geoff Barton, Denise Samuel, Adrian Duckett, Martin Rowe, Ian Parry, Mike Mintram, Ian McKechnie.

With the Pyrenees expedition looming frighteningly close, it was considered that a greater reserve of SRT expertise in the group would be desirable. We had all played around on trees, and a few of us had even tried it underground (Oh horror!) but those who could claim to have sufficient experience and knowledge to ensure survival through August were - to say the least - thin on the ground.

So it was that we arrived at Whernside Manor at 8 O'Clock on Friday evening. To cover all the necessary material in one weekend requires a fairly concentrated programme of work, and we started immediately with issue of equipment, and a demonstration of how to put it together "The Whernside way".

Whernside teach the "frog" system of ascent, with a footloop attached to the upper ascender, and the second ascender attached to the chest. Their preferred descender is the Petzl "Stop", mainly because it is self-locking and requires a positive action to descend. All equipment is attached to a single 10mm delta Maillon on the sit harness, either directly, or via a safety rope. A diagram is shown elsewhere in the newsletter.

Saturday morning dawned damp, and after a sound Whernside breakfast, we donned our caving gear (yes, caving gear!) for a practical session in the trees. These are not just any old trees - they're Whernside trees. They go up and up and however many rebelay and platforms you pass, you never seem to reach the top. There's little doubt that if you did reach the top, you'd find a giant there, so to start with we kept to the lower lengths of rope to practise the basic ascent, descent, and changeover techniques. By lunchtime we had also passed knots and rebelay during ascent and descent, and had completed several laps of the "small round trip" in the trees.

Now came the entertainment. One of the side-effects of using a self-locking descender is that if a member of the party is rendered unconscious by some means, then instead of plummeting to the ground and safely out of your way as he would with a rack, he remains hanging halfway up the rope, effectively blocking your escape from the cave. To overcome this, we were shown how to remove a casualty from a rope.

A little thought around the problems involved in achieving such a "rescue" will soon lead to the conclusion that it's not easy. For you must ascend past the victim, which involves extensive and prolonged bodily contact for the unskilled, then transfer his weight to your descender before returning to the ground. A little more thought, however, and the caver will be quick to realise that given the right partner, practice can be fun!

Given their years of experience in demonstrating these techniques, it comes as no surprise that our instructors all had attractive female assistants waiting on the sidelines. However, when the time came to practise, all we had was each other. We all now know at least one other club member much better than we would ever have thought likely!

In the evening after dinner, we were given a "classroom session" with Dave Elliot, talking generally about ropes and equipment, techniques, bolting, safety, knots etc. Although most of this was not specifically related to SRT, it covered items that every caver should know, but most either do not know or have forgotten. As well as serving as a useful reminder, I'm sure we all learnt something new.

To put into practice our newly - learned techniques, Sunday was spent underground. After some discussion about what we would like to do, the party was split into three groups. Group 1 were to go down Bull Pot, Group 2 downJingling, and Group 3 Rowtons. The Bull Pot and Jingling parties were then to change over, while it was considered that the third group would be content just to go down Rowtons.

The main chamber of Rowtons is about 250ft high, opening at the surface. However, at about 80ft from the surface, a wide ledge causes a discontinuity and ensures that a free hang from the surface is not possible. Starting with a bag-full of 110 metres of SRT rope, Dave Elliot set off to rig the pitch. About 10ft down he placed his first rebelay, to provide a free hang for the remaining 50ft or so to the ledge. The rope was then belayed at several points to provide a horizontal guideline for the airy, rather greasy, ledge to the head of the main pitch. Another short 10ft drop to clear the rock, and a rebelay for a drop of about 25ft, to Dave's piece de resistance. For we now had to swing in about 10ft horizontally to a narrow crack in the roof of the main chamber. By traversing about 20ft along this crack, with 160ft of air below our feet, we reached a belay which hangs the remaining 160ft of rope tidily down the middle of the chamber, and well away from the waterfall.

On this long pitch we experienced one disadvantage of the Petzl "stop" descender - it is not very smooth in use. Thus we all jerked down the rope in a rather unpleasant manner, to the boulder-strewn floor of the chamber. There was about 10ft of rope left in the bag! The whole pitch was rigged with one 110m length of rope, using 5 hanging belays and two lengths of horizontal guideline.

