

Mendip Caving Group

NEWS

NUMBER 201

JULY 1988

LAWA CAVE, THAILAND

The tourist brochure starts, "If you are looking for a place... a little more remote, where nature offers the simple pleasure of sun, unpolluted and beautiful rivers, wonderful caves, wild animals in the jungle, waterfalls or an area of precious blue sapphire mining... the answer lies in this province... Kanchanaburi". Having been to this part of Thailand before, I reconfirmed that this is still a delightful area. True to Asian standards though, the brochures are misleading. The attractions exist and are worth seeing but getting to them is a different matter. A fistful of local currency and luck are needed to visit what is advertised.

The visit to Lawa Cave was more luck than a planned trip. Vince and I had teamed up with a local Thai couple and a German fighter pilot named Klaus and had shared accommodation on a house-raft at Sai Yok on the Kwai Noi River. Sai Yok is 104km north west of Kanchanaburi, the tourist centre of the area, and 233km west of Bangkok. The further from Kanchanaburi you get the less package-type tourists you see. This area is famous for the "Bridge Over the River Kwai" and the "Death Railway". However, Sai Yok seemed a nice enough place to spend the night. Anyway, it was too late in the day to do anything else. Teaming up with locals proved invaluable and being very hospitable people, they made sure we were not ripped off. During the evening we met up with more locals and planned a trip to the cave the following day. Lawa Cave is 31km down river from Sai Yok and as far as we could establish, only accessible by boat. So at 0700 the following morning we watched as our friends bartered for the best boat deal. The price was fixed at £18 in local currency for the return trip. An exorbitant price if you're on your own but not so bad when there are seven.

The trip takes just over an hour in the famous V6 powered longboats. At this time of morning the mist hangs over the river until the sun disperses it and the temperature hangs around 10°C so take some warm clothing. At the landing stage on the west bank of the Kwai Noi River a gentle slope leads to a plateau and a small beverage halt (inevitable!). A walk across the flat area passes chillies and wild cotton there for the picking. A series of steps zig-zagging up through the trees leads to a strongly draughting entrance. The cave was reputedly discovered by a village hunter and the Thai Fine Arts Department discovered cavemen's bones. A passageway leads down to a T-junction and turning left is a chamber with a second visible entrance. Unfortunately the chamber is filled with cave guides and a heavy odour of paraffin from the Tilley lamps. Without too much warning you are ushered by a 3ft high pied piper, lamp held high, into depths unknown. These little chaps don't speak any foreign language and are keen to rush you around the cave so they can be paid their 10BAHT (each person). It goes without saying that we did not stay in the party. The cave is of OFD2 proportions and very dry. It basically consists of four large chambers with interconnecting passages. The largest chambers are named: "Crocodile Chamber" which has an inverted rock formation in the roof resembling such an animal; "Grand Palace"; "Diamond Chamber" where the walls are of quartz and other reflective minerals. Most formations appear dry and inactive and include some fine gours, stal in the shape of musical instruments and thrones. A small Buddha (again inevitable) is also housed. Due to the cost of getting here, you are likely to arrive in some form of mixed group. So if you wish to explore for a couple of hours on your own be sure to make definite arrangements with the other passengers and the boatman!

When touring Kanchanaburi's attractions, plan a route that keeps the distances down and allow a lot of time and cash. A tent would solve your accommodation problems. An area not to be missed.

John Beauchamp May 1988

SPELEODATE

1988 MEETS PROGRAMME

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 15 JUL - 16 JUL | S.WALES | TUNNEL CAVE | MIKE HASELDEN | 0703-46491 |
| 05 AUG - 06 AUG | MENDIP | LIONELS HOLE | ANDY BEARE | 0494-449955 |
| 13 AUG - 27 AUG | SPAIN | SIMA GESM | NEIL HUTCHINSON | 01-267-1005 |
| 02 SEP - 03 SEP | MENDIP | BLACK HOLE SWILDONS | GILL WARREN | 0252-835051 |
| 16 SEP - 17 SEP | YORKS | PEN-Y-GHENT | MARTIN ROWE | 0252-876783 |
| 08 OCT | MENDIP | HALF-YEARLY | BOB SPELEO | 0761-62797 |
| 15 OCT - 16 OCT | DERBYS | TO BE ARRANGED | JOHN BEAUCHAMP | 0761-62929 |
| 04 NOV - 05 NOV | MENDIP | STOKE LANE | MIKE MINTRAM | 01-673-2057 |
| 18 NOV - 19 NOV | S.WALES | OGOF FFYNNON DDU | GEOFF BARTON | 0932-849241 |
| 02 DEC - 03 DEC | MENDIP | GB CAVERN | GORDON LISTER | 01-579-3466 |
| XMAS - NEW YEAR | MAJORCA | AVENCs Y CUAVAS | MARTIN ROWE | 0252-876783 |

WEEKLY MEETINGS are held at the Group's Mendip headquarters on Wednesdays at 7.00pm. and at the Mawson Arms, Chiswick Lane South, London, on Thursdays from 8.30pm.

