

# MCG NEWS

February 1987 No.191

NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP

## MALLORCA '86 - '87

by Neil Hutchinson

The MCG Christmas expedition took place for the third successive year on the Island of Mallorca, from 24th Dec to 7th Jan. Seven people were present - Andy Beare, Lesley Robbins, Ian Parry, Richard Stansfield, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Ward and Neil Hutchinson.

The weather was somewhat less kind than previous years with snow down to 300M the day before our arrival! Fortunately the temperature rarely stays below freezing during the day and things were back to normal within a few days.

As with previous years the main problem facing us was locating known cave entrances, however, at the start of the second week we managed to purchase a set of 1:25000 maps, from which the original coordinates for all the cave entrances were taken. This proved a real boon and made the task of cave location much easier.

The purchase of the maps coincided with the arrival of Yvonne (who flew out for the second week) and so the solving of one problem was met with the creation of another - how to get seven people plus caving gear into a Ford Fiesta! - the solution necessitating a complete shift in the seating arrangements every time 4th gear was selected!

A total of eight different caves were visited during our stay, three of which were located this year with a further two located but not descended. Descriptions of caves visited previous years can be found in Newsletters 179 and 185 so here for the sake of completeness are brief descriptions of the caves located this year:

- AVENC MITJANIA - (Descended) a single shaft with excellently placed bolts to give a 92M free hanging descent to the boulder strewn floor - highly recommended.
- AVENC GORG BLAU - (Descended) at 178M one of the deeper caves on the island. A 40M entrance pitch leads via many shorter pitches in a narrow rift to a final large pitch of 45M down to a sump.
- AVENC DES GEL - (Not descended) a series of short pitches down to 100M.
- AVENC DE LLOREER - (Not descended) an enormous rocky and vegetated depression about 50M across forms the top of a 100M shaft dropping straight down to a boulder strewn floor.

And last but not least the latest MCG discovery - a 60M deep shaft found by Martin Rowe and almost descended by Ian Parry in 'free fall mode' as the entrance on which he was standing disappeared off down the hole! Owing to Ians convincing demonstration, a while was spent gardening the entrance before Neil was given a bag full of bolts and an extra large helmet and told to get on with it! A couple of hours later he was able to report the cave to be about 60M deep ending in a stalled-up constriction with all ways on blocked by boulders and containing rather copious amounts of hanging death. The cave was duly named AVENC BANC DE LLOREER after the nearest recognisable feature on the map. See page 3 for the survey.

So, all in all, a most successful expedition with four more entrances located and a further new discovery to add to last years finds -

We will return.

# SPELEODATE

## 1987 MEETS PROGRAMME

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAVE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
3 JAN	MENDIP	TYNING'S BARROWS	JON ROBERTS	01 575 6437
24 JAN	YORKSHIRE	PENYGHENT	ROGER WALLINGTON	0753 43384
7 FEB	MENDIP	THRUPE LANE	RICHARD STANSFIELD	0276 684983
21 FEB	WALES	D.Y.O.	IAN MCKECHNIE	0932 228292
7 MAR	MENDIP	RESCUE PRACTICE	ALAN DOUGHERTY	0934 863056
21 MAR	YORKSHIRE	JUNIPER GULF	MARTIN ROWE	0252 876783
4 APR	MENDIP	A.G.M. / DINNER	BOB SPELEO	-
18 APR	YORKSHIRE	S.R.T. TRAINING	ADRIAN DUCKETT	01 572 2374
2 MAY	SKYE	UAMH CINN GHLINN	JOHN MIRIAM	01 393 3955
23 MAY	YORKSHIRE	WEST KINGSDALE	ANDY BEARE	0734 790764
6 JUN	MENDIP	GEOLOGY WEEKEND	MALCOLM COTTER	07842 52643
20 JUN	WALES	TUNNEL CAVE	MIKE HAZELDEN	0703 464491
4 JUL	MENDIP	G.B. CAVE	YVONNE WARD	0252 876783
18 JUL	YORKSHIRE	GINGLING HOLE	MIKE LOVELL	0734 663747
1 AUG	MENDIP	BANWELL BONE CAVE	ROY KEMPSTON	0726 34338
15 AUG	WALES	O.F.D.	GEOFF BARTON	0923 49241
5 SEP	MENDIP	STOKE LANE SLOCKER	GORDON JISTER	01 579 3466
19 SEP	TURKEY	TAURUS	NEIL HUTCHINSON	01 267 1005
3 OCT	MENDIP	HALF YEARLY	-	-
17 OCT	YORKSHIRE	RIFT POT	PADDY NEWMAN	-
7 NOV	MENDIP	ST CUTHBERTS	BRIAN TERRY	0533 432533
21 NOV	WALES	DAREN CILAU	IAN PARRY	0296 87795
5 DEC	MENDIP	BLACKMOOR MASTER CAKE	HELEN MIRIAM	01 393 3955
19 DEC	MAJORCA	VARIETY	NEIL HUTCHINSON	01 267 1005

