



RED ROSE CAVE AND POTHOLE CLUB

NEWSLETTER



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Summer 2023



Photo: Ray Duffy in County Pot by Sam Lieberman

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Editor's Note

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter. In this Newsletter you will find entertaining tales from recent and not-so-recent trips. The blasts from the past prove that it's never too late to publish a trip report, so I encourage you all to think about that story you always tell in the pub and finally write it down!

As the spring rolls into summer, I will be looking forward to good weather, plenty of caving, and more trip reports from members!

Gwen Tawy
Newsletter Editor

News

Summer Barbecue

The club's annual summer barbecue will be held on Saturday 15th July. Food will be provided at a cost of around £5 per person. Please let Alice Shackley know if you would like to be catered for and if you have any dietary requirements. If you do not specify any dietary requirements, it will be assumed that you do not have any.

Give it a Go

RRCPC will open its doors to the public on Saturday 2nd September for the CNCC's 'Give it a Go' scheme. This scheme connects caving clubs with members of the public who want to try caving for the first time. Please let a member of the committee know if you can help on this weekend; we need plenty of volunteers to make sure the day is a success.

Conservation Day

Our next Conservation Day will be on 8th October. Please let Hannah Walker know if you can attend.

Agen Allwedd

24th January 2023

Dinny Davies, Gwenllian Tawy, Tarquin Wilton-Jones

My last trip to Agen Allwedd had almost been derailed by someone falling down an 8m hole after bragging that the handline was surplus to requirement, so I was looking forward to a more relaxing trip this time round.

The plan was to visit the Courtesan in Isles Inlet. We changed briskly in the snow, and I pondered whether the trip was really going to be as relaxing as I'd anticipated. The first part of the trip went smoothly, but the passage soon got lower and very uncomfortable on the knees. At least it wasn't wet, I thought. I was in high spirits when we bumped into another cheery team returning from the Courtesan...until Tarquin asked them to extend our callout so that we could continue beyond the Courtesan and complete the Grand Circle.

A very awkward squeeze led us to the magnificent Courtesan, where we sat mesmerised for a moment. After a short break, we continued along the Grand Circle. While it was nice to be walking again, I was not enjoying the slippery streamway and deep pools. Having not been mentally or physically prepared for a trip that involved swimming, I was quite unimpressed at this stage. Things went from bad to worse when I had to negotiate a tricky waterfall above a pool. After a traumatic dismount from the climb, I was assured that it was the last deep pool. Naturally, there was one more. This was apparently too deep to skirt around, so I was told to swim as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, my teammates were unaware of the fact that the wellies I was wearing were too large for my feet (why is it so hard to get good caving wellies for small feet??). This made it near impossible to swim normally because I had to flail my legs in circles to keep my wellies on. As I accepted that I was going to drown, my feet touched the ground! Turns out I could have walked through the pool because it was much shallower than Dinny and Tarquin thought! I was very pleased to leave the streamway after this.

The last part of the Grand Circle went by quickly as we scrambled through different passages, up and over boulders, and through boulder chokes. It was still snowy underfoot when we emerged, so we were pleased to be invited into Whitewalls for a hot cup of tea.

Gwen Tawy

SpeleoSisters+ Weekend

4-5th February 2023

Having had our last meet in South Wales, it was time to return to Yorkshire again. The weekend started well; by 9pm we had added four new entries to the Bullpot Farm First Aid Book: 3x cuts to fingers from a knife that was secretly sharp – something that is unexpected at the Farm; 1x burn to the hand from an oven glove that had a hole in it – something that should have been expected at the Farm. After treating all the wounds, we made vague plans for Saturday.

Over breakfast, we organised ourselves into 4-5 groups. I had volunteered to lead a trip down Notts 2. I was joined by Judith Plowman (Caving Crew), Polly Colvin (Caving Crew), Jane Gibson (Caving Crew) and Sarah Gilligan (Liverpool UPC). It was a pleasant trip, but colder than anticipated.

That evening, Alice Shackley cooked us a wonderful dinner, then Aila Taylor gave a fascinating presentation on menstruating and caving.

There was a lot of umming and ahing on Sunday morning about who would go caving where. I ended up on a trip from Lancaster to County with Sioned Haughton, Lucy Hyde, and Sunita Lustika (SWCC). We moved quickly, so were back out in the sunshine within a couple of hours.



