

C C P C



Newsletter

No. 39

JUNE 1994.

DR ROB HEATH PHD.

It is with deep regret that I have to report the death of "Rob" Heath on Monday 18th April. An influential club member for a good number of years. Rob gave a lot to C.C.P.C., becoming the youngest club officer ever. I can honestly say that Rob was the most decent and talented person I have ever met, and his determination was legendary. I can see him now carrying the entire stock of ladders up to Gaping Gill on his pack frame for a solo ladder trip down (and back up!) the main shaft, while lesser mortals used easier methods. I'm sure Tony will vouch for the effort put into "the dig" long before the introduction of explosives to the club.

In addition to his incredible caving ability, he was a talented musician and academic. Having gained a first class honours in Biochemistry, he took a PHD while researching into Multiple Sclerosis for the Health Service. He went on to research into new drugs for Amersham International.

I personally have lost a very good friend and society has lost a great asset. Our thoughts must go out to Jane and the girls.

Ralph J.

T.S.U. or J.H. SHAFT.

Brian Edmonds.

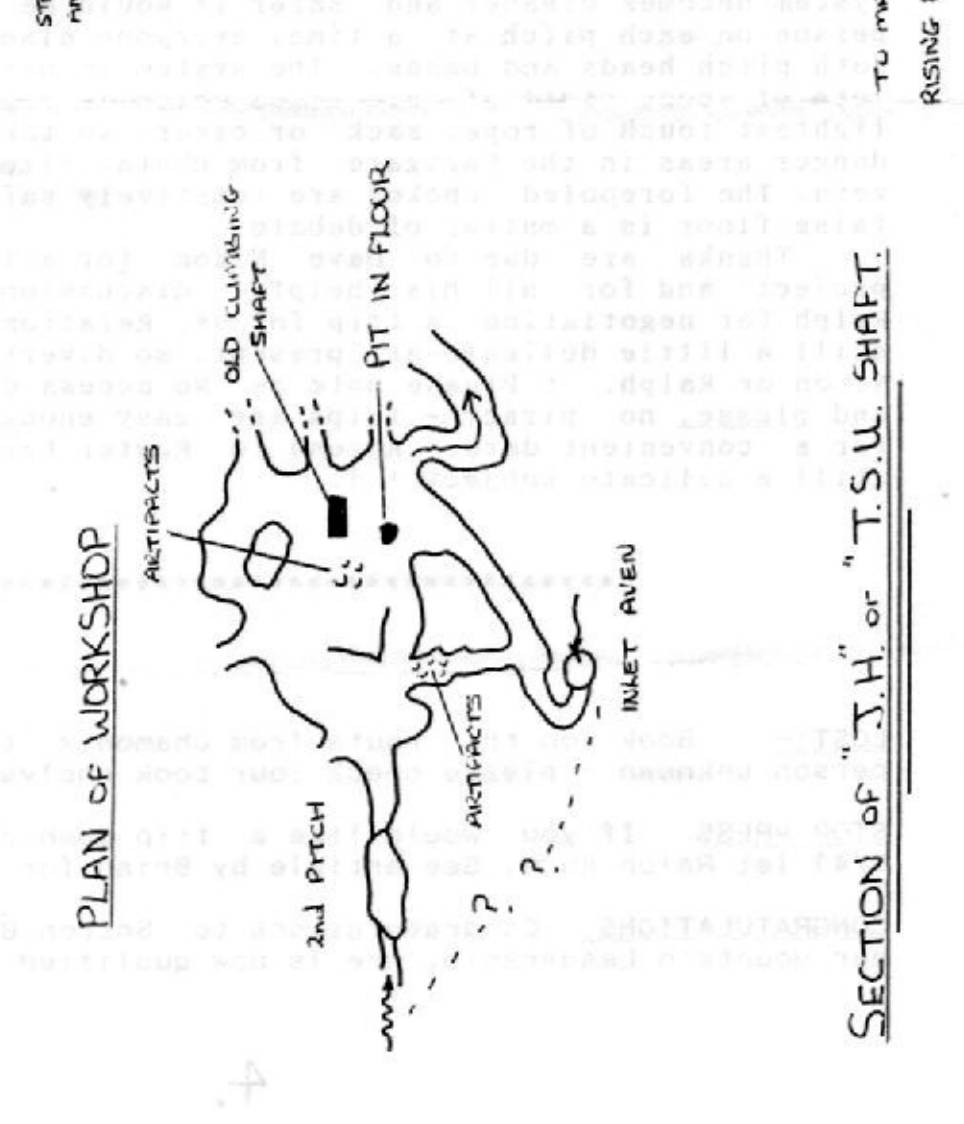
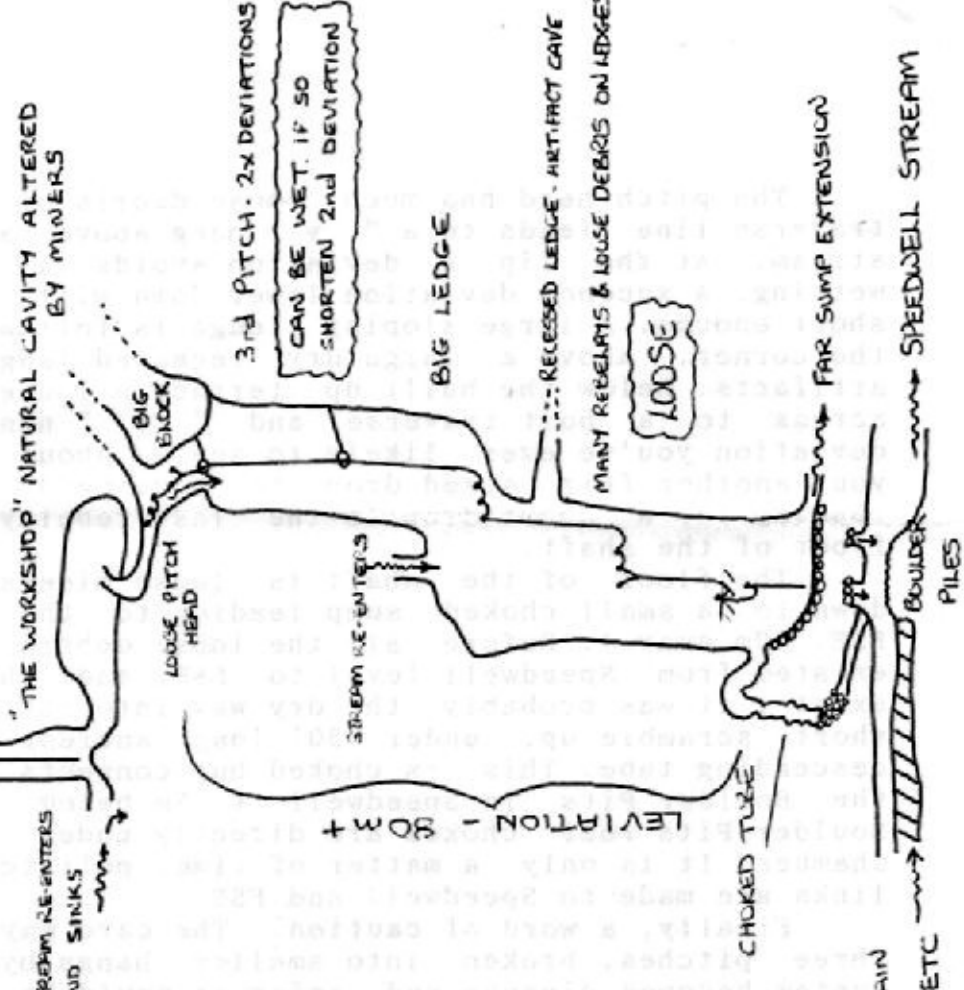
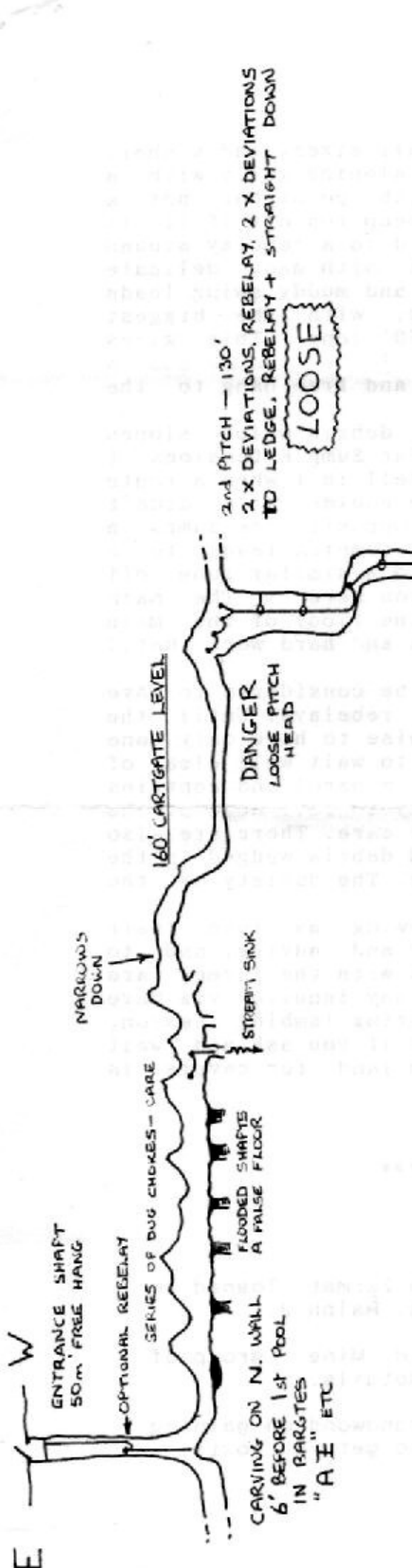
After some delicate negotiations by Ralph, he managed to arrange access for himself, Sharon, Ross and myself for a trip into Dave Nixons current project on New Rake. On a very cold and windy sunday we meet up at Rowter farm after Ralph and Sharon had been to fetch the keys. We paid our fees to the farmers wife and got changed in a gale that felt as if it had just come off the polar ice-cap.