CAVING ACCOMMODATION for 30 people is available at the MCG headquarters, Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XW Tel.0761-62797 National Grid Reference 5147.5606 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 sheet 182

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| COTTAGE FEES per night: | Prob., Assoc., Full and Hon. members | £1.25 |
| | Members children | £1.25 |
| | Reciprocal members (SWCC, NPC) | £1.25 |
| | Guest clubs and members guests | £1.75 |

CAMPING FEES per night: Charged at the same rate as cottage fees.
COTTAGE DAY FEES: Members using any of the cottage facilities but not staying overnight, are asked to make a reasonable donation via the donation box.



| | |
|---|-------------|
| SECRETARY: NEIL HUTCHINSON | 01-267-1005 |
| 15H Gloucester Avenue, Camden Town, London, NW1 | |
| TREASURER: MIKE LOVELL | 0734-663747 |
| 4 Settrington Close, Loddon Park, Earley, Reading, Berks | |
| MEET SECRETARY: MARTIN ROWE | 0252-872006 |
| 10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 7SL | |
| TACKLEMASTER: BRIAN HURLIS | 0934-412048 |
| 1a Arundell Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS23 2QG | |
| COTTAGE WARDEN: JOHN BEAUCHAMP | 0761-62929 |
| St Hugh's Cottage, Charterhouse, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6XR | |
| RECORDER: IAN McKECHNIE | 0932-228292 |
| 21 Conyers Close, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 4NG | |
| EDITOR: YVONNE WARD | 0252-872006 |
| 10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 7SL | |
| ORDINARY MEMBER: GORDON LISTER | 01-579-3466 |
| 127 Seaford Road, West Ealing, London, W13 | |

Cottage doings

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|------|
| 04 AUG-11 AUG | BTCV | (10) |
| 12 SEP-16 SEP | FOSSEWAY SCH | (12) |



ON THE MOVE

Paul Harding has moved to:
283 Bideford Green, Linlade, Leighton
Buzzard, Beds, LU7 7TV

Pat Newman has moved (again!) this time
to just around the corner at:
33 Mauldeth Close, Heaton Mersey,
Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3NP. However,
for the benefit of Tony Knibbs he is
pleased to say that at the same time he
is moving belongings from two previous
addresses (Ealing and Chard) making it
three moves in one issue. Beat that!

Martin Rowe & Yvonne Ward have moved to:
10 Greenleas Close, Yateley, Camberley,
Surrey, GU17 7SL tel. 0252-872006

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

The following applications for
probationary membership have been
received and will be considered at the
next committee meeting:

Paul Wood (proposed by P. Bulling,
M. Rowe) 2 Chiltern Cottages, Great
Chesterford, Saffron Walden, Essex,
CB10 1PL tel. 0799-30888

Daniel Sole (proposed by P. Bulling,
M. Rowe) 52 Lanfranc Road, Worthing,
West Sussex, BN14 7ER

Sonya Cotter (proposed by M. Cotter,
N. Hutchinson) 249, Feltham Hill Road,
Ashford, Midx, TW15 1LU tel. 07842-52643

CHARTERHOUSE

5-year permits are no longer valid! (see
newsletter 199). Instead, an annual
permit running from January to December
will be issued to each full member on
receipt of their annual subscription.
Members who have paid will receive a
permit valid until December '88 from the
Meet Secretary. Please sign both copies
of the permit and return the yellow copy
to the Meet Secretary in the envelope
provided.

1988 SUBS

Subscriptions were due on Jan. 1st.
Members who have not yet paid will have
their membership terminated on June 20th
and will not receive further
newsletters.

If you come into contact with any of the
following please remind them that they
have not yet paid!

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| James Davies | Paul Botting |
| Tony Ingold | Dale Jefferies |
| Bill Jones | Bill Platt |
| Mick Lowe | Andy Scully |
| Cate Sampson | Ru Welling |
| Clive and Gill Towner | Tim and Gill Fowkes |

YV' SDROPPINGS

Martin: "Is everything inside your
jumper you?"
Linda: "Why?"
Martin: "Because they look too big to be
real"
Linda: "Well, some of it is padding"

Vince: "I've just fallen down the
entrance shaft of Bone Hole... if it had
been anyone else they would have hurt
themselves"

Anon: "One of them went funny in the
sheath"

EARWIG...