Caving in Great Douk
Photo Credit: Ane Appelt

Underground Geology Workshop

18th February 2023

I had noticed an Underground Geology day with John Helm on the list of training days and workshops sent out by the CNCC. I thought this sounded interesting so decided to sign up for it, in an attempt to increase my limited knowledge of the subject.

The group met at the YSS at Helwith Bridge and chatted over a brew; the majority of the group were Freelance Instructors wanting to gain a bit more knowledge of the subject to impart to their charges when introducing them to caving.

We settled into the meeting room upstairs and John took us through a PowerPoint presentation filling us in on the basics of geology. Plate tectonics, geological eras and ice ages were all vaguely familiar to me from geography at school. After another quick cuppa he showed us a number of slides relating to the Yorkshire Dales explaining how the different rock types related to cave formation in the area. Various rock, mineral and fossil samples were passed around to illustrate the subject. John also talked about how the water table affects the shapes of passageways and how speleothems are formed.

Following lunch, we made our way up to Dry Rig quarry where John showed us the exposed Silurian basement rocks where you could see the way the original beds had been shifted by the massive powers within the earth.

There was a bit of a debate about whether we would be able to get underground at the Churns after the wet weather we had overnight, but it was decided that as it had been dry all day we would probably be OK. We drove over to Selside and changed on the windy and mizzly lane. John took us into the middle entrance of the Churns explaining some of the features we had talked about in the morning and pointing out things which none of us had noticed on previous trips. He also explained about how the scallop marks in the wall tell us about the speed and direction of flow of water underground. We continued to the top of the Dolly Tubs and then made our way out – some back the way we had come and some out of the Diccan entrance.

It was an informative and interesting way to spend a day and I can recommend future courses to anyone who wants to learn a bit more about the geology of the Dales.

Emma Key

Free At Last

February 2023

Ray Duffy, Sam Lieberman

After several months of digging, capping and hauling, Sam and I escaped and went 'caving'. I'd come up with a cunning plan. The idea was to have a rest from our labours and have 'a jolly'. County Pot was our goal, with the aim of testing out my phone/camera method of recording trips but Sam wanted to test his camera gear as well, so not so jolly. I was grateful to Sam for letting me set the pace on the walk over to the gill, as a spell on the turbo trainer the day before had left my legs a little wanting. We were both distressed by the state of the path in places where it's turned into a quagmire, again. With a cold wind from the north, we trundled over the fell and noticed a second Xmas tree has arrived on the bog, is this a very stealthy and slow re-forestation?

Thankful to get out of the chilly breeze we entered County Pot, and I was glad to see that my pointing of the entrance was still holding up to the rigours of caver's boots. Quickly descending toward the first pitch, I was happy to slide through the narrowing just before it, so I hadn't grown too fat, yet! I laddered the obvious ladder pitch, ropes

already in place for the SRT morons, and took some pictures of Sam on the ladder with my snappy camera system, a doddle. Then we were off down Razor Passage, or nearly, time for our first Sam shot with his fairly new camera system. A few minutes later we had a picture, not bad in underground photography terms. It was so nice to be caving in an upright position after months of crawling and squirming in tight digs, and so fast. Just before Toadstool Junction I wanted to try and capture a shot that I'd messed up with a real camera, I think because the film, yes film, was too old. I'd posed Sam and taken my shot when Sam wanted to try again. Lo and behold the flashes started playing up, the camera went into video mode and the battery ran out on one of the flashes. Such is the lot of cave photographers, struggling for their art. After another bout of swearing and failures we had something in the can and set off for Platypus Junction.

I've always found route finding through this section difficult, probably because I've crawled all over the place when surveying, so that I can't remember as simple route through. I don't think I've ever gone the same way twice and finish up on awkward climbs of nasty little crawl-thro