We went on down the two remaining pitches to the terminal sump before returning to the surface, much delayed by a party who had followed us in then started to climb out just in front of us. On reaching the surface, we found some of the other group who had come out via Rowton's Cave.

The weekend was very enjoyable, and most worthwhile - at least now we are familiar with a system of SRT, and know some of the pitfalls as well as the advantages. The session underground showed that practice on a tree - while worthwhile - is not enough in itself to give competence. It's very different using the techniques when you're totally alone, in the dark, cold and damp, 100ft above the floor and trying to pass a rebelay with a jammed karabiner.

Anyone else who is interested in the course should contact Whernside Cave and Fell Centre, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria. Tel Dent(05875) 213. Courses are planned in advance or may be arranged to order. Our weekend cost £38.50, including comfortable accommodation and large quantities of food.
(PS SRT means Single Rope Techniques - for the uninitiated).

YOU MAY REMEMBER a reference in the April newsletter to a "brekthrough on MCG dig." This was, in fact, a whimsical description of a clandestine visit to some sandstone caverns below London Road, Reigate. Entry was effected by digging down through rubble on a demolition site. A fairly extensive network of chambers was apparently connected to the cellars of the houses in the road. One area of the cavern is bricked up - and a surface survey showed that this corresponded with the site next-door of one "Scutts Cave Wine Bar".. As there was an access problem (outside opening hours) we resolved to make a return trip to the area to complete the survey. Any volunteers??....

Present: John Miriam, Geoff Barton, Roy Kempston, Andy Tizzard, Ian Parry, Adrian Duckett, Steve Taylor, Martin Rowe.

After distributing over £600 worth of SRT gear amongst ourselves in the morning we decided to lock it safely out of sight and descend Gaping Gill on traditional ladders! The general opinion in the New Inn on Friday evening was to avoid the tourist routes of Bar and Dis, and forget about using the winch as this would involve many hours hanging around Main Chamber (ie waiting for the queue to diminish). Either Wades Entrance or Floods Entrance was recommended. Dozens of ladders were gathered together along with miles of rope - this should have set alarm bells ringing and indeed it did, but as our heads were ringing from last night's beer, we didn't hear the alarm.

We parked at Clapham and walked up Trow Gill to Bar, and then located Wades Entrance and Flood Entrance nearby. Flood seemed to be open (we had heard it had collapsed) so we chose this route. AT had difficulty at the squeeze just beyond the entrance and despite heroic efforts, retreated to the New Inn. Undeterred, we squeezed on down an awkward 70' rift where our ladder was more of a hindrance than a help and along many phreatic passages passing beneath connections with Wades and OBJ Hole. We soon arrived at the 50' pitch which presented few problems. A short length of phreatic passage opened out into a short climb followed by a low bedding plane and another short climb down to a shelf and then....nothing!

Now, we were expecting a long pitch somewhere, but JM didn't mention a 300' pitch. Three of us stood at the top together, shining our powerful spot beams downwards but still we couldn't see the floor. After a few minutes thought, we figured out that we were at the top of South East Pot, about 300' deep but with a ledge where we could get off only 140' down. JM confirmed this when he arrived. We sorted the gear out in silence and then descended one by one, the last man down protected by a double line from below. The pitch was dry for 100' and free hanging most of the way down. After 140' it was an easy matter to step onto the ledge and scramble up to a safer point before untying the lifeline.

We were then on the tourist route to the Main Chamber, only about 100' from Bar Pot Big Pitch. A quick dash along South East passage brought us to our destination - Main Chamber, complete with high intensity sodium lights. There was only a short queue for the winch (about 18 people) but even so two cavers appeared to be trying to climb out using pegs and bolts (well, it is only 360'). GB, RK, IP, and AD just happened to have £8 between them and chose to come out the easy way. The real cavers - JM, ST, and MR refused all offers of £2 loans for the winch and bravely returned to South East Pot to climb the 140' ladder. The armchair/winch cavers did offer to take out the 140' ladder and rope however, and this was lowered down to them. Incidentally, 140' of rope makes a hell of a noise as it whips down one pitch and then continues down the next pitch too - fortunately, GB chose to tie it off to a large boulder rather than just hang on to it.

