PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER

NO.105, MAY 1989.

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Portland Rd
Stoke
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PL1 4PU

Plymouth Caving Group can be found on Thursday nights at the Breton Arms, Bretonside, Plymouth, in the Smoke Room. Please come along. New members welcome.

Editorial.

Firstly I would like to Apologise for the delay in this newsletter. Since taking over from Ali in the New Year , I have been to the frozen wastes of Norway, started a new job, fallen in love (Thanks P.C.G.) and even been on a few epic caving trips!!!!!!! and survived them all!!! Being a relatively new member of the P.C.G., I have a lot to learn about the ins and outs of caving, Hope you find this newsletter informative, interesting and a fun read as well. Sorry if this edition is short, but I promise a bumper edition next time.!! Till then - have fun , keep those articles coming in and hey! lets be careful out there.

G.P.H.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

BOOKS. Spéléo Sportive No 3 La Pierre Saint-Martin.

" " No 4 Alpes de Haute-Savoie.

JOURNALS. E.T.C.

B.E.C.-Belfry Bulletin Vol 43 NO.1 Eastern U.S.A., Daren Cilau, Phillipines.

B.C.R.A.- Caves & Caving 42 (Winter '88)

_ Cave Science 15.2 (Aug'88) - Berry Head Caves; Chiapas Mexico, Daren Aragonite.

C.R.O. - Rescue ' 87.

Cerberus- 18.4 (1989).

Croydon CC - Pelobates 52 Jan '88- Austria, Mellte Valley Caves.

53 Jul '88 -Poll na gleim, Mellte Valley, Poll Dearg.

Newsletter Aug-Oct '88.

Descent 84.

D.S.S. 140 - Dec '88. Cheddar River Cave e.t.c.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Plymouth Caving Group, held in the Breton Arms, Plymouth on Thursday 19 January, 1989.

MEMBERS PRESENT : Kevin Manktelow, Graham Hart, Martin Prince, Andy Bennett, Derek Yearling, Jane Evans, Mark Vinall,David Jean, Jim Davies, Paul Nash, Alastair Neill, Michael Heard, Dave Moses, Mike Bennett, Barry Hancock.

APOLOGIES: Lynn Beattie, Bob Cawthorne.

Minutes of the last(1988) Annual General Meeting were printed in the Newsletter and distributed to all members.In the abscence of both the the Chairman and President, the President's Address was read out to the Members.

MEET REPORT: Andy Bennett reported that the club had been active during the year with a lot of well attended meets to Mendip,S.Wales and to Yorkshire, for the New Year.More meets are booked for the coming year.The Tuesday evening meets organised by Martin Prince went ahead well and Andy Bennett is looking forward to a good year ahead.

LAMPS: Martin Prince reported that the lamps are working well with 9 out of 10 lamps functioning correctly.Martin reported that the lamps were not in use as often as he would like.

EDITORS REPORT: Alastair Neill reported the usual lack of articles but he was able to maintain the regular publication of a Newsletter during the year. He reported that more exchanges were being organised and that there were new publications for the library.

TREASURERS REPORT: Paul Nash apologised for the finalised accounts not being available for the meeting. He reported that the Local Authority grant is now applied for and that some squaring up needed to be done. He said that £125 had been raised in tackle fees and that fund raising had also raised some income. There were two grants during the year of £185 a piece. A number of pieces of equipment have been purchased but we remain well in the black for 1988.Thus there is no need to increase membership fees for 1989 which remain at:

£6 for couples at same address
£5 for ordinary membership
£3 for students and unwaged.

HUT WARDENS REPORT:

Mark Vinall reported that there was now a new lock on the hut and that keys were held by himself,Bob Cawthorne, Alastair Neill,Pete Rustage,Martin Prince and Andy Bennett. He said that not a lot had been done to the hut during the year and it was important that something should be done now

RESCUE WARDENS REPORT:Mark Vinall said that club members had supported the DCRO and attended a rescue practice held at Buckfastleigh.
TACKLE REPORT: It was reported that the tackle badly needs looking after. It has hardly been used during 1988 and requires better storage and attention.
ELECTION OF OFFICERS:PRESIDENT.Alastair Neill proposed Bob Cawthorne seconded by Andy Bennett.There being no other nominations, Bob Cawthorne as elected.
CHAIRMAN:Andy Bennett proposed Martin Prince seconded by Paul Nash.There being no other nominations,Martin Prince was elected.
SECRETARY.Derek Yearling proposed Lynn Beattie seconded by Mark Vinall. There being no other nominations, Lynn Beattie was elected Secretary.
TREASURER. David Jean proposed Paul Nash seconded byMark Vinall. There being no other nominations, Paul Nash was elected Treasurer.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE: Andy Bennett,Charlie Bird,Graham Hart, Michael Heard, Alastair Neill, Jim Davies and Dave Moses were nominated and elected. It was agreed that Mark Vinall would continue as club representative at DCRO.

There being no other business the Annual General Meeting closed at 8.37 p.m. having begun at 8.00 p.m.

DIARY.

MAY 24-27 S.WALES WSG
JUNE 10-11 SMCC MENDIP.
AUG 12-13 SMCC MENDIP
JULY? AUG SPAIN.

NEWS

S.WALES- Progress is still being made in the link between AGGY and Daren. Also a lot of digging around OGOF IGAM OGAM.

PRIDHAMSLEIGH.
Would anybody caving in Prid in future please use the Buckfastleigh side of the Dual carriageway for getting changed

D.C.R.O.
Training for Assesment - names to Mark Vinall please.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.
Would members please take note Subs are now overdue for 1989 membership, prompt payment saves embarrasment.!!!!!!!!!

STOP PRESS...
We have just heard the news that Member Chris Booth has fallen off a Cliff near Bosigran in Cornwall - Get Well Soon messages have been sent via the Editor on behalf of the P.C.G.

