PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL
No 122 November 1994

Editorial

Welcome to another edition of The Journal, the vibrant and throbbing organ of PCG. This edition sees in a new editor because Claire has had to move away for work reasons. Consequently, I have agreed (or been pressed) to take over as editor until the next AGM. However, I must congratulate Claire for producing two good editions and I am sure we all wish her well.

It is encouraging to see a number of new authors producing articles but still more are needed so if you've had a particularly interesting trip and feel like writing it up then do so and pass it onto me. It doesn't have to be long or written in the Queen's English (broad Devon will do!) and lets face it, we'll publish anything while we're this desperate! Its very encouraging to see so many article from youngsters starting to appear - keep it up!

There are a number of trip reports from near and afar as well as a recent rescue report. I have also included some technical articles but we still need some more and varied articles please.

I hope you enjoy the journal but must apologise for any errors/omissions as it was thrown together rather quickly. Now read on.....

Keith Jackson

PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP MEET IN THE REAR BAR OF THE BRETON ARMS, BRETONSIDE EVERY THURSDAY EVENINGS FROM 8PM ONWARDS. COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND AND EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS.

Note to authors:- Please send articles to the editor at 4 Tamar Terrace, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4EW (Tel. 0752 845422). If possible please type or wordprocess articles because it makes my life 10 times more enjoyable. Don't worry about what word processor to use as I can optically scan anything as long as its not handwritten. Any articles on 3½ disk are welcome preferably in text or wordperfect format. However, I will type in any articles providing they are legible and aren't to long.

Contents

News and Information. 3

Old Crumbly - Kit Hill. 5

Slave Flash Units 5

Wheal Marquis -Nr Gunnislake. 6

PCG Membership List 7

When I Went Caving.... 8

Additions to the Library. 9

Computerised Survey Processing 10

MATIENZO '94 (Part 1) 11

Wheal Hermon Rescue 14

NEWS BULLETIN

Cave Rescue Practice , 20th November - Probably to be held at Chudleigh but this will be confirmed.

Club Trip : On 27th November there will be a Day Trip to the Mendips, anyone interested contact Princey,0822 855263 for details

Christmas Day ,will be held on 25th December,as many club members as possible to partake.

New Year : Possible trip to Scotland,anyone interested please contact Ali Neill 0752 262206

Cave Leader Training/ Assessment :
Another training/leadership weekend will be held early March 1995. Assessments can be arranged to suit.
NB. Don't forget there is Youth Funding available from the PCG,apply in writing to the Committee.

Notice to Cave Leaders: A letter will be circulated to existing leaders to notify them about the transition to the National Caving Association Local Cave Leadership Scheme.

For more information about either of the above contact Mike Bennett ,0752 263701

Radford Cave : Volunteers will be needed to assist in making the entrance to this cave safe. Anyone interested contact Princey,0822 855263

Annual General Meeting : The AGM will be held on 2nd February 1995 in the Breton Arms at 8pm.

Old Crumbly - Kit Hill.

It was intended that these few words would be about a trip made by myself, Rob Graham and Mike Shaw to Old Crumbly on Kit Hill. Rob had been to the mine before so he was chief navigator.

However, on describing the place to Princey a few days later it seemed that Rob's navigating skills were sadly lacking and the shaft we descended was not Old Crumbly but something else nearby. The shaft was situated very near the top of Kit Hill. From the parking area at the summit the shaft can be found by walking in a northerly direction for a few minutes. The track to follow is clearly defined and is obviously used by many people. However, care must be taken as there is much evidence along the track to suggest that the majority of these people are dog owners.

Around the top of the shaft is a substantial fence. Two of the larger posts are ideally placed for a 'Y' belay. The first part of the descent was a gentle slope. This led to a rocky overhang over which care is needed as there are some strands of barbed wire hidden in the weeds growing around the sides. Once past the overhang our nostrils were attacked by a smell which, while not unbearable, wasn't too pleasant either.

At the bottom of the rocks the ground slopes again, the surface underfoot being very loose. This slope continues to the bottom where a couple of bicycle frames, a television set and other household rubbish was encountered.

The shaft was about one hundred and ten feet deep but led nowhere. Apart from the rubbish there was some evidence of blasting and there were some lengths of chain fixed to the damp, crumbling walls. The only way to go was back up.