Note: Entry at 5 Dec does read cake, not cave.



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**TREASURER:** MIKE LOVELL, 4 Settrington Close, Loddon Park, Earley, Reading, Berks. 0734-663747 (home).

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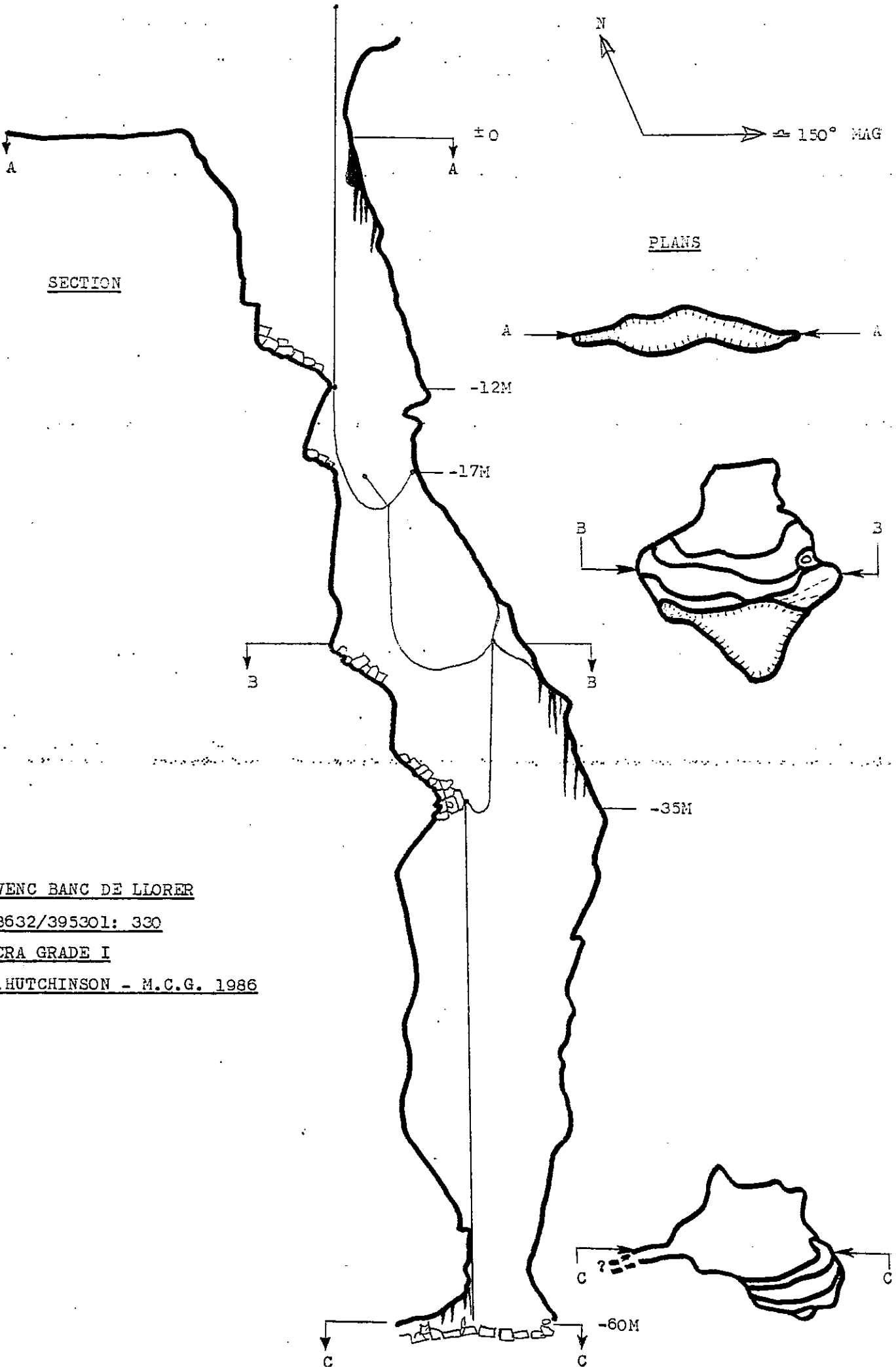
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**RECORDER:** IAN MCKECHNIE: 21 Conyers Close, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 4NG. 0932-228292 (home).