Membership List 1988.

R Ackroyd	35 Julian Rd, Ivybridge, Devon	Ply 893196
M Ashby	1 Stile Orchard, Station Rd., Loddiswell, Kingsbridge	
M Barry	51 Embankment Rd, Prince Rock Plymouth	
S Burnham	8 Courtlands Tavistock	Tav 613547
H Browning	2 Sandy Park West Tavistock	Tav 66551
P Browning	" "	
G Conroy	3 Westmoreland Ave, Wallasey Merseyside	
J Drake	9 Primrose Park, Kincaidston Ayr, Ayrshire	
M Elliot	37 Glebelands, Buckfastleigh, Devon	
A Elsdon	29 Follaton Rd, Totnes	
C Gibbs	200 Grenville Rd., St Judes Plymouth	
P Green	2 Keep Cottage, Berry Pomeroy, Totnes Devon	0803 866215
D Hitchcox	37 Billacombe rd, Plymstock Ply	
R Jones	23 Jephson Rd St Judes PL49ET	Ply 664781
P Kessell	31 Gilwell Ave, Plymstock, Plymouth	
R & P Moss	30 Yealmpstone Close, Plympton Ply	Ply 342428
P Nash	46 Torr View Ave Peverell Plymouth	Ply 787673
A Nash	" "	
D Pritchard Jenkins	Manor House, Lutton Cornwood.	
P Rustage	60 Lower Compton Rd, Lower Compton Plymouth	Ply 228491
S Toner	217 Embankment Rd, Prince Rock, Plymouth	Ply 667218
M Vinall	25 Lipson Rd, Greenbank Plymouth	Ply 262206

Membership List 1989

R Ashley	28 Edith Ave, St Judes, Plymouth	Ply 665232
L Beattie	29 Admiralty St, Stonehouse Plymouth.	Ply 665091
A Bennett	10 Clayton Place, St Judes Plymouth	Ply 262947
M Bennett	c/o Skern Lodge, Appledore, N Devon.	
C Bird	166 Albert Rd, Stoke, Plymouth	Ply 562230
C Booth	10 Ocean Court,Richmond Wk,Devonport Ply	Ply 560156
R Carr	The Nurses Home, Freedom Fields Hospl,Plymouth	668080x4018
R Cawthorne	3 Valletort Rd, Stoke, Plymouth	Ply 563588
J Cawthorne	" "	
J Clarke	Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse, Plymouth	Ply 229363
R Davies	32 Vapron Rd, Mannamead Plymouth	Ply 227673
J Dunford	118 Lipson Rd, Plymouth	
J Evans	39 Connaught Ave, Mutley Ply.	
P Fairbanks	166 Albert rd, Stoke, Plymouth	Ply 562230
B Hancock	6 Hartley Ave, Plymouth PL3 5HW	Ply 227462
G Hart	35 Portland Court, Portland Place, Stoke Ply	
M Heard	176 Devonport Rd, Stoke, Plymouth	Ply 561506
M Hayes	239 Grenville Rd, St Judes Plymouth	
D Jean	13 Tor Rd, Hartley, Plymouth	Ply 700293
C Johnstone	10 Ocean Court, Richmond Wk,Devonport.Ply	Ply 560156
K Manktelow	42 Lands Park, Plymstock, Plymouth	Ply 406480
E Mercer	Studio Flat,231 Grenville Rd, St Judes Ply.	
D Moses	3 Chollacott La, Tavistock	
J Murphy	67 Truro Drive, Tamerton Ply	Ply 791574
R Naylor	29 Princess Ave, Plymstock Plymouth	Ply 404271
A Neill	25 Lipson Rd, Greenbank, Plymouth	Ply 262206
J Penny	49 Bamphylde Way, Southway Plymouth	Ply 708100
A Phillips	Danehurst, Richmond Rd, Crownhill, Plymouth	
M & N Prince	57 Greenbank Ave, Greenbank Ply.	Ply 670544
P Reid	86 South Down Rd, Beacon Park, Ply	Ply 500455
S Smith	2 Holwell Clo, Plymstock, Ply	Ply 492774
M Vyvyan	49 Bamphylde Way, Southway Plymouth	Ply 708100
G Williams	5 Dunstone View Plymstock Plymouth	Ply 405144
G Wilson Rd	239 Grenville Rd, St Judes, Plymouth.	
D Yearling	13 Beaumont Place St Judes, Plymouth.	Ply 267865

As at 4th APRIL 1989

39.99 -40.02 Years.

Nov 22nd saw an assorted party gathering to visit Radford Cave. It seemed an appropriate venue to celebrate 40 years (life begins at etc), as it was the venue for the first caving trip way back in April 1963, and only visited some 300 times in between! We went around the cave! It really hasn't changed much! Yes one or two of the formations are muddier, and one or two only have been broken. There is actually less litter and graffiti than 1963, because the lock never stayed on then!

Darren pointed to a possible new route - from the side entrance rifts to the Well- he says it is too tight for him!!! We went on down to the boulder slope, and to the trumpet. It was dry- luxury. (I can remember when the trumpet was a 50 metre sump - back in the good old days) Charlie leapt at the suggestion that we go into the inner series via Ron's Window. He was followed by a mad few. Others went in via the squeeze. Others sensibly stayed in Red Corridor.

After pointing out Wherry's squeeze,(Discovered by Tony Wherry,Sutton High School Caving Club, 1963) we went on down into the Oxbow chamber. Of course we then had to go around it, some of the mud has gone from the first small chamber (There did not used to be a pit in the mud floor, this has been entirely excavated by cavers taking pieces out to throw at those still on the chamber!) Back in Red Corridor other bits were pointed to - Victory Chamber, the Belfry etc, and then Derek arrived with Lynn,Jane &Jane.