P.Smith.

Slave Flash Units

I have recently be playing around with a high performance slave flash unit which may be of interest to club members who like to take the odd snap down a hole. The unit has been designed by a member of the Cave Radio and Electronics group of the BCRA and seems to perform very well. The whole unit plus batteries will easily fit inside an empty clear film canister with just two external wires coming out to connect to the flash gun. There is no switch to get wet or muddy since the batteries are permanently wired and have a life of years due to the low power consumption of the unit. When attached to a flash gun the unit can be triggered by another flash at considerable distance. The designer claims it is sensitive to a flash being let off 1km away!. This means it is sensitive enough to be triggered by flashes around corners and not directly in sight which is a great advantage in a cave. Also the unit is relatively insensitive to being triggered by cap lamps etc. and can be used in daylight (?).

Anyone interested in a unit can get a contact address from me. The units cost £25 ready made or £13 in kit form. In either case you will need some knowledge of electronic construction to get it up and working. For larger orders there are discounts (£8 for kit) so it may be worth clubbing together if people would like any of these units.

Keith Jackson

Wheal Marquis -Nr Gunnislake.

Wheal Marquis is reached by driving along the Tavistock to Gunnislake road. When you reach Gunnislake bridge do not cross it but carry straight on up the track beside the river for approximately five hundred yards.

On this trip the three of us were joined by Rob's brother Mark. Once again Rob had been there before so we followed his lead. You can imagine our apprehension, considering Old Crumbly, when, getting out of the car Rob's first words were "That fence wasn't there last time".

On closer inspection the fence was new, having recently been erected by the land owner (please note access is sensitive here - please contact Ali or Princey before going).

Walking alongside the fence you come across a wooden box on legs. Go through the fence here and there is a trail of sorts which climbs up to the left. Walk along keeping the river on your left and you will come to the mine entrance.

Just inside the entrance there are two large steps to climb down. Carrying straight on over a small ledge the way leads down to the first shaft. Looking from above the opening is resemblant of a funnel, the sides of its wide mouth being very loose. This tapered to a smaller hole down which deep water could be seen.

To proceed we rigged a traverse line over the shaft and Rob then free climbed a small pitch,rigging it for the rest of us as he went.The passage we were in now led to the shaft down which we were going to abseil. A 'Y' belay was set up and we descended to the bottom of the shaft approximately eighty feet below. The way on in either direction was under three or four feet of water and we decided against a soaking.

The last person to begin the ascent, Mike, experienced some bats in the tunnel, bats which he assured were very large.

Whilst descending the small pitch Rob had free climbed Mike placed a tackle bag on the floor, and while disengaging his rack from the rope the bag disappeared down the aforementioned funnel. Fortunately it caught on a timber in the water and stayed on the surface. Needless to say it was Mike who went after it!

There was further incident and we exited the mine in the dark and rain. I went down the track car which for some strange reason reversed itself into a ditch. It came back out quite easily, we changed, loaded up and returned home.

P.Smith.

MEMBERSHIP LIST:PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP 1994

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Paul(Taff) Turner..HMS Boxer,3P Mess,BFPO 232

When I Went Caving....

When I went caving it was dark and gloomy. On my first time it was difficult getting into the hole.We stood in a trench that someone had dug and looked at the little boy on the wall. There was a slope I couldn't get up, I kept slipping back down. I got very, very muddy and I enjoyed it very much.On the way home we went to a garage to get a drink and a Mars bar.

Martin Smith aged 7

When I went caving I liked it very much. I saw the boy on the wall showing the way out. On the way out I had to guide the way out and didn't get lost. I kept hitting my head on the roof (I had a hat on). Some of the bits were small so they were hard to get in and out of. In the middle of the cave we stopped and turned off out and listened to see what we could hear. We didn't hear very much. We had to climb up a bit on a rope it was hard but I got up it in the end. It was easy to get down because we went down on our bums.