John Beauchamp is the new secretary of
Chaterhouse Caving Committee... Sub
committee formed to carry out cottage
work... Long term maintenance plan being
prepared... New MCG advert in Descent...
Cess pit to be fenced off... Armchair
meets being arranged... SRT rescue
weekend on Mendip coming soon...
Donation box near showers... 50p
suggested for cottage day use.

REWARD OFFERED...

...For the return of a large red ledger
containing the MCG accounts.
Information, in confidence, to any
committee member.

DEADLINE...

...For the next newsletter is July 31st

ARRAN, EASTER 1988

by Mike Haselden

Standing by our tent I gazed all around me and as far as the eye could see there was not one single man-made feature on the mountainous landscape. Here time had stood still for many centuries and for a few idle moments I was transported by fantasy back into another time. Then, as throughout our few days in the rugged hills of north Arran, there was immense pleasure and satisfaction in just simply being there.

Sue and I drove to Ardrossan where we left our car in the care of a local garage for 50p a night after having been warned by the police that to leave a car parked on the ample dockside park would guarantee a breakin within the day. We were also complimented by the police for leaving notice of our walk route and details with them. After a two hour boat and bus journey we set off on foot to round the uninhabited north-east coast of the island. This area of gentle hills and coastline gave us an easy start to our six day walk in the northern hills. After some 36 hours non-stop working and travelling, we were glad to find a pitch for the night with only about seven miles walking done for the day. That evening our peace was only disturbed by the throbbing engine of a local fishing vessel passing close to shore. Before settling down for the night we had enjoyed sitting by a fire, fuelled by an ample supply of driftwood. Once the sun was over the horizon the temperature dropped very quickly to freezing point. Sue lamented cold feet so I improvised a bed warmer with hot pebbles from around the fire in a sock! She reported this to be a successful system and the pebbles were still warm in the morning.

The following day we passed through Lochranza. We decided to take a short cut involving a river crossing as the river was not too deep or fast flowing although quite wide. We took our boots and socks off and, picking the least line of resistance I waded in. The water was icy cold from the mountain snows and its embrace about my legs felt like sudden amputation. I looked back at Sue for encouragement but got none so I decided to show her my mettle and proceeded. Half way I decided to give in but it was pointless turning back so I went on to the far side, each step feeling that my legs would shatter like fragile icicles. On reaching the other side I had to wait some time for my lower limbs to feel normal again and, although my ordeal passed without me uttering any good or bad words, my expression must have said it all because Sue set about walking the long way round over the bridge! When we met up again at the village we enjoyed a few tasty morsels to compensate for our less interesting dehydrated lightweight rations before slogging up into Gleann Biorach with its squelching boggy terrain. But, with clear skies and wild country all about us, the rewards were greater than the burden of our heavy packs. Loch Davie was our goal for the day but the only suitable patch for camping had been fouled up by previous ignorant visitors. However, it took little effort to restore the place back to nature and soon we made home with just 3kg of 20th century fabric.

Next morning at the crack of dawn we set off for the high peaks carrying only a light day-pack, leaving the tent and other gear at Loch Davie. With a rising sun and a gain of altitude we were soon basked in warming rays and after about an hour we arrived at a coll below Cir Mhor, which was to be our next goal. From below, Cir Mhor seemed a difficult climb but it yielded easily to simple scrambling and from its summit at 800m the commanding views of snow-clad Grampians, mainland coast and many islands to the south and west were reward enough for our early morning effort. We spent a long time enjoying our lofty perch identifying many landmarks and discovering the compass telling lies, probably due to magnetic rocks such as are found in the Cuillins of Skye. Goatfell at 874m was our next objective but first we would have to descend 400m of very steep rock and scree. The descent proved itself to be more difficult than I had anticipated, needing much care, and we arrived at the saddle more than ready for our lunch break. Later we scaled the minor north Goatfell and then went on to the final goal, crossing the last remaining winter snow on the northern slopes of Goatfell. Being a fine weekend many visitors had come up the easy trade route from Brodick so our full enjoyment normally found upon reaching a high desolate peak was a little spoiled. However, the panorama was nonetheless magnificent.