They went into the Oxbow, we continued. The chamber above Terminal Rift was visited so as to get a good view of the curtain. Darren then asked if I had seen 'Pig behind Bars This was discovered by Kevin and himself while digging around in the Horseshoe (underneat the connecting squeeze) It is a fine little formation, two straw-like columns make the bars, and a little blob of Stal makes the pig, snout and all.

From here some went out via the gunbreech, others by the slide. A pleasant trip ending in Drake's drum.

Four days, a birthday, and much brain-cell squashing Glenfiddich later, Dave Jean and I met brother Ted at the Pengelly centre. We spent time in the White Hart calculating that Ted's last trip was June' 88 - Giants Hole Derbyshire, and that prior to that - Summer '78 - Sell Gill & Ribblehead in the Dales ! The last Prid trip was in 1972..... urghhhhh the passage of time - it's horrible ! The same Prid trip had a certain fat littl Staffordshire Bull Terrier called Brandy in the party! (See an early newsletter)

Eventually all time delaying factors had been used up so we drove over to Prid,paid, and changed. We were the only ones there! We wandered in first of all to Bishops chamber and then through the Maze to the Coal Hole. As I much prefer the Coal-Hole by-pass,Dave and I went thataway, and then caught Ted coming down the Coal Hole. Along to the Cellars to the TRENCH.

Back in 1972, Brandy, on being lowered (protesting) down the Coal Hole trotted along to the cellars,STEPPED down into the trench, stepped up to the hole at the far end, negotiated the 2 FOOT drop into the passage leading to Lake Chamber, and walked down to the platform for a drink.(All of this in total darkness) Nowadays of course a full sized person has to scrabble as so much mud has been worn away.

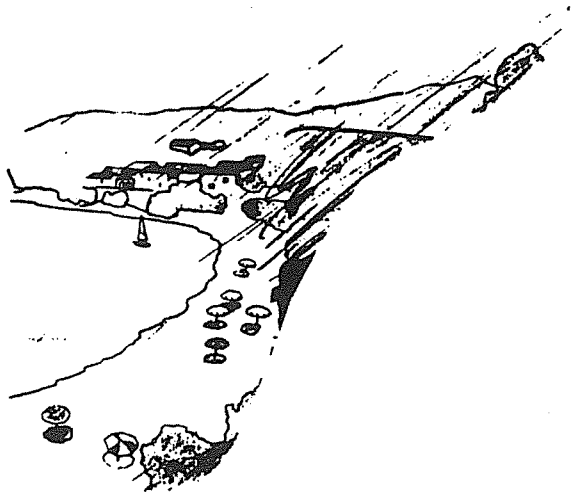
At the lake I had to go for a swim. Absolutely essential(Where else do you wash your wet-suit) The water level was just right - 6 inches below platform. We then decided to have a look at the lower passage to mystery pools. It proved to require a gritty duck with six inches of air space so we came out via the Worm-Hole instead. This proved an interesting scramble in a greasy wet wet-suit.

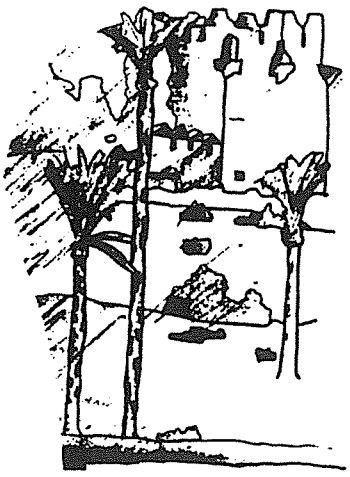
We moved onto Junction Chamber, and on to the rift climb down and to the well. Again it is amazing to see how much mud had gone. More than 5 cubic metres at this side of the well! We did not cross but set off back. Horror of horrors we could hear voices - we set off to the sloping rift area and climbed up to come out in the side of Crystal chamber - a route I cannot remember doing before! I have always come out via Colite crawl(I think)

We returned to the surface. To the stream to wash (too cold), so back to Plymouth. A pleasant couple of caving trips to remember.

Bob Cawthorne

SPAIN





DATES ARE

SAIL OUT WED. 26 JULY 11.00

SAIL BACK FRI. 11 AUG. 14.00

PLYMOUTH - SANTANDER.