Teri Age 10

We finally arrived at the caving site and put on our overalls over our old clothes, threw a hat on and walked to the ladder that lead to the first cave. I was the first to go down, it was dark and wet getting darker and darker as I got further down until I was in. It was quite slippery and very muddy. We walked on through the piano and through other obstacles before I got stuck!. I managed to squeeze out of it and to the next tight squeeze which I got through (just). I thought my light was running out until I realised it wasn't on properly. I thought the first cave was hard until we got out and changed out of our wet muddy overalls, hat and light and ate lunch. We made our way to the next cave. This was harder but better. We went through lots of tight squeezes like places where you have to crawl through holes and up and at the end I had to do a handstand to get out. As soon as I saw it I freaked out but someone helped me down so that was ok. The worst bit was when we went around a hole and I was worried but I got past alright. All in all it was wet and muddy but brilliant and to finish it off we washed in a freezing stream.

Naomi Jones (1st Mylor Scouts)

Additions to the Library.

BEC Belfrey Bulletin, 473 (White Pit), 474
BCRA Caves and Caving 64, Summer 1994. Phillipines, Norway.
BCRA Cave Science 20.3.
BCRA Cave and Karst Science 21.1, Xingwen, Plymouth Lost Caves, Pollen
Cerberus S.S. Journal 22.5 (7/94). Combe Down, Bath
Carn Brea Mining Soc. Newsletter 27-32
Craven Pothole Club. Record 35
Croydon C.C. Peolbates 65,66. Index 50-64
International Caver 10. Mexico, Russia, Nepal.
Martin Farr (2nd Ed. 1991). The Darkness Beckons-The History and Developement of Cave Diving
NCA Speloscene 12
NAMHO Newsletter 24, Jan 1994.
Pengelly C.S.T. Newsletter 36
Pengelly C.S.T. Studies in Speleology IX. Bats in Devon, S. Devon cave damage
Pengelly C.S.T. Newsletter 69 (1994). Pen Recca, Trefil, Chianimani, Obituary of Squeak
Royal Forest of Dean C.C. Newsletter 114. Fairplay Iron Mine, Hoathorns Wood Swallet
Shepton Mallet C.C. Journal series 9 No. 6. Box mines, Sierra Nevada.
Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, Below 94.2, Llanymynech, Croesor/Rhosydd, Hermon Accident
South Crofty plc. Prospectus
Speleological Abstracts 1,3,4,5 (1964-66)
Westminster S.G. Newsheet 1-4 (1993) 5-7(1994)
Wessex Caving Club. Newsletter Vol 22 No.242. MRO report, G.B.

Computerised Survey Processing

Anyone serious about surveying may be interested in the SURVEX program which I can distribute. This program was written and is still under development by a small group of cavers who seem to be loosely bound to the BCRA. The program is of a very high standard and is available to anyone interested FREE!

The basic principle of the program is to accept standard survey reading (distance, bearing and inclination) and from this produce plots, coordinates and close loops. The 3D feature produces a network of lines representing the survey legs on a PC monitor which can be rotated and moved as required. This is very useful for helping to visualise complex systems and seeing just how close different sections of passage are located. The system will also produce from raw survey data the position of each survey station in Cartesian form (ie. in an x,y and z frame). This is useful when drawing out a survey as it can be used to accurately place stations on the drawing. The loop processing is also interesting. The basic idea is that if you survey around a loop chances are when all the station coordinates are calculated the ends wont meet. What SURVEX will do is then tell you how big the errors are and then jiggle all the points around the loop in a sensible manner until the ends do meet. This also allows the surveyor to spot any gross errors if he has been sensible enough to survey plenty of loops. An example of the type of data you feed in is shown in the box.

```
*fix \1  0 0 0
*prefix \Entrance
*equate 1 \P182

1  2   11.80 131  -26  ;Entrance crawl
3  2    3.90 060  -15
3  4    3.26 165  -63
5a 4    3.06 125  +50  ;Centre of chamber
5b 6    3.45 180  -30
7  6    8.70 038  +22  ;Boulder slope
7  8   15.40 190  -30
        .
        .
31 30 11.51 158  +05
31 32 3.98  294  -14  ; Choke
```

The first line fixes station 1 at the centre of the universe (0,0,0). The second line prefixes the station names with "Entrance" so they become "Entrance1","Entrance2" etc. This is useful if many surveys are to be joined together which is possible because it saves typing and prevents name clashes. The third line states that station 1 is the same point as station P182 on another survey which presumably would be a separate branch of cave. This then links the two surveys at this point. What follows is a description of each survey leg. The first leg is from station 1 to station 2 which are 11.80 metres apart with a bearing of 60 degrees between then and a down slope of 20 degrees. The 2D plan (elevations are also possible) is shown.