Sam near Platypus Junction
Photo Credit: Ray Duffy



Cave Pearls
Photo Credit: Ray Duffy

ways but eventually the razor blades arrived and then the sadly broken Platypus. Heading back toward Poetic Justice was very familiar territory and soon we reached the big boulder in the stream that denotes the climb up to Ignorance is Bliss and beyond the gymnastic PJ itself, with a rope for god's sake dangling down it, wusses! Just beyond I took the opportunity of taking a close-up of some cave pearls while Sam set up his gear for a shot of me emerging from under the loose-looking rock bridge into Spout Hall. The spout itself wasn't particularly daunting so getting up wasn't a problem and we pounded up past The Snake with Sam taunting me with a request to enter the tortuous passage which I refused, vehemently! In no time at all we were back at Broadway having only got a slight splashing at Showerbath and yet another rope was dangling down the first pitch. I undid the lock at the bottom of the ladder and set off up leaving Sam to de-rig. I had fun coiling the ladder with the wires on the outside, Red Rose heavy gauge wires don't like outside coiling. A nice stroll over the moor to a hot shower and cuppa, while Sam shot off to do a survey leg down the entrance to Casterton Pot. All in all, a

grand few hours in a beautiful cave, just what the doctor ordered.

Ray Duffy

Travels with a Camera (Or a Phone)

February 2023

Ray Duffy, Sam Lieberman

December 2022, another year done at the dig face in Rollerball and Ray & I promise ourselves a jolly. It takes two months and it's a late February Sunday 2023 now, but we finally escape the mine and it's off to County Pot for a little round trip with Ray's new 'phone'. He's already got several other 'phones' some of which actually get used for phone calls, but this one was specifically bought for taking pictures in part inspired by some of the remarkable photos produced in the 'point and shoot' category at the recent Club photo competition. Not to be outdone and perhaps with a touch of mischief, I figure it's a chance to break out the camera gear too - mirrorless DSLR, wireless flashguns etc. etc. "Oh no!" says Ray.



Backlighting Ray
Photo Credit: Sam Lieberman

Anyway, it's a nice sunny day to walk across the fell, albeit with a chill North wind and the bog monster making a bit of return in places on the path over. There's nobody else there when we reach the cave, and off we go. The ladder is quickly rigged at the 1st pitch and Ray grabs a few snaps as I come down the ladder. Ray's particularly interested in a shot on the way down Razor Passage where a large higher level passage opens out above the stream trench, but on the way there I see a small decorated grotto so we stop and I break out a flash gun. It takes

me half a dozen shots to get the settings right on the camera and get a picture with enough light, but then it's out of focus, so time to go fully manual - at last a reasonable picture. I pack the gear up again and we move on. It's not long before we reach the prime location and I carry on down to be model whilst Ray gets the phone out. A few tries and he's happy with the picture and I think, whilst I'm there I'll take a shot looking back up the passage. Small flash behind Ray for a back light, big flash looking forwards to light the big passage - can I get both to fire at once? NO, I CAN'T! The small flash batteries (despite having checked them that morning) have gone flat, having fixed that the big flash has got itself in the wrong 'mode'. I end up with a couple of half decent shots but it's time to move on. We carry on to Platypus Junction, then back up past Poetic Justice and past the Showerbath with a couple more photo opportunities each. Back at the pitch we find an additional rope dangling down and tackle bag at the bottom of the pitch but no sign of the cavers that left them there. Up we go, and Ray has fun coiling the ladder 'outie' style cursing the thick wire and last 5 rungs that won't get in line and before we know it, we're back on the surface ready for the trudge back to the farm.

So, in review:

Phone (camera): Light, easy to carry, easy to use, quick. With modern sensors copes well with low / ordinary caving light. The phone can cost less than a protective case to put it in. It's easy to end up with a bunch of blurry or grainy pics so you do need to know the limitations as to what will work and what won't but with modern phones the list of what you can't do is getting smaller and smaller. At a push you could install a SIM and actually make phone calls.

DSLR and all the trimmings: Expensive, with flash guns and slaves / remote triggers and an even more expensive box to put it all in. Heavier to carry around and fiddly to set up and get all the settings, camera, triggers, and flash right, especially if you don't take pictures very often. This can be thus be slow, frustrating and result in grumpy, cold models (although they may just be like that to start with!) That said, if you're wanting a high-quality set piece with interesting lighting just where you want it then you probably need the all the gear and a lot of practice to use it effectively.

Anyway, whatever's your preference get yourself out there and try few pics and I'll look forward to seeing them at next year's photo competition.