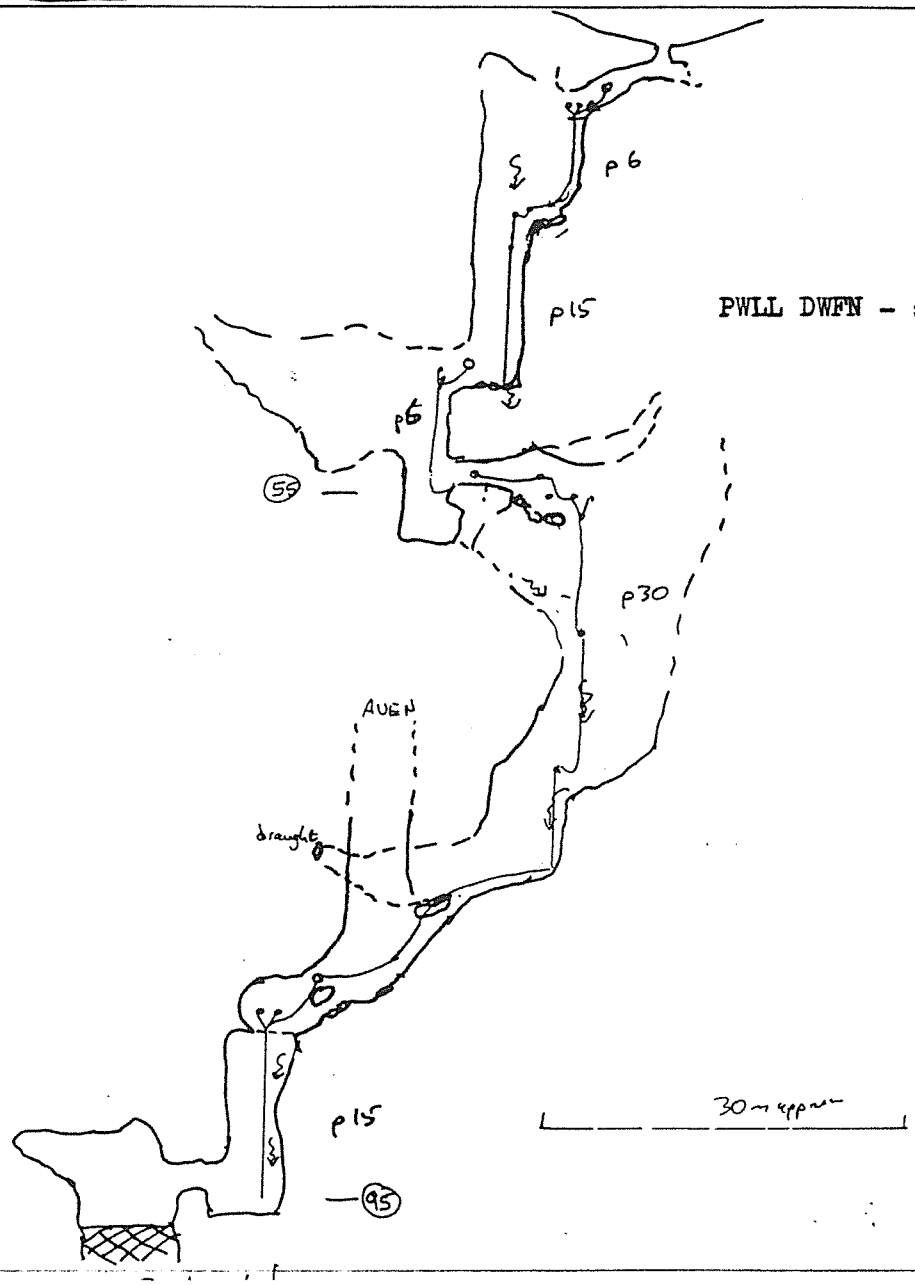
FULL COST £205

Could be a 25% reduction

D Jean
700293

PWLL DWFN.

For quite some number of PCG trips to South Wales we had gone prepared to do Pwll Dwfn, above Dan-Yr-Ogof. We had found the entrance a few years ago when looking at likely digs in the area, and had helped some SWCC members who were digging a choked shaft a short distance up the valley past it. The guide book description indicated that it is a pre--dominantly vertical cave, about 100m deep; and we were told it had been bolted for SRT. Repeatedly we had found an excuse not to go; couldn't be bothere d because of the walk (it's not that far), couldn't be bothered because it's pissing down with rain(it might flood??), couldn't be bothered because of the night before (most usual excuse), couldn't be bothered - let's go down OFD, or just plain couldn't be bothered.



PWLL DWFN - section.

However in the Breton before our trip in Feb, Carl (our tame ferret on loan from the Cuddly Toy Caving Club) started leaping up and down saying "let's do Pwll Dwfn, it's really good, I've done it lots of times". So on the Saturday, Carl, Tim(PPS) and myself set off to do it. You can get there two ways, from Dan-Yr-Ogof car park, or up the Bridle Path past Carreg Haffes. We chose the latter, despite the rain and mist (note - this can become impassable if the river is high- it was still passable this time - and the farmer doesn't like people crossing his fences trying to find an alternate route). Up the road is a bus shelter - a very convenient changing room in the rain! As soon as we started walking up the road, a Land Rover pulled up in front of us disgorging a large group of cavers with lots of tackle. "Oh no! , they can't be doing the same cave as us, can you rig more than rope down it?" Carl didn't know. They obviously had the same thoughts,and rushed off ahead of us. We never caught up with them, never saw them again, perhaps they're still on the moors somewhere? A steep walk up the hill brought us on to the tops in thick mist-

fortunately the cave can be easily located by following a shallow dry valley, and we soon found it. Carl said he wanted to rig it, and I would keep an eye on Tim who hadn't done an SRT trip before underground. An awkward entrance leads to a low passage to the first pitch; from here the pitches follow close after each other. The bolting in the cave is not particularly brilliant - quite a few rub points, and the bolts tend to follow the water! Zippy's rigging didn't help - he had forgotten how to tie a Y- hang so just used single bolts, resulting in eve n more rub points! He didn't tell us until afterwards that he hadn't done any rigging before! Tim had fun on the third pitch, which only goes part way down then makes an awkward swing into a tube in the wall. He got into the tube, but then fell out again and made a plummet part way to the floor. We used two ropes, of approx 95m and 55m . On rigging the last pitch I found we had run out of rope 10m off the floor. Carl tried to persuade me to free climb down, but I declined and so we headed on out.

Next day, having decided it was so good I wanted to do it again, I returned with Andy and Mike Bennett and Jane Evans. Again we rushed up the hill, Mike (as usual) doing a mad sprint in front of everyone else (and he walked straight past the cave, serves him right) leaving Andy plodding along at the back with the tackle. Mike rigged using more bolts and Y-hangs, but it worked - this time the rope reached to 10cms above the floor of the last pitch! This cave is definitely worth doing, better than I expected - not quite Notts Pot, but it's nearer and it's definitely better than Rhino, in spite of the bolts.