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**ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBER:** GORDON LISTER, 127 Seaford Rd., West Ealing, London, W13. 01-579-3466 (home).



AVENC BANC DE LLORER

63632/395301: 330

BCRA GRADE I

N. HUTCHINSON - M.C.G. 1986





COTTAGE BOOKINGS:

10/11 JAN.	AVON ACF	(12)
19-23 JAN.	RNAS	(17)
2-6 FEB.	RNAS	(18)
9-13 FEB.	RNAS	(18)
14/15 FEB	S. CONQUEST	(10)
28F/1 MAR	EALING COLLEGE	(12)
9-13 MAR	RNAS	(18)
14/15 MAR	WOLVERHAMPTON MC	(12)
23-27 MAR	RNAS	(10)
30M-3 APR	RNAS	(10)
6-10 APR	RNAS	(9)

RESCUE PRACTICE 1987

Date: Saturday March 7th.

Venue: Nordrach Cottage.

Time: 10-00am.

Please try to attend, especially if you are local to Mendip. In the morning I hope to display the MCG Rescue Kit and demonstrate some hauling techniques for self-rescue. The afternoon will consist of a practice in a local cave.

Alan Dougherty.

QUICKIES

Alan Dougherty has ask me to point out that the name of his house is 'Wynhayes' not 'Wynhanger' - sorry.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Paul Phipps now lives at 51 Main St., Ash, Nr. Martock, Somerset, TA12 6PB. Tel: Martock 822495.

Martin Rowe now lives at 16 Ashfield Green, Yateley, Camberley, Surrey. Tel: 0252 876172.

Mike Mintram now lives at 14 Trouville Road, Clapham, London, SW4. Tel: 01-6732057.

NEW PROBATIONARY MEMBERS

David Briggs of 1 Swan Close, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon, BS22 8XR. Tel: Weston-Super-Mare 516793.

Stephen Wyatt of 17 Stonewell Drive, Congresbury, Avon, BS19 5DW. Tel: Yatton 838953.

Geoffrey and Gillian Blackgrove of 39 Danetree Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9SA. Tel: 01-394-0444.

CONGRATULATIONS to Gill Warren on becoming a full member.

EVEN BIGGER CONGRATULATIONS go to Ian and Penny Mckechnie on the birth of their baby daughter Anne Margaret May. Anne was born on 6th February 1987 at 04.13am and weighed in at 8lbs 2oz (3.68kg).

I must add that the card announcing Anne's birth had a pair of little blue booties on the front under which Ian has written "Unisex mini-caver's wet-socks".

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

I have been getting a newsletter out about every four or five weeks and until now have had a reasonable flow of articles, but now I find I have very little material left.