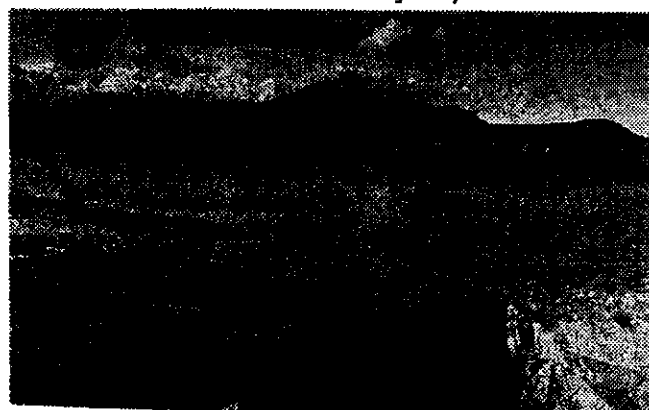
We made good our return to camp via a very steep descent into Glen Rosa and equally steep ascent of Fionn Choire. Dehydrated rations can be surprisingly tasty after a day walking on the mountains, and they were. In the shadow of the glen, the evening temperature quickly dropped to zero so a small fire was a comforting sight before cocooning ourselves in sleeping bags for the night. A call of nature tempted me out of my bag. I stepped out of the tent and felt the ground stiff with frost. On either side of the glen the mountains were in pitch black silhouette dominated above by a brilliant spectacle of stars in a ghostly background, and another magic moment was made to linger in my soul.

The next morning it was time to move camp but embraced by the warmth and serenity of the glen we felt a little reluctant to shoulder our heavy packs and set off. Skirting the western flanks of Carn Mor, Cir Mhor, Beinn Tarsuinn and Beinn Nuis we generally contoured southward for most of the day before finally veering to the west on the approach to our next selected camp area. Just below Corrie Nuis by the side of a stream we came to a perfect grassy patch which, although a little short of our target for the day, dictated our pitch for the night.

The next day, free of our heavy packs we headed for the high ridges and again the weather was perfect. Beinn a Chiabhain, Beinn Tarsuinn and Beinn Nuis, together with their connecting ridges, form a horseshoe providing the walker with a memorable day of exciting climbs and views. We came off the ridge at Corrie Nuis where no more than 50m below its top the wreckage of an aircraft tarnished the joy of the moment for it was sad to come across the unmistakable death place of an aircraft with its crew and passengers, be it many years ago.

All too soon our final day was upon us. The day dawned warm and clear with just enough thin cloud to shade the sun, but we were glad of this as both Sue and I had suffered over-exposure and our faces were a little burnt. Our boat back to the mainland was not due until after lunch so we had a leisurely walk down the mountain into Glen Rosa and finally to Brodick. The holiday was not yet over for we travelled to Cumbria where I did a couple of caving trips before going to the east side of Yorkshire for a reunion with friends before our final journey home.

To conclude, a few points are worthy of mention. During our trip we came across two geology student groups and judging by their comments and my untrained eye I would judge the island as a classic site for those interested in the subject. To borrow the words of a friend, Arran is a "microcosm of Scotland" offering the outdoor lover a varied arena for walking and climbing as well as allied activities. Wild camping is discouraged by the authorities but I am sure they would have no objections to "professional" campers. However, if camping within sight of civilisation, it would be best to go to official sites. The months of April and May are regarded locally as having the best weather reliability, with long daylight hours and no midges. If you visit north Arran I feel sure you will not be disappointed and like us, want more.



Looking across to Goatfell, Arran from Brodick

CAVERS LOCKED - IN UNDERGROUND

Hells Journal, 16-2-88

Six cavers emerged sheepishly from beneath the Mendips today after being trapped underground. They were literally locked-in in Longwood Swallet when the key of the door snapped. The group entered at 8pm, locking the metal hatch which keeps out unauthorised people, behind them. But when they returned nearly 4hrs later and inserted the key, it broke. The alarm was raised about 3am and the police alerted MRD. Chisels and hammers were passed through a gap in the 2ft square hatch. The six chipped away at the lock and got out at 6am. After his enforced captivity Mr Thorne said "The place is built like Fort Knox and we had to cut our way through the hasp on the lock. In 15yrs caving it's the first time it has happened, but I am glad it did. I now know the emergency system works".