To run this program you need a PC (not a particularly flashy one) with hard disk and a simple editor to be able to enter the data. It is fairly easy to install and use but you do need some degree of computer literacy to survive. Any one interested in a copy of the program can contact me. For small set of data I may even tap it in and give it a whirl for you if I think you're nice - Keith Jackson.

MATIENZO '94 (Part 1)

The 1994 Matienzo expedition proved to be very successful, with many kilometres of new cave discovered, and many exiting new possibilities for the future opened up. About 50 British cavers from various clubs were present, and also joint trips were made with the Espeleo Club Tortosa (Catalans), who hold the adjoining permit area to the south. These successes were unfortunately marred by a fatal accident towards the end of the expedition, when Alan Box abseiled off the end of a rope at the top of the 101m high Astrodome in Uzueka.

PCG members present included Dave Jean, Bob, Julie and Lloyd Cawthorne, Mike Heard, and Alasdair Neill.

2nd August.
Having arrived on the Plymouth - Santander ferry, Mike Dave and Ali visited **Cueva de Cofresnedo (65).** A short walk from the Snows bar and a climb up the hill side leads to a large entrance. The cave consists of a 20m wide passage with fine formations, which chokes after 275m. Photos were taken. This is an important archaeological site.

3rd August. **Simas del Picon (75).**
We surveyed this cave last year; following our departure it was extended beyond the terminal stal choke, the extensions containing some very fine helectites (see cover photos of Caves and Caving 63). This time Bob Mike and Ali returned to look at various leads in the old part of the cave. A drafting sand-choked passage at the foot of the Scree Run was dug, breaking through after about 2 or 3 metres. This led into a small decorated chamber and a passage leading to a rather loose pitch of about 10m. This was followed immediately by another pitch, for which we had no tackle.

4th August. **Simas del Picon.**
Ali, Andy Pringle, Paul Stacey, Sarah Hall, Ian Walton.
Ali and Paul rigged the second pitch of the previous day, which reached a very tight slot possibly going onto another pitch, with a fair draft. This extension we called Megabat, there being large (c2" long) droppings composed of insect remains at the top of the pitch.

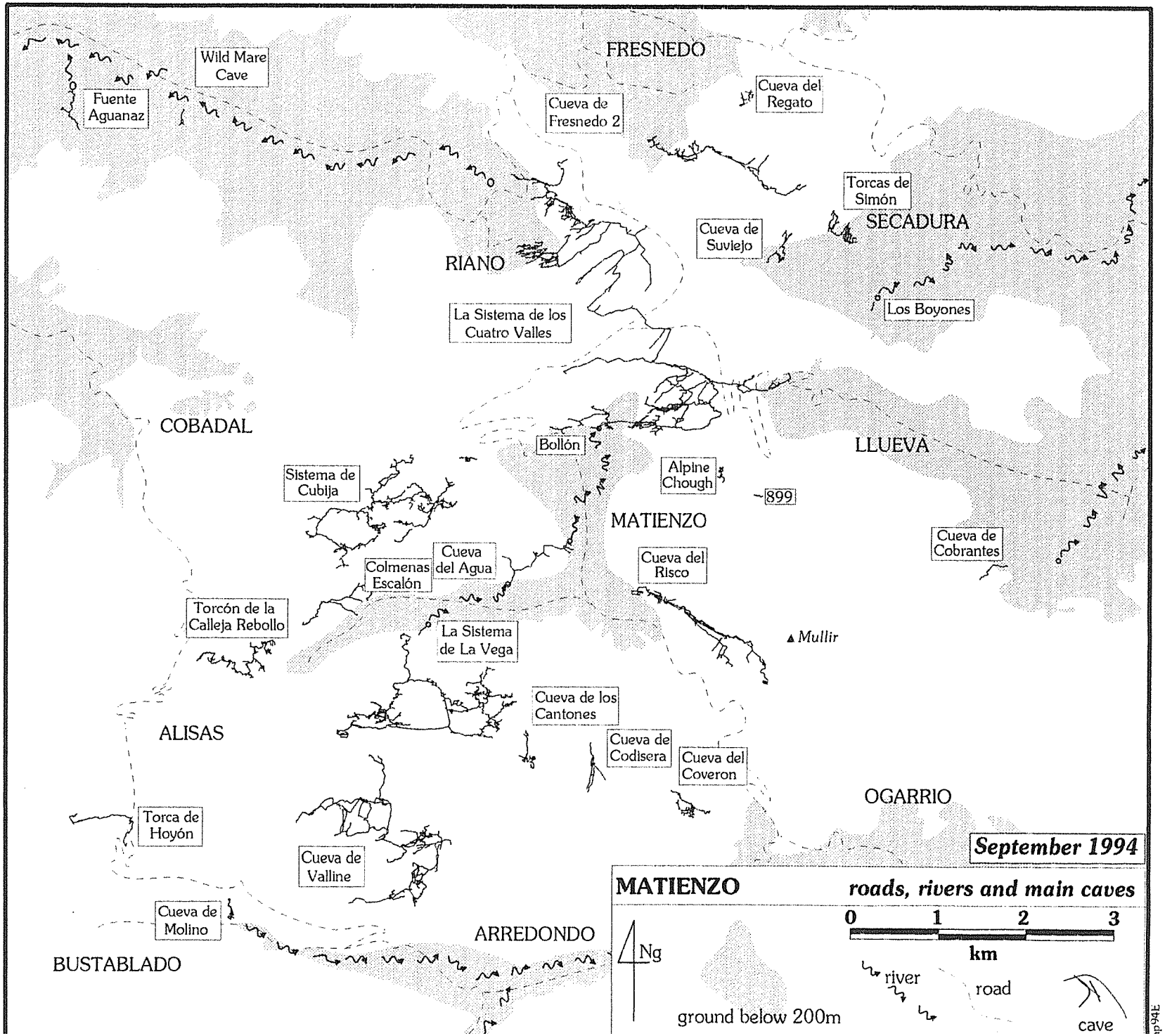
We also looked at a stream passage (active only in wet weather) at the foot of the entrance slope, where a squeeze under loose rock leads to a slot down, where water can be heard falling. A number of climbs were also looked at.