Unless you put pen to paper and write about your trip reports, experiences (good or bad but clean!), caving/SRT/climbing advice and tips, etc, etc, I will either have to reduce the size of the newsletter or only produce one every eight weeks or so.

I enjoy preparing the newsletter for you and hope you enjoy reading it so get busy - it doesn't take very long to write down a few memoirs!

Yvonne

### MCG EXPEDITIONS 1987 AND 1988

Yes folks, that does say 1987 and 1988. If you have paid your subs, you have probably received your membership card with the meets programme in it. Unfortunately, the planned trip to Turkey will not be taking place, mainly because it has proved too difficult to research properly in the time available.

However, there will still be two trips abroad in 1987, to either France or mainland Spain in the summer and the island of Mallorca in the winter.

The trip to France/Spain (exactly where is yet to be finalised) will be from 5th to 19th September 1987. Unlike last years caving trip to Malaga, the emphasis will be on 'prospecting'. It is expected that very little caving will be done and that only a small number of people will be mad enough to pay £300 not to go caving.

For 'fun cavers', a fourth winter visit to Mallorca is planned, probably around Xmas or New Year, but dates are yet to be chosen. The MCG probably know more caves in Mallorca than Dave Elliot can shake a stick at. Cost is usually about £200 plus food. The caves vary from horizontal, to 400' vertical pots, so there is something for everyone.

Thirdly, a visit is planned for Sept. 1988 to Southern Spain (as yet, this is not an official MCG trip - only an idea of a few members). Assuming the Spanish give permission, it is hoped to spend two weeks getting to the bottom of SIMA G.E.S.M., the 1000M deep cave visited by some MCG members in 1986. This will be a major expedition (for a start, 1500M of rope is needed!) so start training and saving now if your interested.

For further information about any of these trips contact me, Martin Rowe at the Mawsons Arms, or Neil Hutchinson.

### RULES FOR LOAN OF CAVE KEYS.

- 1) Proof of membership of bona fide caving club required.
- 2) £5 deposit required, preferably cheque. Cash permissible in self addressed envelope with stamps or coins for postage.

- 3) Deposit to be hung on empty key hook.
- 4) If no-one at cottage to accept returned key, post through letter-box and cheque will be destroyed or cash returned by post.
- 5) All above to be notified to the borrower.

These rules will be displayed in the cottage library from March 7th 1987.

### CONSTITUTION AND RULES

The constitution and rules will be discussed again at this years AGM on April 4th 1987. If anyone has any strong feelings for or against any change, could they please send their proposals in before that date to Neil Hutchinson or Yvonne Ward. The committee propose to delete Part 2: Caving, Part 3: Digging, Part 4: Camping and either leaving them out altogether or replacing them with something more suitable - what do you think?

### FRENCH LETTERS

The MCG now has a correspondent in Toulouse, France, a short 1 1/2 hr drive from Arbas - the venue of an MCG foreign trip in 1983. Hopefully, caving reports will soon be appearing in the newsletter (hence the title).

Can we expect one-time writer of caving guide books, Tony Knibbs, to write a new book soon - PYRENNES UNDERGROUND? Both as secretary and as an ordinary member, Tony Knibbs has given a lot to the group over many years and his departure has left a vacuum which will be difficult to fill. He will be keeping in touch however, and hopes to be back in the UK for the AGM.

By the way Tony, if you're reading this newsletter and planning any SRT trips, here's an aide-memoire ..... Don't die of ignorance: always use a cowstail!

Good luck Tony and Denise in your new venture.

# PWLL DWFN ON SRT

by Tony Knibbs

It is a little known fact that there are other caves in the Swansea Valley besides Dan-Yr-Ogof and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Pant Mawr Pot and Tunnel Cave are good alternatives to visit if either of the major systems is unavailable due to high water levels. But a third alternative is Pwll Dwn.