Once having escaped from the large marauding geese in the farm yard we found the recently re-capped shaft on the line of hummocks marking New Rake. The letters J.H. were drawn in the concrete, relating to the shafts proper name, rather than the erroneous "T.S.U." inscription that it was known by previously. The heavy steel lid wouldn't stay open in the strong wind, but kept blowing onto us as we looked down the shaft - an ominous sight. The first pitch is about 160' deep, starting off as a generous oval of ginging, into solid rock, and then into open slope on the vein. Stacked deads abound, but this pitch is "relatively" clean. There are a few minor rub points, and a spit for a rebelay about halfway down. The landing is on a small debris cone.

To the west is a short steep scramble to a cartgate, but to the east a more gentle slope again leads to the same cartgate. About six feet short of the first pool on the left (north) wall are the letters "A" and other carvings in white vein material (probably Bougtes or Heavy Spar - BaSo4). Similar carvings are found in Peaks Far Sump Extensions. The cartgate continues under hanging death chokes (held up only by imagination...), over flooded shafts in the floor and heaps of rubble, and through a series of forepoled digs through collapsed areas. The floor of the cartgate is at least in part false, and well water logged... Eventually a cascade can be heard ahead as the water falls into an unflooded shaft. Traverse over this one and the next two holes in the floor. The passage now climbs above the cartgate level, over deads, into a narrower vein slopes for a short way, followed by an easy descent over well stacked deads to rejoin the cartgate as a crawl. The second pitch is soon reached.

The take off is from a dodgey heap of loose, unstable debris that funnels down to the pitch. A short bolt traverse leads to a "y" hang and a drop with two deviations, a rebelay and two further deviations to a large ledge and rebelay, with a third drop onto another cone of debris. This whole pitch is very loose and unstable - take great care of those below you. Down to the west the streamway is met in a low crawl, but to the east the vein opens out into a large cavity - " The Workshop ".

The Workshop appears to be a solution bedding cavity enlarged by T'Owd Man. It contains many old artifacts and interesting dry-stone walled features. There are several apparent ways on, including a rectangular climbing shaft and a small round pit in the floor with a stream at the bottom. The way on is past the round hole into a short crawl with a stream, which loops around to the head of the big pitch - a large natural shaft called Leviathan.



SECTION OF "J.H." or "T.S.U." SHAFT.

The pitch head has much loose debris of all sizes, and a short traverse line leads to a " y " hang above a sloping gully with a stream. At the lip a deviation avoids a rub point but not a wetting. A second deviation lower down will keep you dry if it is short enough. A large sloping ledge is followed to a rebelay around the corner, above a large dry recessed ledge with many delicate artifacts. Below the built up terrace a loose and muddy swing leads across to a bolt traverse and " y " hang, with the biggest deviation you've ever likely to see - about 50' long ! This gives you another fair sized drop to more muddy, loose ledges and a rebelay for a short drop to the last rebelay and free hang to the floor of the shaft.

The floor of the shaft is loose miners debris which slopes down to a small choked sump leading to the Far Sump Extensions (FSE, 40m away). Before all the loose debris fell in (when a route existed from Speedwell level to FSE, and the boulder pits didn't exist) it was probably the dry way into FSE. Opposite the sumps a short scramble up, under 30' long ancient stemples leads to a descending tube. This is choked but connects to a similar tube off the Boulder Pits in Speedwell (5m below you here). The main Boulder Pits roof chokes are directly under the floor of the main chamber. It is only a matter of time, politics and hard work until links are made to Speedwell and FSE.

Finally, a word of caution. The cave may be considered to have three pitches, broken into smaller hangs by rebelay. Until the system becomes cleaner and safer it would be wise to have only one person on each pitch at a time, everyone else to wait well clear of both pitch heads and bases. The system is part mineral and contains lots of loose stuff of all sizes which is ready to roll down at the lightest touch of rope, sack or caver, so take care. There are also danger areas in the Cartgate from unstabilized debris wedged in the vein. The forepoled chokes are relatively safe. The dubiety of the false floor is a matter of debate.

Thanks are due to Dave Nixon for allowing us into their project and for all his helpful discussions and advice, and to Ralph for negotiating a trip for us. Relations with the farmer are still a little delicate at present, so divert any inquires via Dave Nixon or Ralph. (Please note :- No access during lambing season, and please, no piracy - trips are easy enough if you ask and wait for a convenient date. Access to Rowter Farm land for cavers is still a delicate subject !).

LOST:- Book on the route from Chamonix to Zermat loaned to person unknown - please check your book shelves. Ralph J.

STOP PRESS If you would like a trip down J.H. Mine (group of 3/4) let Ralph know. See article by Brian for details.

CONGRATULATIONS. Congratulations to Sharon Brandwood on gaining her Mountain Leadership, she is now qualified to get you lost!