5th August. **Cueva-Cubio de la Renada (48).**
Bob, Dave, Mike and Ali.
This trip was primarily to continue re-surveying of areas around the end of Stuffed Monk Gallery, the original survey data having been lost. However about 20m of previously unsurveyed passage was added, through a crawl which connected to the choke at the end of Stuffed Monk Gallery - an area we looked at with Plymouth University cavers last year.

6th August. **Cueva de la Codisera (39).**
Pete Eagan, Simeon, Phil Pappard, Ali.
This is a very high level cave on the south edge of the Matienzo depression, running through to chokes outside our area, which were later radio-located. The cave starts off as a huge passage. Some way in, a climb up to the left and a route along a large ledge enters a bouldery passage, then an exposed rope traverse around a 90m pitch, followed by large "minaret" shaped passage which ends in a choke. Just after the traverse, a climb and a traverse along a ledge enters a small passage. This was investigated about six years ago by Portienzo, but no records were left. The passage leads to traverses over a number of (mostly small) holes in the floor, which all drop into a large chamber - forming a 90m pitch. Simeon dropped a pitch at the end, noting a number of large passages leading off part way down. At the bottom was just a small choked streamway.

A later trip with Mark Wright saw the passages part way down bolted to; these totalled about 350m of largish passage, which choked.

7th August. **Matienzo v. England Football Match.**
The score: Matienzo 12 goals, England 6. However away goals were deemed to count double, so the result was a draw - replay to be held in 1995.


FRESNEDO
Wild Mare Cave
Fuente Aguanaz
Cueva de Fresnedo 2
Cueva del Regato
Torcas de Simón
SECADURA
Cueva de Suviejo
RIANO
Los Boyones
La Sistema de los Cuatro Valles
COBADAL
Bollón
LLUEVA
Alpine Chough
Sistema de Cubija
899
MATIENZO
Cueva de Cobrantes
Cueva del Agua
Colmenas Escalón
Cueva del Risco
Torcón de la Calleja Rebollo
La Sistema de La Vega
Mullir
Cueva de los Cantones
ALISAS
Cueva de Codisera
Cueva del Coveron
OGARRIO
Torca de Hoyón
Cueva de Valline
Cueva de Molino
ARREDONDO
BUSTABLADO
September 1994
MATIENZO
roads, rivers and main caves
Ng
0 1 2 3
km
river
road
ground below 200m
cave

Simas del Picon. Ali, Phil Collett and Hobbit from the Shepton.
Many expedition members managed to escape injury by going caving; Mike and DJ went down **Agua.** We had a look at the passage branching off near the end of the old cave. A pit in the floor (a pitch of about 10m) was descended by Hobbit - no way on. A French group in April had bolted up on the left hand side of the pit and found a way on through the stal blocking the end of this very high passage, into continuing large, but eventually stal choked, passage. This may repay a look at.