At 310ft, its depth exceeds its length; it is a classic pothole in miniature. The hardest part of the trip is probably the walk up from DYO lower car park, following an uphill track from near the adjacent campsite. At a point where the track turns away to the west, a footpath continues south along the line of a drystone wall, Cribarth mountain in full view ahead. About 200 yards along the path, now beginning a gentle descent, strike off about 20 degrees to the left, gaining height before making a downslope approach to a small dry valley. Near its upper end the levels off, widens and splits into two. The entrance is a body-sized hole between boulders in a barely discernible depression in the centre of the valley floor.

A 10ft drop enters a short passage to the head of the first pitch of about 25ft. Bolts in the right-hand wall are set low and invite a teetering take-off. The landing is on a sloping boulder floor leading down to some quite large blocks above the second pitch. Again, the bolts are in the right-hand wall and somewhat low. An oblique initial descent of about 10ft reaches a bolt rebelay which gives a good hang (and a damp changeover) for the ensuing 40ft.

The third pitch is entered through a narrow fissure with conveniently placed bolts on the right. The pitch of 30ft is at one end of a roomy rift, of which the floor is visible 45ft below on take-off. A descent of 30ft brings one level with a passage 15ft above the floor, gained by an easy pendulum move. A bolthole offers a useful 'mooring' point and optional belay for a ahndline (30ft) down the steeply sloping passage to the head of the fourth pitch.

The impending reappearance of the small stream is heralded by the sound of falling water from below. This is the 'big' pitch of 75ft where a 120ft rope allows sufficient for a subsidiary drop of 15ft. Bolts are on the left-hand wall, again rather low, and the first few feet of the descent is narrow but quickly opens out.

The stream enters about 25ft down and the descent is close to the wall; a well placed deviation would avoid a minor rub point at a bulge. A light spray is encountered on the final 20ft of descent.

Crossing the boulder floor reaches a further 15ft drop over jammed boulders, where a rope is useful. A boulder-floor rift is briefly followed downslope to where a couple of jammed blocks entail a short wriggle before reaching the fifth pitch.