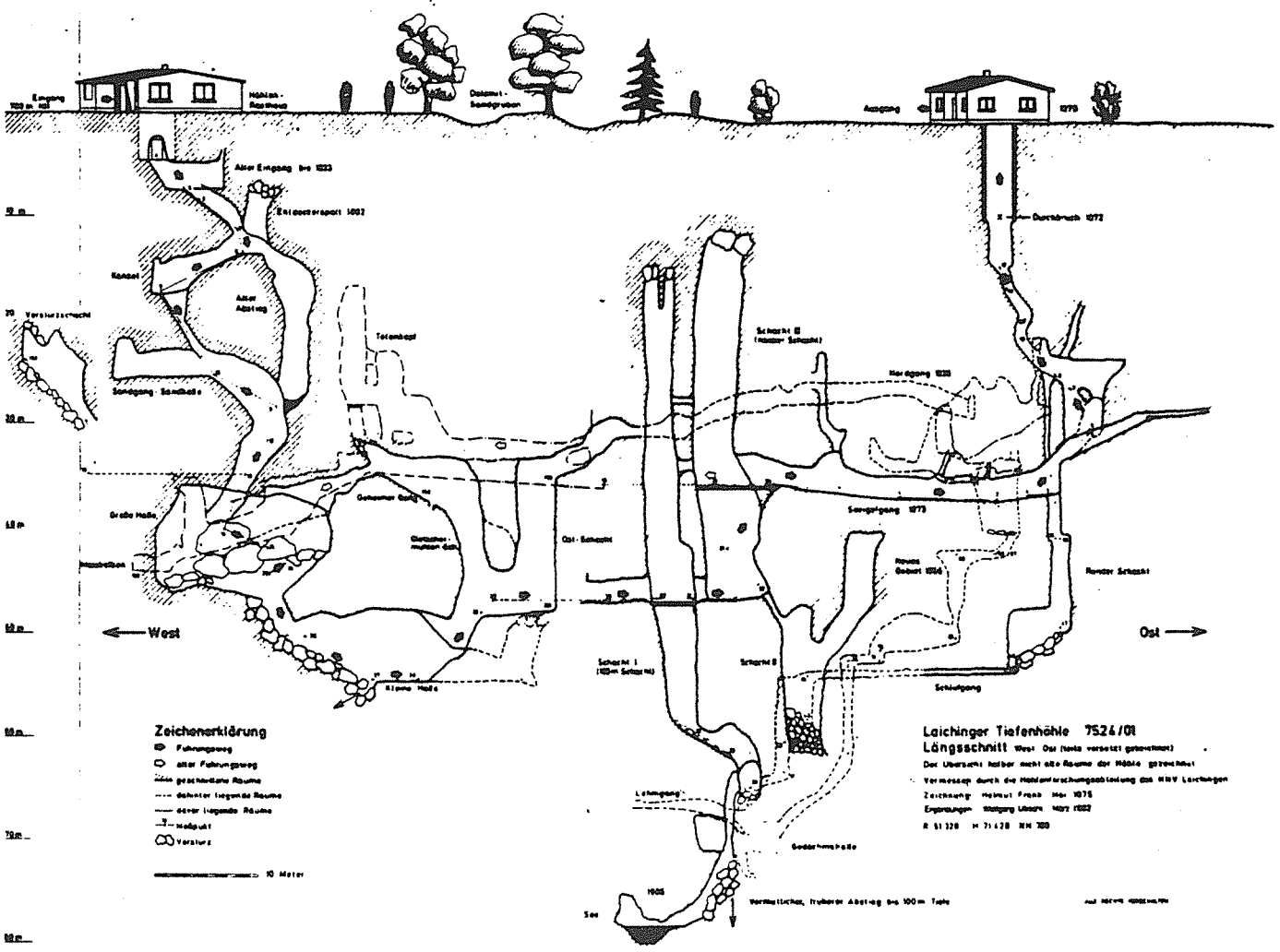
Ali Neill.

Two Show Caves in Germany and Austria

During May of 1988 I took a holiday in the Alpine areas of Southern Germany and Austria, and I included in my holiday a visit to two show caves, the Laichinger Tiefenhöhle and the Eisriesenwelt.

The Laichinger Tiefenhöhle situated on the Swabian Alps around the small town of Laichingen just south of the Stuttgart to Ulm Autobahn. The Swabian Alps, at this point, consist of a gently tilted north-south plateau of Jurassic rocks, mainly chalk and dolomite, disected the rivers crossing the plateau to become tributaries of the Donau (Danube).

A cross section of the Tiefenhöhle shows how it is linked to the structure of the rocks, following the bedding and vertical joints the cave has developed both horizontally and vertically for distances of 1070m and 80m. Many of the passages show evidence of phreatic origin though there is also vadose development and a number of calcite features. Like other show caves this one has its Madonna and Waterfall.



The cave was originally entered through a boulder choke in 1892. The modern entrance was constructed in 1933 and a through trip became possible in 1972 with the construction of a new exit. Today the tourist trip consists of a climb down to the Sandhall, which is dusty and well named, and then on down to the Great Hall some 45m below the surface. Here there are some 40 tons of boulders still precariously positioned after collapsing from the ceiling.

A climb down over more boulders takes one to the Little Hall, the lowest point on the tourist route. The way on is along a passage the wall of which is covered with botryoidal stalagmite, this they call the cauliflower way (Blumenkohlgang). Then to the one hundred metre shaft which is a little exagerated since the cave has a vertical development of only 80m, but you can look down towards the lake at the lowest point. Then on past the wet shaft (Nasser Schact) and along sea urchin way (Seeigelgang) to the exit shaft.