A METEOROLOGICALLY INTERESTING WEEKEND

by Alan Dougherty

Over the weekend of 16/17th January on Mendip I witnessed a couple of interesting meteorological occurrences. On Saturday 16th the Dougherty family visited Ebbor Gorge having driven in thick mist around the southern base of Mendip. Whilst walking up the gorge we became aware that the cloud was breaking up and the sun making an appearance. During our picnic sat above Ebbor Rocks we were positioned within a break in the clouds looking out over the Somerset Levels which were obscured by mist. Periodically cloud rolled in and out of the valley and we could feel a marked difference in temperature as soon as the moist air reached us. What we were not aware of at this stage was the extent of the temperature inversion to which Mendip was being subject. However, on reaching the plateau surface, having driven up the Old Road from Wells, we were greeted by a most magnificent clear sky.

Heavier cold air had clearly descended down the slopes leaving the plateau clear and the surrounding lowland shrouded in mist in a way normally associated with uplands of greater amplitude. A splendid drive across Mendip took us to the head of Burrington Combe where again clear sky gave way to mist.

On Sunday morning we walked Kings Wood at the eastern end of Wavering Down, being amazed to see the trees encrusted in a fairly thick layer of melting ice. This ice encrustation appeared to be local to the Shute Shelve Hill area where the valley dissecting Mendip is the route of the A38 road. The ice was thick enough to be visible across the valley but melted rapidly.

Not to be outdone by Mendip, the Yorkshire Dales provided some excellent floods over the Christmas period. No serious caving was possible but I did witness white water canoeists on a normally dry section of the River Skirfare in Littondale!

200 NEWSLETTERS AGO

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

News-sheet - July 1961

As this is the first publication of its kind that the club has produced for a number of years it should be explained that almost the sole purpose of this letter is to let club members know what is going on. Those who are unable to attend Thursday meetings hear very little and even those who attend regularly seem to miss a great deal. The letter is to consist mainly of jottings, no attempt being made at a literary work of art and being in no way a substitution for "THE JOURNAL".

PINETREE POT This cave is now open to all who are properly equipped whether they be a member of any club or not. The keys may be had from the club cottage on a deposit of 10/-.

UBLEY HILL POT The collapse of the entrance has been inspected and it is estimated that a couple of hours work (or some very heavy rain) would be required to re-open it. It will remain closed at the moment until the value of the numerous bones has been ascertained.

BLACKMOOR SWALLET A great deal of work has been carried out on the digging of this swallet. A concentrated effort might well mean an early breakthrough. All volunteers to Malcolm Cotter or to the dig itself, spade in hand.

HEARD IN THE COTTAGE Member1 to prospective member "There is one of the committee". Member2 "Take a good look at him, you don't see them very often".

MCG

digs

dig vb -gg-; dug vi 1.to turn up, loosen or remove earth 2.to understand *vt 1.to break up, turn, or loosen (earth) with an implement 2.to bring to the surface (as if) by digging; unearth 3.to hollow out by removing earth; excavate (<* a hole>) 4.to drive down into; thrust 5. to poke, prod (<* him in the ribs>) 6a.to pay attention to; notice 6b.to understand, appreciate *USE* (vi 2; vt 6) slang (ME *diggen*)

dig n 1a.a thrust, poke 1b.a cutting or snide remark 2.an archaeological excavation (site) 3.pl, chiefly Br lodging (short for diggings)

digamy n a second marriage after the termination of the first

digger n 1.a tool or machine for digging 2.a private soldier from Australia or New Zealand, esp in WW1 - infml (dig + -er)

diggings n pl 1.material dug out 2.a place of excavating, esp for ore, metals, or precious stones

dig in vt to incorporate by burying in the soil *vi 1.to dig defensive positions 2.to hold stubbornly to a position; defend doggedly (eg when batting in cricket) 3.to begin eating - infml - *dig one's heels in* to refuse to move or change one's mind; be stubborn

digit n 1a.any of the Arabic numerals from 1 - 9, usu also inc 0 1b.any of the elements that combine to form numbers in a system other than the decimal system 2.a finger or toe 3.a unit of measurement equal to .75in (about 1.9cm) 4.an instruction to a member of the Mendip Caving Group (*dig it!*) (ME, fr L *digitus* - finger, toe - more at toe)

BONE HOLE

16.04.88 Took in 2 Accro props, and 2 digging ropes left at foot of fixed ladder for HAULING NOT LIFELINING. One prop fixed under hanging boulder, other as terrace for spoil. Progress in clay with stones/large boulders. Bang required and more props.

18.05.88 Second dig site started revealing red flowstone. Back at the rift dig, the big nasty boulder was banged.

22.05.88 Bang nicely shattered the boulder. 20 bucketfuls of spoil removed. Draught issuing from rift. CAUTION the hanging boulder needs additional support and spoil heap forming the balcony is unstable.