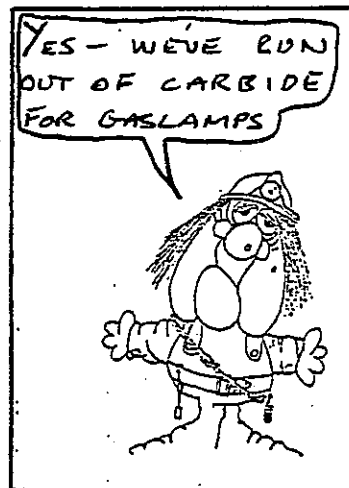
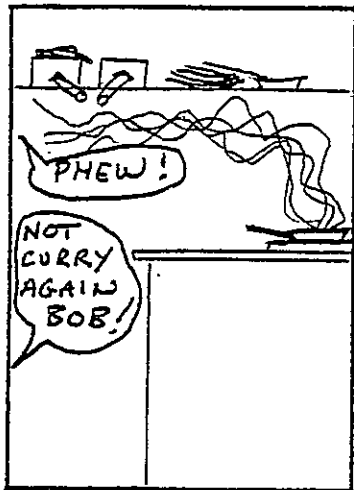
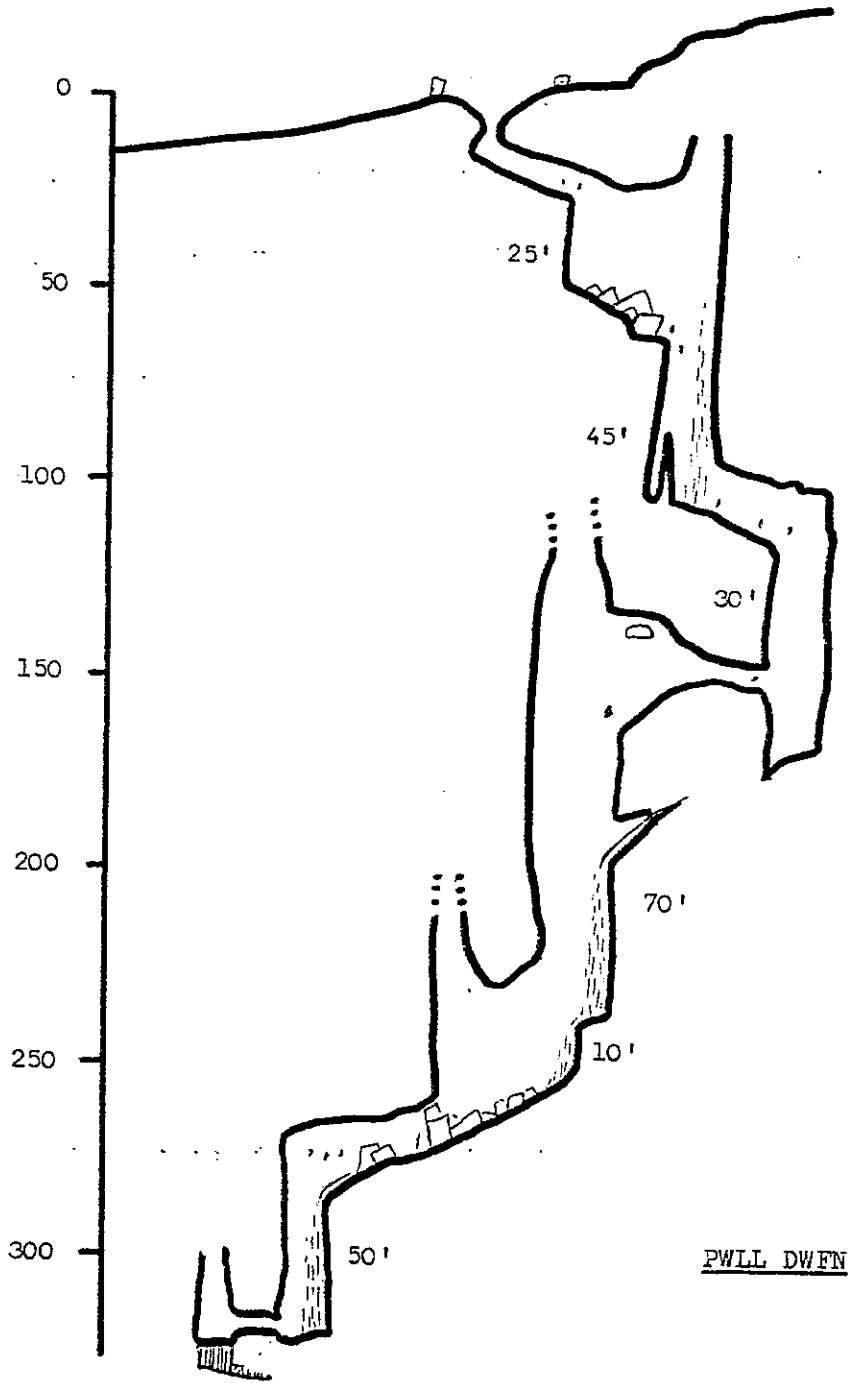
Boulders peter out to reveal bedrock at the head of the pitch and the small stream drops over a v-shaped lip which is traversed over using bolts in the right-hand wall to gain a fine hang in the centre of this 50ft pitch. From the boulder floor, an obvious short climb leads to an adjacent shaft terminating at a deep lake.

With so little horizontal development, Pwll Dwn offers no problems of tackle handling - you simply lower it down and then haul it up again. The cave is therefore amenable to either ladder or SRT rigging and can be recommended as an introduction to vertical caving.

See page 8 for survey.

## Bob Speleo β







# 'Logbook'

11/1/86 Bone Hole - John, Neil, Arthur.

Long trip to push dig at bottom of ladder - after a few hours NH could see open cave, and also JM who had gone down the cave to just above the original dig! This connection proves that the bottom of the ladder is in fact very close horizontally to the top of the bottom dig - a great deal closer than we had thought. A little dissatisfied JM investigated the opposite direction in the dig (ie. into the gorge) and discovered a small draughting fissure blocked with mud - all efforts are now channeled towards following this fissure down to where, hopefully, the wall undercuts back to the lower sections and open cave!