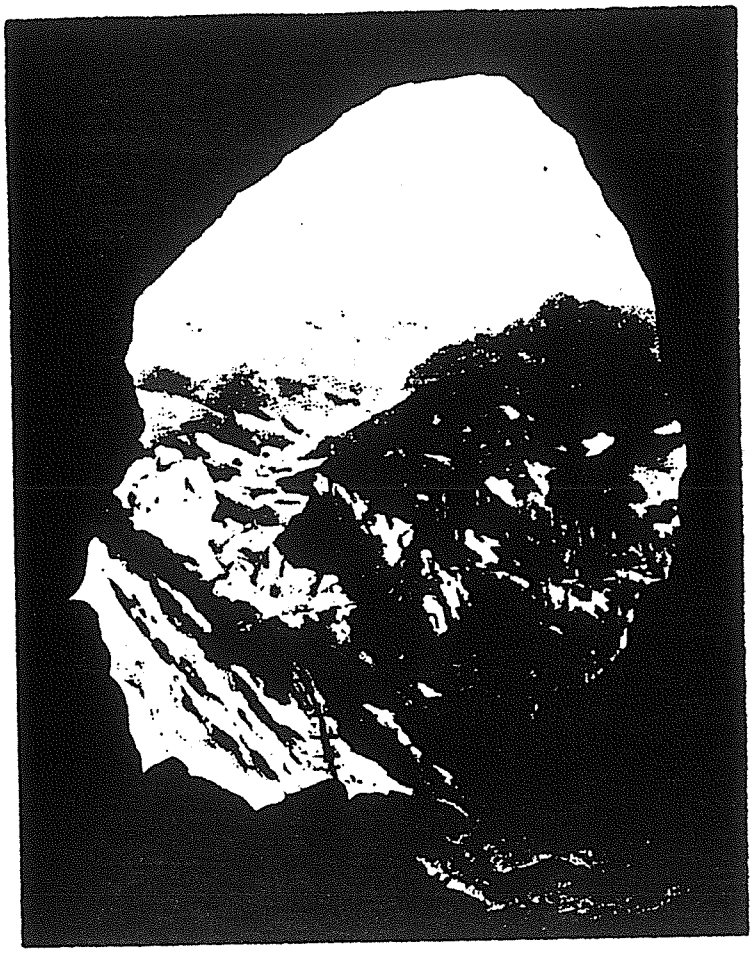
A few days later I was in Salzburg and took a trip along the A10 Autobahn towards the village of Werfen above which rises the Tennengebirge range which peaks at Hühnerkrall-K (2401m, 7200ft) along its western edge. It is beneath this western edge that the Eisriesenwelt (world of the ice giants) is to be found. Its entrance is at 1640m (5460ft) above sea level, well over a kilometre above the floor of the valley of the Salzach River.



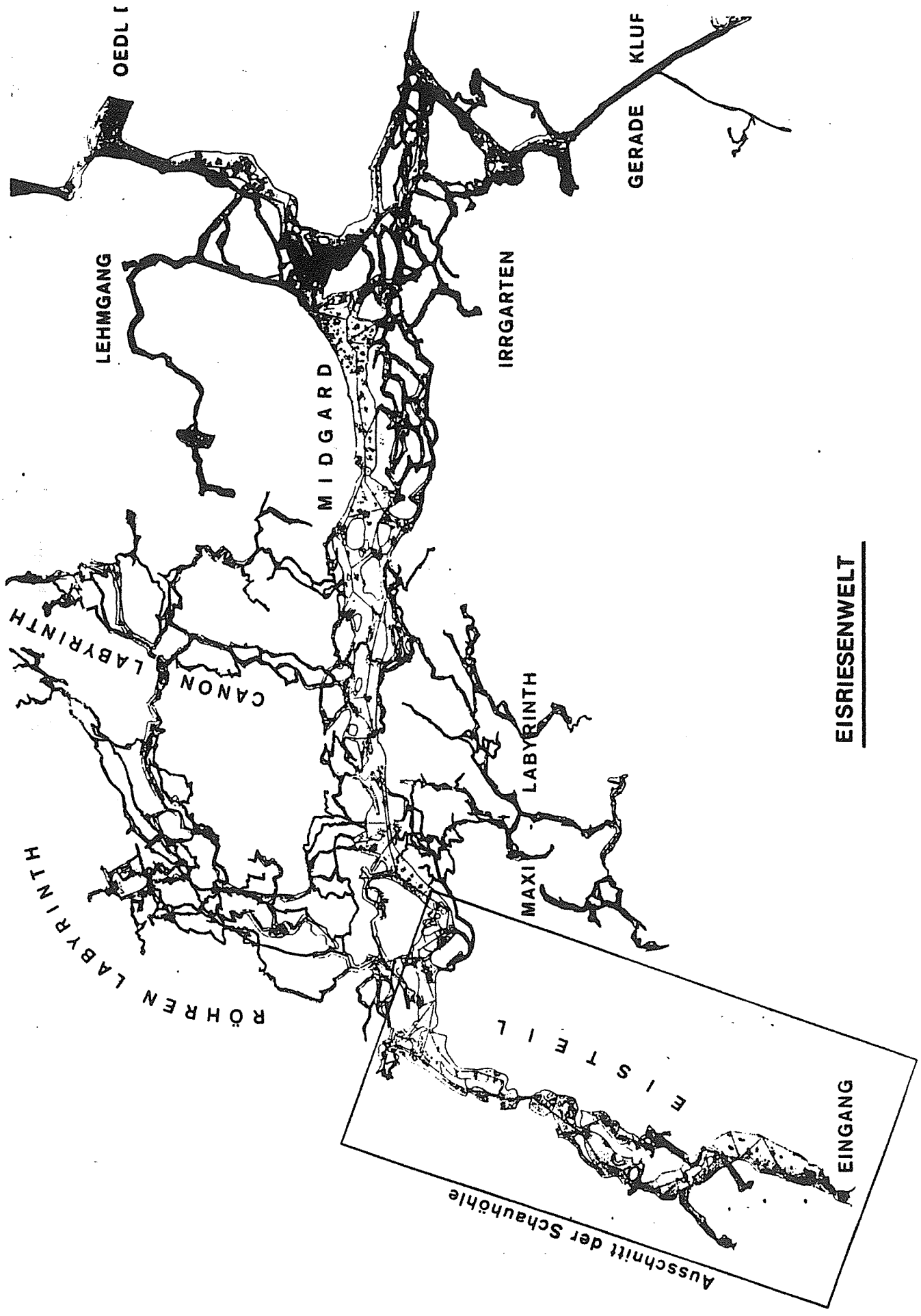
The entrance is reached from Werfen along a winding mountain road that takes you up to the cable car which ascends to the Dr Friedrich-Oedl-House, a refuge with fine views over the Austrian Alps. From here a 20 min walk along a winding footpath takes you up to the entrance of the Eisriesenwelt in the precipitous rock wall of the Hochkogel-peak 2282m (7480ft).