Sam Lieberman

Finding Nice Way

25th March 2023

Andrew Atkinson, Dinny Davies, Sioned Haughton, Jessie O'Shaughnessy (GSG), Toby Speight

It was a wet weekend, and Lancaster Hole was busy. After waiting our turn on the surface, we descended into darkness. Our first task for the day was to replace the ropes in Double Decker Pot. It didn't take long to remove the old ropes and rig the new ones. After completing the job, we made our way towards the main drain. As we progressed, we found the water levels were higher than expected. Before we were forced to swim, we decided to turn around and retrace our steps and take the high-level route to Fall Pot.

Our second objective was to find Nice Way. Andrew and Dinny decided not to join, leaving Sioned, Toby and I to do the route finding. When we reached the start of Snail Cavern we handed our SRT kits to Andrew, who promised to tie them onto the pitch on the other end. We then crawled to a chamber, where we spent some time poking our heads in a few holes, searching for the way on. Just as we were giving up, I stumbled upon the well-hidden way on. The only giveaway was the pre-rigged pitch down Ease Gill Aven. We squirmed across this into The Surprise; a roomy chamber. We then admired the views in Nice Way and Bi the Way.

Back in The Surprise, we climbed up into Sideline Passage. The sandy crawl went on forever, but eventually reached a junction. Here, we turned left, finally reaching the pitch. As I neared the pitch-head, I could hear murmuring below. I shouted down to Andrew, and he confirmed our SRT kits were tied onto the rope. It took some time to haul the gear up, as it frequently got caught on an irritating lip. With Toby's help, we managed to retrieve our gear and slip them on to descend the pitch. We were surprised to find Andrew had been joined by Jessie, who had lost her group in County. That would explain all the murmuring that I could hear in the crawl!

After regrouping we gathered our things and made our way out of County via Manchester Bypass. All in all, a very pleasant trip which was well worth all the crawling.

Gwen Tawy

There and Back Again: A Lancs-to-Lancs "through" Trip

1st-2nd April 2023

NCHECC

It was a delightful Saturday morning at Northern CHECC, and I was tagging along with a half-dozen folks from Aberystwyth Uni for what was planned to be a Lancs-County through trip. They were glad to have me along, as I had made this crossing many a time in years past (though admittedly going in the other direction) and they were not 100% sure of the way through.

Things progressed as they usually do: we dropped into Lancs, made our way to Fall Pot, and proceeded through the high-level route relatively unhindered, with only a few glances at the map around the Minarets. There was much ooo'ing and ahh'ing at the formations beyond Stake Pot, which is not unexpected for young Welsh cavers. We reached Main Line Terminus around 3pm (having started around 11:30) and I found myself no longer just a tagalong, as I was the only one who had been in this section of the system before. We found our way to Stop Pot, and this is where the trouble began....

The water at the boulder choke at the base of Stop Pot was deeper than anyone wanted to deal with, so we pulled out the guidebook to find the bypass. The route descriptions offered by the CNCC are well-done, they really are. However, in a cave system, distances can be hard to measure, and it is very easy to start second-guessing oneself; everything from here on out is written in hindsight. We found the bypass and dropped into Four Ways Chamber, but we missed the secondary exit and ended up downstream of Eureka Junction; we were solidly in Wretched Rabbit territory, and we didn't even realise it. About halfway to the Wretched entrance I had this horrible sinking feeling of where we were, and I was hoping that I was just mis-remembering what in hindsight was so obviously the Wretched streamway. We eventually reached the in-situ rope at the base of the Wretched Rabbit entrance, and I knew for certain exactly where we were - we would have to go back and try again.

As a small side note - I had been informed (for the better part of a year) that the Wretched Rabbit entrance was a total collapse and thus impassable. I learned after this trip that it was not entirely blocked off, just "dangerous", a fact which had I known it at the time would have saved us literally 12 hours... why yes, we're not even at the halfway point, dear reader!

From here our guidebook-woes increased. By this point I had lost all sense of confidence in my direction-finding, and we continued to muddle through the Wretched series thinking we were actually in County. A "100m walk upstream to a handline" was more like 60m... what should have been a 7m pitch was actually 4m... "cross over a hole" was actually a rift... you get the idea. In looking at the map afterwards I am reasonably sure where we ended up, but none of it is named and none of it is anywhere near an entrance.