12/1/86 Bone Hole - John and Neil.

Had a good look round and decided that in fact the original dig at the bottom of the cave was the best alternative - however, in order to proceed, chemicals are required. Neil.

9/3/86 St Cuthberts - Tony K, Yvonne W, Jo D, Dik H, John B.

Felt undressed seeing Dik with his black dicky around his neck. Nevertheless an early start (0940). Down to Arete and then to Pulpit pitch. Quite a wet descent near the bottom; the females seemed to relish things pattering on their wet-suits from high. Following Gour passage some fine acrobatics were witnessed at the pitch. Up the right hand wall into Bypass Passage and the bold step into Sentry Passage and out into the Upper Traverse chamber. A quick inspection of High Chamber revealed comments such as "Cor! it's big innit?". Yvonne liked the two eunuchs guarding Harem Passage - we had to drag her off them! Out into the Railway tunnel and up to cascade chamber to compare it with the photo in M.U. We found a hole in the floor which took us to the Fingers and a nice nest of cave pearls in the corner. Unfortunately there were traces of boot prints up this little grotto which really do need cleaning off. Some good sliding / falling / swearing in the Rabbit Warren especially up the 2nd stal bank. Back at the stream our troubles started on the chain into the Gour Hall. Jo needed some improvised leg

loops to get her up and gravity to get her down again! Realising the time and the need to get back for the AGM, we dashed back via Stal Pitch, Everest Passage, Boulder Chamber, Pillar Chamber and out - so we missed an hour of the AGM. John.

Note: this was Jo's proving trip.

23/3/86 - Tony Knibbs birthday party.

People too numerous to mention here, joined Tony for a cheese and wine party in the Gorge of GB. For atmosphere, 75 candles (one for each of Tony's 75 years) were lit around the chamber, to great effect. The event was attended by at least 30 MCG plus many friends from other clubs (amazing what people will do for a free glass of wine).

30/3/86 Upper Flood - Paul Dixon, Jim Morris, Ken Cooper, Malcolm Cotter. Entered 11.30pm left 6.30.

Wet and misty walk to the cave. Nether Wood Swallet has more rubbish! Stream in UF passage moderate with dam overflowing (bung in). Numerous heavy drips. Main stream taking more water than I have yet seen, although valley outside not fully flooded. Water cold. Numerous inlet trickles to cave. Two large ones in final chamber before dig. 21 loads of spoil removed from face. A definite sound of water heard at face although still not sure where the sound came from. Air remained fresh with visible inward movement. Flowstone noted on right side of face. Malcolm.

30/3/86 - Brilliant showers! Karl.

20/4/86 Rhino Rift - Neil H, Lesley R. Lesley's first underground SRT trip - A bit nervous at pitch heads, but soon got going. A very good trip down to the bottom and out in about 3½ hours - 2nd pitch very wet! 3rd pitch very loose!

20/4/86 Waterwheel Swallet - Alison Moody and JR.

Quick visit to Waterwheel Swallet, a nice 'cave' for its size, but perhaps Willy Stanton has tidied it up too much! JR.