BATTERY SHALLIT

23.04.88 Entrance depression dug against solid rock revealing small stream sinking out of sight. More clearing may reveal other artifacts.

11.05.88 Low stream passage seen but lots of mud to shift. Promising.

18.05.88 Passage 24ins x 18ins developing, dip 20° with 6ins liquid mud at bottom. 10ft of passage in total.

UPPER FLOOD

05.04.88 Black Aven climbed, visual connection made to shale rift.

10.04.88 Conservation measures in first downstream chamber using garden spray. Pipe placed to collect washing water.

20.04.88 Duck reported to be very low.

08.05.88 Good puddle in the Lavatory Trap; duck completely dry. Tools taken to dig; bang wire secured out of way. Start made in old water course to left above final sink, entered by squeeze below boulder. Squeeze enlarged and huge boulder moved 4ins - continued to creak. CAUTION, THE RUCKLE IS UNSTABLE.

Turned to dig at final stream sink. By diverting stream down previous hole, made couple of feet with hammer/chisel. Needs bang. Much litter removed from cave.

14.05.88 Draught at entrance. 5litre drums needed to carry water for cleaning down. Work commenced at face, 8 loads removed.

21.05.88 Decided the boulder choke is not the place to prod around. Removed large amount of boulders/rocks/stream debris from the upper stream sink exposing rift. At least here the roof is solid.

22.05.88 Low water level. 2 Accro props used to support roof in the chamber before the boulder choke. Removed flake blocking view down rift where stream diverted, stream seen dropping vertically. Bang required. Strong draught in Lavatory Trap.

ROD'S POT

22.05.88 To bang 3 boulders to gain access to "Eyeball Rift". By the sound of the explosion, something was blown to bits!

23.05.88 Nice one Nigel. Clear view into rift. 15-20ft visible and rising. 3ft curtains and 2ft straws clearly visible. Some small decorations at the squeeze will be sacrificed but photo. first.

RHINO RIFT SRT RIGGING GUIDE

by Mike Haselden

Some of us are familiar with a certain SRT rigging guide covering a few of the Yorkshire Dales potholes. With the authors permission I have adopted more or less the same system for Rhino Rift and, in due course, perhaps others. The symbols shown on the key are well known although for simplicity I have omitted a few and added two: RW and LW for the wall where the traverse line rigging is done, seen as you go down. It would not be practical to use this system for mid-pitch rigging because unless you are familiar with the cave you would not know its direction and rope spin would add to the confusion. However, on a traverse it is useful to know on which wall the anchors are placed for a particular rig. There may of course be alternatives. The sketched section is not to scale and mostly from memory. All dimensions are metric and I accept no responsibility at all, whatsoever and notwithstanding and without prejudice for what may so ever happen, for typing, editing, printing or actual errors of any kind in this here article. Nevertheless I shall be interested to hear others' observations. Mendip Underground should be consulted for location, access arrangements and other details.

RHINO RIFT ON ROPE

by Martin Rowe

Generally, Mendip caves and SRT do not go together - pitches are short and often separated by long crawls. Rhino Rift, however, has a single pitch of 84m (broken by two ledges) only a short distance from the entrance. An SRT trip has been possible for several years if you were prepared to trust dubious bolts and risk bad rub points. Recently, new anchors have replaced the older badly positioned and poorly drilled anchors to give secure, mostly free-hanging, pitches. Care is still required to avoid sending loose rocks down the shaft.







Approaching the pitch, the rope is belayed to stal-cemented boulders (natural thread on the right) for protection. For the best hang on the pitch it is necessary to traverse out along the left hand wall. The first of 4 bolts is located 5m from the natural belay. Choose anchors carefully - the newer better-placed anchors are generally at the higher level. From the 4th anchor, a pair of anchors can be reached slightly lower down for a Y-hang. Although free-hanging at first there is a bad rub-point below so it is necessary to use a deviation at about -5m. The cord for this is left in place and reached by abseiling until level with its free end and "penduluming" using finger-tip holds in the stal. The deviation cord will be the correct length and only needs the addition of a krab. A 31m abseil lands on a steep rock-strewn ledge. An anchor in the RH wall protects the approach to the second part of the pitch. 2m beyond, an old plate hanger with an anchor above together give a Y-hang and short 3m abseil to a rebelay on the corner of a flake. This anchor is suspect, but gives an 18m free-hang to the second ledge. (The suspect anchor is effectively backed up to three others.) Continuing downwards pulls the rope above against the rock, so it is wise to leave a little slack and rebelay at an anchor in the alcove on the RH wall of the ledge. 3m beyond is the back-up anchor for a Y-hang from another old plate hanger with a new anchor above. It may be necessary to use a rope protector below this Y-hang, depending how the knot lies. An 18m inclined pitch (requiring you to "push out" on the rock) lands at the bottom of the shaft.