Our call-out time was 8:30pm. At 9pm we were down in an unknown streamway with a couple of the group trying to convince us we were in a section of streamway that would get us back to County (spoiler, it was not), and I - along with the official leader of the group - made the executive decision to head back to where we knew absolutely where we were: Mainline Terminus. Knowing that Cave Rescue would likely not be anywhere near us until at least 11pm,

we pulled out the foil blankets and tried to stay warm, which only lasted us until about midnight when we realised we were all shivering and cold. After a brief discussion we all agreed on two things: we needed to go somewhere, and that Lancaster was our best bet to get found by CRO (if at all - we could always just go out Lancs if they weren't there). Hungry, thirsty, and bone tired, we made our way back to Lancaster Hole with little incident (and in fact, making better time), arriving a little after 3am. We sent the fastest lads back to the farm while I and another lass stayed with one caver who did not feel capable of prusiking out. From there it was more waiting and foil blankets until CRO arrived. I was the last caver out at about 4:30am, nearly 17 hours after having gone in; needless to say, I got my fair share of caving done that weekend!

Phillip Timko

Mini Expedition to Yugoslavia 1969

A memory of Jim, his adventurous caving life and humour from an article he wrote in 1969.

Adapted from RRCPC Journal No.5 1970 by Dave Creedy

Jim Newton, Ron Bliss, Ian Carruthers (Eccles) and Steve Hesketh

As Dave Hodgson (Hodge) turned down the chance of travelling in favour of promotion, only four hard core members of the Red Rose set off. We took delivery of a (Ford) Cortina from a trusting hire company, and proceeded to stuff it full of essential caving gear such as flippers, snorkels and suntan cream. I wondered if my team were wholeheartedly behind me for Postojna.

We were soon motoring down the M6 with Eccles at the wheel. I had to tell him to slow down a bit as we had 3,000 miles to go. Then Ron took over, and I thought he would set a good example of careful driving for Eccles. Instead, the "Ghost of Leadfoot" rose again, and we zoomed down the M1 at 90 mph with Ron's sunglasses flapping like wings. Needless to say, he was soon replaced when we managed to wrest the wheel from him 200 miles later.

We crossed the Channel by Hovercraft to prevent Ron from losing his dinner. From Calais we kept driving steadily, only planning to stop at the German border to change some money. As it was three o'clock in the morning, the currency exchange offices were closed, so we slept in their rose bushes until they opened. By this time, we were surrounded by tourists who were fascinated by our sleeping habits. The next stop was the camp site at Golling where, of course, we went to the pub for a Zigeunerspiese served by Katie.

We reached Postojna the next day with Eccles frustrated that the car had not needed any attention. There, at the Karst Research Institute, we met Rado Gospoderic whom I had last seen about four years previously. He sent us initially to Postojna Cave with Marian Perko, a student who worked at the Institute in his holidays. Marian was to be our constant companion for the next few days, although we later found out that he was paid for each caving trip.

We camped at Pivka Jama pronounced "Pewka" - a name that became less and less funny as the drinking water ran out. The following day Marian took us to Cerknisko Jezero, a huge polje or shakehole, four miles in diameter, which is dry in the summer and fills with water in the winter after the snow melts. In the side of this, where a river which crossed the polje sank, was Zelske Jama, our first wild cave. The Yugoslavians had blasted about fifty feet to get into it and this passage looked decidedly unstable, as shown by the fact that when a sparrow hopped onto a rock above the passage, down came a minor avalanche. This did not seem to bother Marian at all, and so we followed him in, guided by the dim glow of our carbide lamps. These we were soon to curse, as the passage floor was full of flood debris and we kept tripping on hidden branches. Once into the main passage, however, everything changed. Here was a clean rock floor with a stream and a high roof with many formations. We eventually reached the sump where the water was so warm that steam was coming off it. This was due to the water flowing slowly across the polje where the temperature was in the nineties. We consequently had trouble getting Steve and Eccles out of the water. On returning to the campsite, we met a Plymouth Caving Club contingent who suggested that they join us on a trip to Krizna Jan which was on our list for the following day.