We then went on to the extension of last summer, which Keef and Ali had just missed finding, and took some photos of the pretties.

We then returned to dig the stream passage near the entrance, getting down about 1m, but the tight slot we were going down demanded better tools for further progress. But it looks good.

Ali Neill

MATIENZO DISCOVERIES 1994

	1994 surveyed(m)	Total length (m)
Colmenas-Escalon	2248	2341
Regato	1034	1034
Sistema de Cubija	950	14621
Risco	769	9046
Codisera	371	1881
Hoyos	200	200
Picon	175	1441
899	154	154
846	99	99
South Vega	76	21982
Volvo	67	467
Arturo	56	56
Fresnedo II	40	6801
717	25	25
750	25	25
825	20	20
TOTAL	6336	

IN CONJUNCTION WITH SPANISH CAVERS:

Pena Jorao	2319	
Valline	6990	20200
TOTAL	15460	

(Watch out for the continuing saga of Ali's adventures in Spain in the next exciting issue of the PGC Jounrnal....)

Wheal Hermon Rescue

The last PCG newsletter carried a short report about an accident that had occurred at Wheal Hermon, Cornwall in April. The following is a more detailed report about this incident from Adrian Pearce, who as well as being secretary for Shropshire Caving and mining club initially called out the Emergency services and was present throughout the rescue.

1/ When I telephoned 999,I was switched to Taunton and I asked for Cave Rescue. The operator didn't know what this was and I had to try and explain! Eventually I was passed to the police who agreed to call out the rescue team. This highlights a general problem that needs to be addressed by the local teams.

2/ Our club forms a team for Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation and there were about 20 team members at Cot Valley. Although most were in Wheal Bellan at the time of the accident, there were 5 of us immediately to hand. The remainder were fetched out and were available within an hour. One of our members descended to the injured person and gave first aid another followed very quickly. I was at the shaft top for most of the time. Apart from the medic that we lowered, only our members were involved in the shaft. The firemen did sterling service as a hauling party but it is wrong to say that they and the medics did the rescue with our help - it was actually the other way round.

3/ The access to the shaft top was very restricted and only took myself and two firemen. No more cavers could have physically been placed there. The haul was carried out by a line of firemen back down the level and this would not have been improved by replacing them with cavers. We had surplus members outside, experienced in rescue techniques, who were basically redundant because there was no room for them. More cavers were not needed. The shaft bottom was very unsafe with loose rock constantly falling, it would have been positively dangerous to put more cavers in there. Our two members and the medic handled the job quite adequately - the length of time taken was due to fears of spinal injuries and the necessity to fit the stretcher very slowly.

4/ Nothing would have been gained by bringing in a local cave rescue team. The only skill they would have had over us is local knowledge and this was not needed since it was a straight lift up a shaft. If we had waited for the local team to arrive, it would have taken longer before someone went down to the injured person. The length of time taken was due to the injuries rather than the techniques used and could not have been speeded up even with a local team. It is not true to say that it took longer than an experienced cave/mine rescue team could have done - it didn't and we are anyway.

5/ The cave rescue was called out immediately after the accident when we were not aware of the situation of the injured person. within a short time we had found out that he could be treated and removed using the MRCO team members available and the emergency services on site. We were asked to assist by the Fire Officer who rightly judged that no further assistance was required

6/ Finally I completely agree that the accident would not have happened if a traverse line had been used. A lesson we should all learn is that

"Protection costs nothing to set up and can save a lot of pain"

Adrian Pearce

PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

Equipment Amnesty

The following items of PCG equipment are missing
1 Cell
1 Helmet
Several Cell Belts

Please contact Pia or Princey on 0822 855263
to return these items.