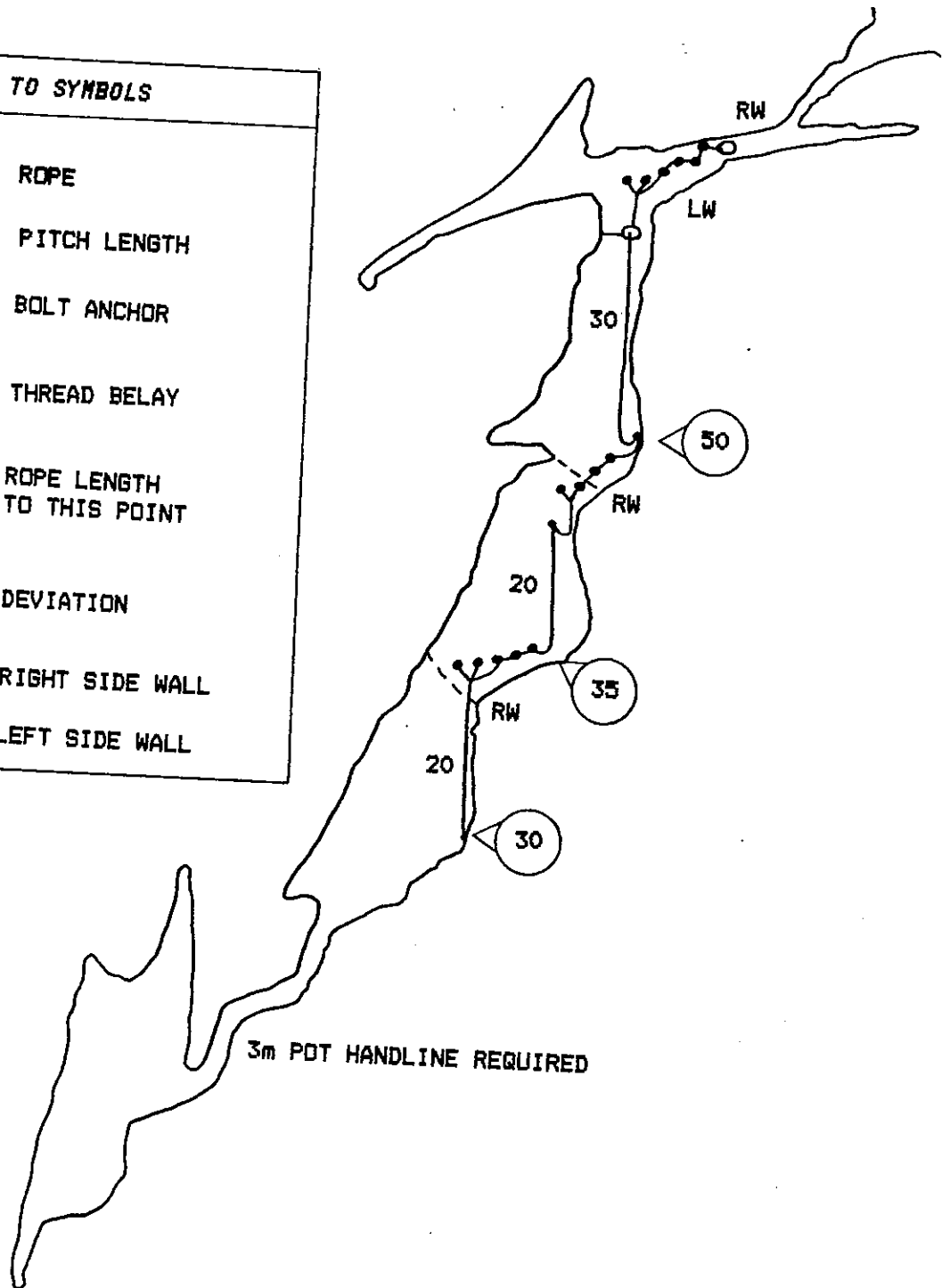
A small hole beyond is the beginning of a narrow rift, descending to the "4th" pitch - with a fixed rope of uncertain age. The pitch is 7m and opens out. It can be climbed with a handline but is awkward. Beyond, a short "5th" pitch is free-climbable on the left. The end is an impenetrable choke, with a rift soaring overhead.