The entrance is enormous and lead immediately into 30,000 square metres of ice along 1 km ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile) of ice covered passages. The total length of the cave is now 48 km (30 miles). At the entrance the guide hands out huge hand-held carbide lamps to the group and then, picking up his own lamp, along with several strips of magnesium ribbon, sets off into the cave.

From the entrance you go into the Posselthalle, named after the first tourist who entered it in 1879. Then one climbs the 30m high ice wall which covers the full width of the cave. Alexander von Mörk, the founder of the Salzburg Caving Club, was the first to overcome this obstacle in



1913 which enabled the cave to be explored further. Leaving the ice wall through a low, narrow passage the magnificent Hymir-hall is entered which contains a number of ice towers and figures which the guide illuminates with bright magnesium flares. These include the Ice Chapel, the Ice Organ and Friggas Veil. By now we are over 100m above the entrance and in Odins Hall. This leads through a draughty air passage to the Ice Door, with its shining ice curtains. From here a descent is made into the largest chamber, the Alexander von Mork Cathedral, and here, among the glittering ice formations is an urn containing the remains of von Mörk who was killed during the First World War. The tourist section ends at the Ice Palace with superb reflections of ice formations in melting water.


OEDL
LEHMGANG
MIDGARD
IRRGARTEN
GERADE
KLUF
LABYRINTH
CANON
LABYRINTH
MAXI
LABYRINTH
RÖHREN LABYRINTH
EISRIESENWELT
Ausschnitt der Schauhöhle
EISTEIL
EINGANG

WOT NO BUTCOMBE - A tea-total caver's account of a weekend on Mendip!!

I'd been counting the weeks, days etc to the club weekend on Mendip - I could hear the Hunters calling me from afar, one or maybe even two pints of Butcombe had my name on them (!) you could say all in all I was looking forward to the weekend, and then....it happened !!! A fairly routine visit to my Doctor on Friday morning resulted in one of two options : a) put up with the severe (and getting worse) back ache due to a kidney complai or b) take the antibiotics and forego the Butcombe - it was close but not that close.!!!

So off Steve(mornin' nice day for it) Smith, Graham (Mahatma Campbell,see further on Hart and I went. We passed the Hunters - I could almost smell the Butcombe - after going to The Mineries and finding it shut we walked to the pub to meet up with the others. At long last I had my first smell of Butcombe, the pain in the back was pretty bad and I'd therefore decided to keep taking the tablets as it were. The others (good mates that they are) continued to advise me as to the quality of the Butcombe (thanks alot) and I had a coke!!!

The first night Butcombeless passed - Phew!! The following day we called into Wells to pay homage at B.P. and to buy essentials (i.e. coke for me and beer for everybody bloody else for after the Hunters closed that night!!) Then we went caving.(Someone else can write that trip up- perhaps Kevin ?) After returning to the surface in beautiful sunshine we went back to the hut for coffee/tea (yawn) Kev (lucky sod) even had a can of beer on the way back from the cave (G.B.) to the hut. After changing etc four of us decided to go into Wells for a 'Ruby Murray'. We found a terrific little Indian Place and the food was terrific also, however second dissapointment of the weekend no Lassi. So I had non-alcoholic tomato juice.....this is getting boring now folks. Only Steve actuall had a beer there but Graham must have been on something because he was the nights enter--tainment - I really thought we were going to be asked to vacate the premises when he suddenly broke into"You take the High Road and I'll take the Low Road" in an Indian type voice. (Hence Mahatma Campbell) We were also (oh joy of joys) treated to a rendition of "Walk like a Pakistani" !! We finally left the restaurant none too soon for the owner I think and moved onto the Hunters. It was all a little too much for me - the smell of the Butcombe, a full tum and a roaring fire - so I wimped out after a glass or two of coke an went back to the hut to get a cup of tea before bed and some intense study of the back of the eye lids!!

8.30 a.m. Sunday morning came round(yes folks there is such a time on a Sunday morning!!) I had to get up,nature was calling. Once I was up I decided everybody else should be too, so I made a giant pot of tea and told them all brekkie in 15 minutes - that did the trick. I did gently wake Kev with a coffee and somebody's shaggy dog woke Ali I think not quite so gently!! After a good hearty breakfast and another antibiotic tablet, we went off to Goatchurch (Stupidos) That in itself is a story I shall leave one one of the others to tell - 'Nuff to say the sight of all the arms and legs trying to get into the drainpipe was something I shall never forget. We did think (for all of 2 secs) of doing Sidcot next but after Graham had shown Mike Heard the Blind White Cave Fish at the sink we ran away. Then followed a half hour rally drive to find a nice pub for lunch(Why did it have to be a pub?) I don't even know where we ended up (Near to Butcombe ha ha thanks a lot) I had (you guessed it) coke. Whoopee. We got back to the hut,had a coffee and left shortly afterwards for home.

I did enjoy the weekend but I would ask the following questions;

1) Why doesn't the Hunters do 'Carry Outs' of Butcombe?
2) Why is it that this had to be my first weekend on Mendip this year and I couldn't drin
3) Why isn't there another Mendip weekend planned in th very near future ?

AND WHY ME!!!???

LYNN BEATTIE

AGEN ALLWEDD

Priory Road & Gothic Passage Extensions

As we drove up through South Wales towards Llangattock we caught frequent glimpses of swollen rivers and of fields that had become lakes - things did not bode too well for our attempt on the Grand Circle in Aggy. However our second objectives was to look at the new extensions to Gothic Passage and, providing we could face the monotonous trip down Southern Stream Passage - and back, we should still have a good trip in store.