The race was then on, to see which party would reach the surface first. In the event, the winch team won, but only because the ladder team were slowed down by MR who, as usual on long trips, was becoming exhausted. The final pitch and the entrance squeeze almost became a quick cement job but encouragement from GT and JM ("come on you sod") soon got him out. After a quick pint in the New Inn it was off to Ingleton for fish and chips (only 43p!) and the news that Geoff Yeadon had just made the first through trip dive from GG to Ingleborough Cave. (The lengths some people go to to avoid climbing ladders!).

AT LAST, the ultimate in journalistic speleological news headlines:-
from The Guardian of 18th June 1982, p.17, by David Ward

"Journalist in Underground Death Horror Panic".

RECORDER'S REVIEWS

"...on the Amazon you'll hear a
scarab scowl and sting
zodiacs on the wing
all the stalactites and vicious
vertebrae
hunt the stalagmites while
laryngitis slay
all the parasites that come from
Paraguay in spring
snarling equinox among the rocks
will seize you
and the fahrenheit comes out at
night to freeze you
wild duodenum are lurking in the
trees and the jungle
swarms with green apostrophes
oh the Amazon is calling me..."

Don Maclean

The jungle of caving publications is indeed untamed, and mysterious. Journals spring into being and equally rapidly die out. Their evolution is perplexing. Like many forms of life (scroungers for example) their role is parasitic, being marginal to the main function of the caving species which is to go into ~~pass~~ caves. But like many parasites their role is valuable, communicating between members of the same sub-species and between different caving clubs.

Hunting in the publications jungle is a sorry task. There is no simple international caving bibliography listing, for example, all known references to OFD or Swildons. Closest to this ideal is the yearly index of major titles and articles, nominally covering the world, published by Anne and Tony Oldham and called "Current Titles in Speleology". This has been printed every year since 1969, and post-dates the earlier "Speleological Abstracts" published by the British Speleological Association from 1962 to 1968. We have every year's issue of CTS and Speleological Abstracts in the library, and also a similar Austrian publication "Internationale Bibliographie für Speläologie" for the years 1950 to 1960.

Broadly all three publications list principal articles and books on speleological topics, by country and by topic within each country, eg: cave description, biology, techniques, accident and rescue, etc. CTS also has a list of the source journals and their editors, so providing a useful guide to the (nearly) up-to-date availability of publications. From the users' viewpoint the principal deficiency with the yearly format is the need to thumb through successive annual volumes, to find the articles desired. This is of course a minor niggle compared to the problems there would be in the absence of any index at all.

Compiling the index is a thankless task, though vital if caving literature is to be used to anything near its full potential. Here is one Recorder who would like to express his appreciation to the various bibliographers, especially Ray Mansfield who compiled the CTS throughout from 1969 to 1981. We now have the 1982 edition, compiled by Tim Stratford of the Swindon Speleological Society. Most regrettably, I consider the 1982 CTS a less acceptable publication than preceding issues. It hurts to say this, because of the undoubted volume of effort put into the edition by Tim.

Inadequate proofing and omission to index various publications are the two most blatant failings. This is worrying because in the absence of any other source of reference, users are totally reliant on the completeness and accuracy of CTS. Some errors can be spotted by taking time to cross-check (but why didn't the

compiler do this adequately himself ? - it isn't the users' job). The theory, "no need to ask a karst policeman, look it up in CTS" is weakened, and CTS diminished as an authoritative reference source. Some examples now follow:-

- This CTS is the fifteenth edition (the discrepancy - it's in its fourteenth year - is because there were two editions in 1973). But on page iv CTS is indexed as no.14, 1982. Does the index really mean 14, 1981 (as on page 2) or 15, 1982 (as on page ii) ? A minor point, you will agree, but indicative.
- Spelling errors - Belfrey Bulletin is an obvious example, surely the editor should have spotted this sort of thing - are a further irritant.
- Incomplete cross-referencing. It so happens the MCG newsletter suffers here. We published twelve newsletters during 1982, nos.148-159. Articles have been extracted for CTS from at least three, nos.151, 152 and 154, and are listed in the country/topic section. But the existence of even these three has been omitted from the publications index.