Once more we changed in red hot conditions, next to what had once been a show-cave cafe, now derelict, in a small ravine. At the end of this ravine was a gated entrance about twenty feet high. On entering, the roof rose and the floor dropped away to give a height of about 200 ft. The walls were about the same distance apart. This fantastic chamber extended for 400 ft. before we climbed over a rubble cone and descended to the first of the lakes. We had brought two dinghies for these. Ron, Steve and I immediately claimed one and paddled off upstream with Eccles bravely swimming in front. Paddling the dinghy was a dicey feat as there were many gours to cross and this time the water was icy cold. Most of the Plymouth team were strong swimmers and we progressed together across the biggest lake, which took about a quarter of an hour to cross. Here we rested on a huge rock fall to wait for Marian and a lone female from the Plymouth Club. After a while, a swimmer arrived to tell us that their boat had sunk and marooned them. Back went our boat and crew in the best of traditions.

By the time we arrived everybody was beginning to feel cold, and after a discussion, it was decided to start ferrying people out with our one remaining boat, whilst the hardy swimmers would go on to see the formations which were supposed to be found in the far end of the cave. After about an hour we got everyone out, and then returned to take photographs. Eventually, the swimmers returned, delighted with the formations they found and determined to return again with cameras.

We rose late next day and found that everyone had gone from the Institute when we arrived. I then suggested we visit a cave which I had seen but not been in last time I was here. Away we went to Planinska Jama which had a huge entrance with a large river debouching. The old guide at the entrance let us go in after a frantic bout of sign language. By now, we had adopted the Yugoslavian caving dress of swimming trunks and boiler suits. In this huge cave, two rivers, Pivka and Rak, join underground. The cave had been intended to be used as a quick attacking route from Postojna by the Italian army, to avoid the awkward overland route, when they occupied the country in the last war. Accordingly, bridges and paths had been constructed. Most of the bridges had fallen into disrepair, so that we had to traverse at stream level until we were eventually stopped by a huge lake. Returning down the passage, we spotted an inlet in the roof with a cold draught emanating. At that moment, we met the

Plymouth Club coming in with the Yugoslavians. We told them about our find and they went off to borrow the old Guide's wooden ladder which, unfortunately, was not long enough.

About this time, the dreaded Pivka Jama malaise struck. We were supposed to be going with the Lubjana Caving Club to pursue the latest find but first Ron and Steve went down with the enteric lurgi, and the next day, myself and finally Eccles bit the dust. After arranging to revisit our find later, we decided on a few days by the sea to recover from the "gallopers." At this time, we learned that three of the Plymouth Club were in hospital with "typhoid," so we got slightly worried.

We returned to Postojna after five days by the sea, fully recovered and determined to scale into the passage we had seen. At the Institute we met Lois, an old friend from our last expedition. He was keen to ascend the loose climb, but after a large boulder came out of the wall into his lap, he too decided on a scaling. The Yugoslavian's alloy pole was too short, so out we went to the sawmill and returned with a log thirty feet long. What a way to go scaling! It took six of us to place it in position and then Lois ascended to report that it ended just below a ledge, and that the attached ladder was unstable. We tightened it and I climbed up to see a chamber 15 ft. in diameter with another shaft going off from this and with a good draught blowing. It was impossible to go further with the time we had remaining, so after exploring the other branches of the cave and seeing the Proteus or "human fish" in its wild state, (we had already seen them in a pool in Postojna Cave), we retired to the local caver's hostelry. Here we spent the rest of the evening, sampling the food and drink of the locality, mostly drink.

We left the next day to bag Triglav, the highest peak in Yugoslavia. We pitched the tent in a beautiful wooded valley in the shadow of Triglav's sheer, three thousand feet North Wall then went down to the nearby hotel to study the huge climbing guide (about 10 ft. square) on the pub wall. Our friends at Postojna had recommended the Bamberg Route which ran along the top of the North Face cliffs to the summit. After looking at the map, we decided to come down that way. By five o'clock next morning we were on our way up and sweating hard even in the shade. The sun did not appear until we reached the plateau about a thousand feet below the Triglavski Dom, the mountain hut we intended sleeping in. We were disappointed to see very little snow on the tops and the ice axes we were carrying became just excess weight. The landlady of the hut spoke English, which solved a lot of our problems as she could explain the tariff and menus to us. These were written in Serbo Croat, which is just slightly better than Greek, and you know the old saying! After a hearty meal, we headed for bed and managed to get a bed apiece, plus extra blankets. We found next morning misty, but this slowly disappeared as we climbed the shoulder of the final peak.