I was travelling up with Mike Rendall, Brian Yates and Jasper Jarrett and in one way and another this was to prove to be an interesting trip. Following a hazardous ascent of the lanes leading to the escarpment we entered a wintry world and teetered along the narro snow covered road to Whitewalls where we met up with Charlie Burton and Lee Johnson of Bristol Poly.

The snow and wind caused approximately six cases of severe bottling-out syndrome before we found ourselves changed and enduring the long cold walk to the entrance. Inside however things soon hotted up and in only forty minutes we arrived at the start of Southern Passage.

There was reputed to be six thousand feet of tedious crawling, stooping and scramblin ahead of us, and nobody was looking forward to it. The first several hundred feet surprised us all as it was actually a fairly pleasant stream passage necessitating only an easy stooping progress.

Forty five minutes later it was still going strong and had introduced us to several awkward scrambles and short crawls, but overall the reputation of Southern Stream Passage seems to stem from its length rather than any particular obstacles - although it was an absolute bastard on the way back out.

We arrived at the 7ft wet climb down into the small Waterfall Chamber and the Passage continued monotonously beyond for a further several hundred feet. Then a muddy roof passa appeared and a handline indicated the way upwards. A short sandy passage led to a low junction with two ways on. These were supposed to lead into the two main extensions recently discovered - both leading eastwards towards Daren Cilau.

After a break we took the left-hand passage leading to the Gloucester dig in the Priory Road extensions. As it later turned out this was to be a wrong choice and a lucky one! Some low crawls leading to a big Aven and then further low crawls suggested a possible retreat but we pushed on and broke through into several hundred yards of large rocky passage. Beyond lay longer crawls and half the party dropped back whilst a few hardened twits pushed on to the low terminal chambers and boulder chokes, which are only two or three hundred metres from the latest finds in Daren.

The arduous and steamy crawling back to Southern Stream left nobody feeling up to the Chelsea extension so whilst Mike, Brian and Jasper opted for heading out, Charlie, Lee and I wanted to get into the supposedly 'stupendous' section of streamway into which Southern Stream leads.

As Mike and Brian headed out Jasper came back down the last few yards of Southern Stream with us to where the narrow, constricted passage opened out onto a silt bank at the edge of a broad gloomy passage. Deep dark water flowed by. Downstream fresh flood-foam coated the lowering ceiling towards the terminal sumps. Upstream the roof rose and there was the sound of roaring water.

Jasper then set off to catch up with Bike and Brian while Lee, Charlie and I waded through shallow pools into a broad, high canyon. We followed the wide roaring stream for hundreds of yards up steep cascades and around deep foaming pools. Some waterfalls were easily surmounted and the passage got even bigger towards Quarry Corner where it turned left abruptly. Soon we were halted by a six-foot-high overhanging waterfall which played into a very deep pool. Charlie in his furry suit, laid down on some impressive calcited rocks to doze while Lee and I stormed the obstacle and succeeded in climbing it. The strength of the fall was such that it was not possible to lift a leg beneath its full force

Not far beyond we found the 5th boulder choke and a side passage leading to a 4th boulder choke. Knowing that the way beyond would be sumped we turned back and began to retrace our way downstream. The change in the stream came rapidly, so much that nobody noticed it coming at all. We had passed Quarry Corner and were approaching the cascades downstream. One moment we were ambling along in a moderately sporting streamway when we suddenly realised we were being herded along by an increasingly insistent foaming, roaring mass of brown water. Shortly afterwards the river turned brown and we were continually being swept off our feet. Arriving at the cascades they looked impossible to pass in the controlled manner that we had climbed up, but the impossibility of turning back meant that

we took the plunge and allowed ourselves to be propelled downstream towards Southern Stream Passage.

We knew that the area around the entry of Southern Stream could sump, which caused us some concern as we knew nothing of the bypass further upstream at the time! Clambering onto some rocks we assessed the last low section before deciding to go for the final wade through the low archto safety. The water at Southern Stream had risen two feet since we left it and was still rising steadily. Relieved to be out of harm's way, we set off out.

The only other incident of note occured only fifteen minutes from the entrance.We emerged from the first Boulder choke to the sound ofdesperate shouting and found a cold and very worried Jasper sitting in Darkness! Having failed to catch up with Mike and Brian , his light had completely failed. We estimated that he had set out in total darkness, not even sure if he was on the right route or not, for about two hours.

It was a very relieved Jasper who joined us for the final bit of the journey out. We emerged in Darkness to find itcold, raining and that all the snow had gone- there was the clear explanation of our exciting flood pulse. Little did we know then that the flooding was to have more serious consequences that weekend.....

TO BE
CONTINUED.

Geoff Lloyd.

EXPEDITION MEDICINE SEMINAR - ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY 18/3/89.

On 18/3/89, myself, Chris Booth and Claire Johnstone attended the above seminar at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

Many topics were covered , and Speakers included Nigel Winser who was of course the

EXPEDITION MEDICINE SEMINAR - ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY 18/3/89.

On 18-3-89, Chris Booth, Claire Johnstone and myself attended the above Seminar in London. Many topics were covered, and speakers included Nigel Winser who played a major role in the Mulu caves Expedition in Sarawak. Topics included Base camp Health and Hygiene, Marine and Underwater environments,Venomous creatures and High Altitude Medicine. Although caving as a subject was not a major consideration, I did get to talk to Nigel during Lunch. A very nice chap indeed. A point that keeps cropping up, and cropped up in the 1½ pages on Caving in the Expedition Medicine Manual, is how ineffective a Helicopter is in Cave Rescue, almost 100% I would have thought!!!! All in all, a good seminar, well attended especially by the P.C.G. medical contingent.

Graham Hart.