It is worth noting here that CTS does not and has never attempted to review the full calendar year sequence of magazines published from January to December. Instead it reviews magazines as available, eg. one newsletter may be covered from September 1981 to September 1982, another from November to August, etc, leaving 1983's edition to carry on where 1982 left off.

Normally the issues received for referencing are noted in the publications index. Any omission from this index makes it impossible to tell which particular newsletters were actually received and checked. Did Tim look at all twelve MCG newsletters, or up to 154, or merely the three noted elsewhere ? And have other caving publications received similar (lack of) treatment ?

Ignorance breeds uncertainty. Without wishing to expand the MCG editor's head too much to stop him getting through those tight squeezes he enjoys so much, I think it likely there are other articles worth referencing from other MCG newsletters during 1982. So a further consequence of Tim's omission from the publications index is that it isn't clear whether each MCG newsletter has been checked following on from the last reference in 1981's CTS: there could be omissions in the topic index as well.

- There are clear omissions from both the publications and topic index. Publications such as the Belfrey Bulletin are missing. BB joint issue 402/403 (1981) is referenced, but Bulletins up to 416 were produced in 1982. Surely Tim Stratford didn't think the Bulletin or the BEC had expired ? Couldn't he have made other enquiries, in obvious cases such as this ?

Other examples known to this Recorder include Wessex Journals 192 and 193, produced in August and October 1982 - surely at least 192 should have been referenced ? How about Chelsea Speleological Society - none listed for 1982 though twelve were issued ? Or Descent 51 and 52 ? Examples possibly less obvious to Tim might be Gloucester Speleological Society (five issued in 1982, none listed), and Plymouth Caving Group's Journal no.84 from February 1982.

There are probably many more. Tim remarks in his editorial that "publications have got much thinner on the ground during 1982". I cannot believe this is totally unconnected with his failure to ensure that even obvious publications were obtained and referenced.

So much for factual failings. Presentation has suffered too. For example, Tim lists cave descriptions exclusively by author, within each country, which causes laborious and undesirable tedium for those CTS users wishing to find details about individual caves (most cavers are more interested in the cave than the author).

Take for instance Hole-in-the-Road, a new Mendip cave discovery in 1982, which CTS users might be interested in. CTS lists Hole-in-the-Road under:-

<u>CTS reference</u>	<u>Title, author and source journal in CTS</u>
82.1802	Cavern surprise as road falls in (Western Daily Press)
82.1803	Buzby goes to ground. Surprise caves find poses problems (W.D.P)
82.1833	Open and shut: two recent discoveries have their entrances filled in (Pete Glanvill, in Caves & Caving)
82.1862	St George's Cave, Wells (Graham Price, in Cerberus Journal)
82.1870	British Telecom discover new cave (Martin Rowe, in MCG Newsletter).

Note the scatter of listings, indicated by the numbering sequence, and the four occasions out of five when no cave name is provided for researchers to locate references – the index merely uses the sources' headlines. By luck St George's is mentioned in Graham Price's title: unless the researcher knew already about the origins of the cave, the four unnamed references might remain unused. Note also the failure to refer anywhere to the alternative and commonly used name, Hole-in-the-Road, which is mentioned in at least three of the sources. What results is a list sorted and indexed in a way unhelpful to users – a pot pourri rather than a worthy work of referencing.

Ray Mansfield, it may be said, gave cave names wherever possible. However even Ray didn't list articles by precise location but by author within each caving region, a compromise between the demands of geographical and biographical referencing. If a balance is required, then Ray achieved it. (Let me here disabuse readers that I regard Ray's efforts as perfect. A few years ago all titles, including foreign ones, were given in English, which was fine for some. No doubt there were complaints from foreign subscribers – whatever the reason, latterly titles of publications ranging from Bulgarian to Russian to Spanish have been reprinted in CTS in latinised type but untranslated. Fine if you're a Bulgarian or Russian, useless if you aren't, and a black mark to Ray. I believe it would be useful for all foreign titles to be repeated in one common language – English naturally.)

To conclude, Tim Stratford has failed to match Ray's previous efforts. The volume itself remains an essential tool for caving bibliography, but this year it is tarnished. This is the more regrettable because the deficiencies are avoidable, and are ones which cause problems for users. It really is the compiler's job to get this right.

I suppose I'd better stop here, to make room for Bob Speleo's cartoon strip ? ...

Bob Speleo β