The views from the top were magnificent and cameras were soon red hot. A party of about twenty Italians then appeared having come up another route. They insisted on galloping along the loose scree slope which overhung the North Wall! After spending about half an hour in the sunshine on the top, we headed for the Bamberg Route down. At first, this seemed fairly easy, but it got steeper and steeper until the red route markers were replaced by guide wires. The final 200 ft. to the pass was sheer and prompted Ron to take off his glasses so that he would not see the drop. However, by swinging on the guide wires like Tyrolean Tarzans, we managed make it down safely. We then began to wonder about our Yugoslavian "friends" and their choice of route. By this time we had become almost dehydrated and dashed down to the river

which poured from a small glacier at the foot of the three thousand feet cliff. On the way we passed several stone carvings to mark the deaths of climbers who had fallen there.

We left for home the next day, deciding to go through Switzerland for some pass bagging and one small sortie to scale a peak which looked near at hand. Two hours later, still in the foothills, we thought it better to return to the car and continue home. We returned to France through a back street customs post where they refused to change our money. Luckily, a friendly landlady accepted Swiss francs and we were able to slip into a drunken sleep once more.

Upon landing in England, we suspected that the Customs must have been tipped off as the Ford was turned inside out, one of the snags to travelling in a posh car! Fortunately, we were saved by a poor fellow traveller dropping his whisky allowance on the custom's floor which attracted everyone's attention. Such was our relief on escaping, that we failed to notice that Ron was driving until we started overtaking Police cars going along the motorway. Home again!

Jim Newton (Adapted by Dave Creedy)

Humorous Antics Down Hammer Pot

27th April 1986

Sharon Kelly, Adrian 'Gimmer' Laycock, Jimmy Rattray, Christine Rosser, & Dalek

It was promised to be an early start. It still took a lot of convincing for the others to believe that they could actually do it!

Down the entrance for 12.30. I lined everyone down the 1st pitch. I meant to free-climb it but as it happened the 10' ladder was still 10' too short! Adrian & Christine decided to hang around by the end of The Rift. Got down the 4th & put a bolt in for the 5th. On catching up with Jim & Shaz they then declined to go down The Sludge Crawl due to the froth at the entrance to it. I got to the end & noticed the water level rising slightly. Made a desperate dash for the other end, despite gaining many knocks & bruises on the way.

All went well until the start of The Rift again. Sharon got up first. Gimmer, gimmered around for a while. Christine was ok. Then Jimmy & I. It was not until the middle of The Rift that the problems began. It started by Christine slipping down & so needing Jim's kindly aid. This, he proceeded to do minus his helmet. "It was too cumbersome" he said. The next thing he knew was that his batteries had dropped out & Christine had 'conked' him on his balding top with a metal bar that was used to aid jamming oneself across the rift. We got out at about 9.40pm. With Jim "Alladin" minus his lamp batteries & zip. Gimmer, less lighting, Christine with bruises & a 'shiner', Sharon with shiny kneecaps & last of all me, with a G.G. sized hole in the crotch of my panties & a red & raw left cheek as proof of it.

Robert Bialek (Dalek)

Stressed Out in Strans Gill Pot

May 1989

Mike Cooper, Andy Jackson, Keith Partington & Dalek

Mike Cooper arrived at Horton in Ribblesdale after 08:00! We waited for ULSA to show up until 10.30. We were going to go down Penyghent Pot with them. So, it was the 4 of us; Keith Partington, Andy Jackson, Mike & I that got the tackle out for Strans Gill Pot. BPC provided 210' & 40' ropes. Mike provided the rest.

I drove Andy up via Malham & Darnbrook. Two gates required opening. Mike took The Halton Gill route. We parked up by The River, on the other side of The George Pub at Hubberholme. By the time we'd gotten changed & got to the hole in the sweltering heat it was 12.30. Mike rigged. 2 bolts at entrance, to a deviation bolt below the 2nd squeeze. By the time we all got down to the 2nd pitch, 'Hope', an hour had passed by. Keith bottled out & so I helped take him out to daylight, being able to free-climb up the entrance pitch. I rejoined the others below the 2nd. Charity Pitch was rigged from an angle plate, going directly to a rebelay bolt & shared with a rebelay bolt lower down on the other side. Standing on a Big Ledge to reach out 5' out to drill in my spit. All got down for 6.30. Then the Sluice pitch.