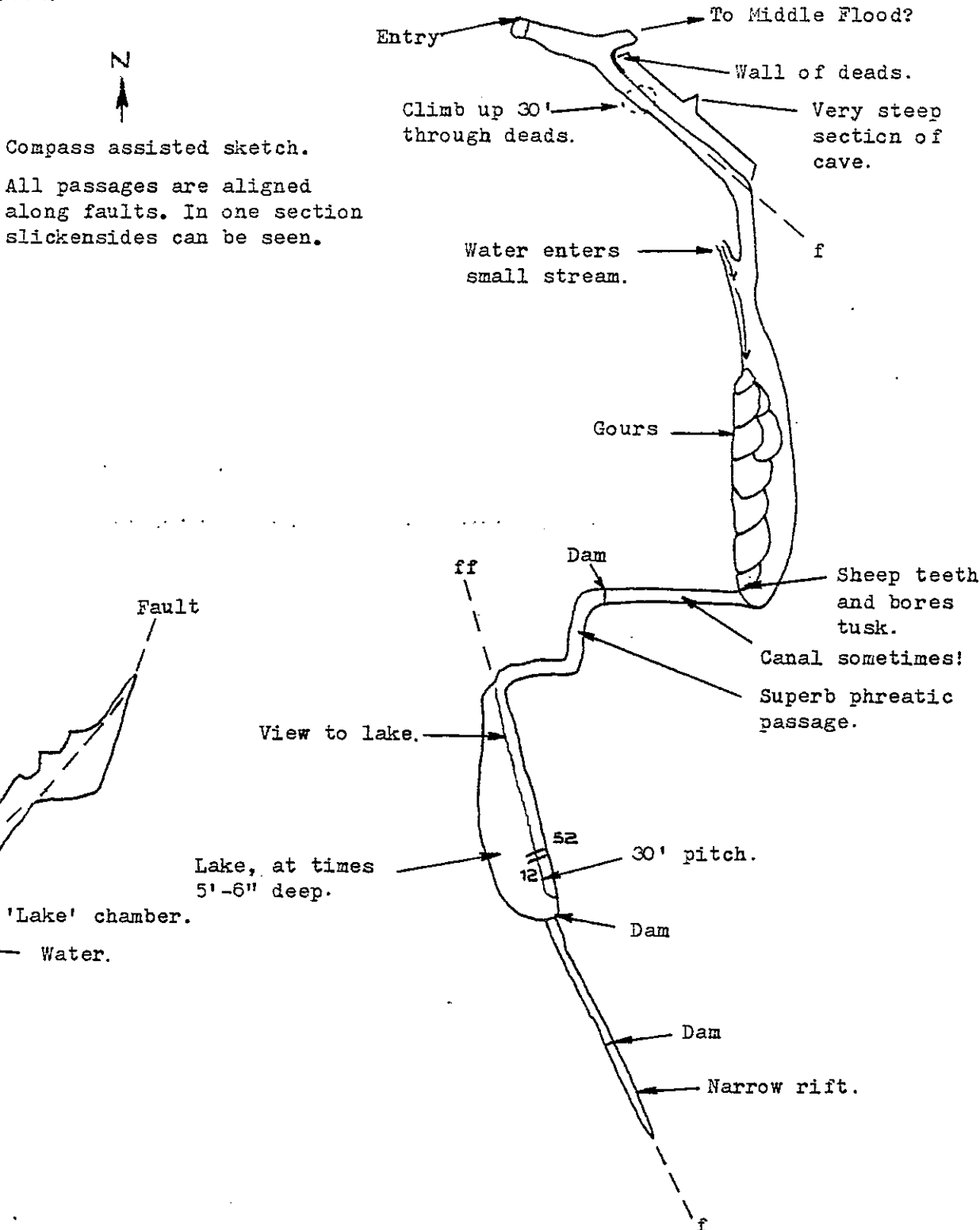
8/3/86 Waterwheel Swallet (Middle Flood). Bernard Reeves, John Mirriam and Malcolm Cotter.

At last a trip to end curiosity and speculation regarding this cave. The two burning questions being the trend of the cave in relation to Upper Flood and the size of the stream.

The cave started with a steep-to-vertical much mined by cavers. Just below the entrance pipe a small chamber was seen containing sandy tailings which may represent the end of our old Middle Flood dig. The way on was downwards through a fault. This fault obviously contained large voids in the past and had been used as an overhead store for deads.

Fresh new stalactites hung from the base of this new feature showing how quickly they can form from lime-rich water derived from cement!

The first section of cave contains some red conglomerate and red calcite flow. There is also evidence of old stalagmite floor which has been partially removed. Malcolm.



Compass assisted sketch.

All passages are aligned along faults. In one section slickensides can be seen.