My only comment on Mike's article is that he has been generous with rope lengths. I found that where he has marked 50m, 35m and 30m I measured my rope on the surface as 48m, 30m and 25m. However, I do not guarantee these lengths.

RHINO RIFT SRT RIGGING GUIDE

ENTRANCE

| KEY TO SYMBOLS | |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | ROPE |
|  | PITCH LENGTH |
|  | BOLT ANCHOR |
|  | THREAD BELAY |
|  | ROPE LENGTH TO THIS POINT |
|  | DEVIATION |
| RW | RIGHT SIDE WALL |
| LW | LEFT SIDE WALL |



GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF NORDRACH COTTAGE

The guidelines for guests have recently been revised. They are printed here in the hope that members will achieve the high standards that we expect from our guests:

It is expected that the cottage will be kept clean and tidy, and that consideration will be shown to other guests or members. The MCG reserves the right to refuse access to Nordrach Cottage to any person(s) unable to conduct themselves in a sensible and responsible manner. (ED. if this applied to members, 75% of the MCG would be expelled!)

A key will be made available by the Cottage Warden. It fits the front door and side door of the cottage (into the changing room). A back door key will be found on a hook inside the door - please replace it after locking the door.

ON FIRST ENTERING the cottage place your name(s) on the COTTAGE BOOKING SHEET on the lecturn beside the fireplace. ON LEAVING the cottage (even for short periods) always lock all outside doors, close all windows and turn off gas supply.

NO MUDDY BOOTS to be worn in the lounge, kitchen or upstairs; NO DOGS or other pets may be brought into the cottage by guests; NO SMOKING in the bedrooms.

ELECTRICITY. Consumer units are located near the front door above head-height. These will be found, and are normally left, in the "ON" position. DO NOT COVER the storage heaters or attempt to dry clothing etc on them.

DO NOT adjust the controls to the storage heaters. The cottage warden will switch these heaters on during periods of cold weather.

EXTERNAL LIGHTING for the hosing-down area and camping area: switches are located inside the side entrance door and front door. Switch off after use as they use a lot of electricity.

BATTERY CHARGERS are located between the side entrance and the changing room. Read instructions carefully and clean up any spilled electrolyte immediately.

GAS. The gas tap is located in the kitchen directly below the hob cookers. Two externally housed propane cylinders have an automatic changeover valve, so access to the gas-store is normally unnecessary. A gas-store key can be found hanging on the gas tap. TURN OFF GAS SUPPLY in kitchen before leaving the cottage or going to bed.

SOLID FUEL (winter only) for the open fire will be found outside the back door. Use the spark guard provided especially when leaving the fire unattended. Ensure that the fire is out when departing.

KITCHEN. Store food tidily on the shelves below the cookers. Utensils, crockery and cutlery will be found on shelves, in cupboards and in drawers. Please WASH UP AND RETURN articles used. KITCHEN WASTE must be placed in the plastic refuse sacks provided. These sacks must be put into dustbins at the gate.

CLEANING MATERIALS, TOILET ROLLS, REFUSE SACKS. Stored in the walk-in cupboard on the right of the stairs. As a fire precaution, the door is kept locked but the key is on the hook on the door - please replace it.

CHANGING ROOM AND SHOWERS. Do not bring ANY muddy gear into this area. Leave it outside. Ensure the extractor fan is on when showering. There is normally enough hot water for up to ten showers. If more is required a second immersion heater can be switched on in the kitchen. Switch off after use, and also turn off the wall heater after use.

GEAR/TACKLE CLEANING. There is a hosepipe, rope-washing machine and hosing-down area at the back of the cottage. CLEAR OUT the gulleys leading from the hosing-down area after use. After cleaning, and draining on the lines provided, gear may be stored in the shed which is used as a drying room. Caving gear may be stored here BUT NOT in the changing room. The key will be found on the back of the side entrance door.

LIBRARY AND TACKLESTORE are available to MCG members who may supervise access by guests in special circumstances.

RESCUE EQUIPMENT, including carry sheet, survival bag, blanket, first aid and comfort box, hauling rope and pulleys, is stored in tackle sacks on hangers above the stairs.

PLEASE TAKE ALL REASONABLE CARE OF THE COTTAGE. LEAVE IT CLEAN AND TIDY. Report any malfunctions or damage, or fix it yourself if possible.

PAYMENT OF FEES may be made to a member of the MCG who will sign the booking sheet as having received them. Alternatively, stamped addressed envelopes are provided in the lecturn. Include the appropriate fees as a cheque payable to Mendip Caving Group and post as soon as possible. Do not leave cottage fees in the donation box.