Here we took the unconventional route! The 5th 15' was loose & dodgy! As was the 6th 20', even more so! Mike got part way down the 7th, but it was very wet & no naturals or bolts were seen. So here we retraced. Andy climbed 10' on the 6th & a slab came away & broke on his L thigh, shin & foot (worst bit). I also fell 5' in the same way. My R Elbow was badly bruised. We then took The Passage of Time route to see the rest of the Pot & then began the exit. The Sluice pitch was free-climbable using the handline. Once up Charity Pitch I derigged. The 2nd pitch squeeze was achieved at the top by squeezing through on my RHS, but my R foot slipped & I twisted my knee. Agony! It got worse later on! All out for 10.30. It was very painful for both of us walking downhill to the cars. Arrived at the Dump 12.30. Another caver, Mike Carroll, had perforated his ear-drum diving in Hurtle Pot, at 12m depth!

Robert Bialek (Dalek)

Hanging High in Hangman's Hole

May 1990

Mike Cooper, Andy Jackson, Keith Partington & Dalek

To quote from the reference in the Northern Dales Guide book "Not For The Faint Hearted". I arrived at "The Dump" to find the multitudes arising. I needed just one other to call it an official trip and I wondered who'd be it?

Now I must say that this trip was originally planned for our Meets Sec's benefit some time ago, & it was after much badgering that I volunteered to do it again, at least the dry, misty day gave me peace of mind, for the last time that I did the entrance crawl "Unprintable

Passage" proved extremely wet! So, I began to sort the tackle out & then Paul appeared to give me a helping hand.

"So, what's this hole really like?" "Oh, sort of awkward at the beginning and the end where you have two tight bits, i.e., the fissure & The Collar; with lots of loose boulders in between." "You mean it's a bit of a challenge doing it?" "Yeah, that just about sums it up." I couldn't have put it any better than that!

But now our Meets Sec had plans afoot elsewhere. So, with permission granted at South House Farm & the half hour's walk over with, we rigged the entrance climb with a rope. It looked awkward but was easy enough to free climb out later. The fissure looked evil but once down, well, we were committed to do the whole trip & forget about it until later. The crawl seemed higher than 3 years ago & I was quite pleased with myself. Over Bridge Pot & through the mud to Pedestal Pot. The rigging might have driven some SRT freaks 'potty'! You see there were no bolt spits anywhere – not one. So, one had to make use of the natural terrain & that constituted the odd boulder here, flake there or stal boss further up there.

So, a boulder & flake to give a Y hang to pass a flake deviation got you nicely to a pile of huge boulders where you climbed down to reach The Slot Pot. A Y off 2 stals got you straight down a narrow rift jammed with boulders to reach a floor cum rifty crawl & climb down to a 10 ft exposed climb to Gallows Pot. Here things seemed impossible to make a safe rig, but with a boulder back-up, using a wire belay cum short traverse to a large buttress gave you a Y hang from this buttress & flake, to go down close to the waterfall, it being a bit splashy.

Scrambling over some boulders we reached what you might call the Intimidating bit, The Collar of The Executioner's pitch! A Y hang off 2 stals & a deviation off a block at the top would give a nice hang should you care not to get hung up by whatever means was at your disposal. Mine was a Stop which I couldn't get going cos I couldn't reach the handle by my chest. Fidgeting about, I used the rock more than owt else to close the handle & get me going again! Paul had a Fig 8; he'd more sense. Now stepping off at -54' we negotiated 2 hairy climbs up & down to reach a muddy silted up choke. A few minutes were spent digging here for want of a better reason to justify the trip. Climbing back up was an ear-splitting, shattering experience!

At The Collar I must have spent 10 minutes wriggling through, like Paul did too. Rest of the exit proved uneventful. The crawl water seemed just a little lower with the water coming up just before you. The fissure climb wasn't as hard as last time. Maybe the furry/oversuit combination helped to make me slide up easier. Problems though could lie with the tackle. A rope was pulled out & bags tied on & pulled through separately, with a minimum of fuss. Trip was about 6 hours long & the only other participant was our latest in our long line of novices (to the Club, but not, apparently to caving), Paul Croft. He is a younger version of me! That is, you've guessed, your ever-lovin', cave-clobberin' Dalek.

Robert Bialek (Dalek)

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