

"Cave" Rescue Report!

It was 4.20 pm when, believe it or not, I had just got into the shower after a 12(twelve!) mile run. Marguerite called me to say DCRO were on the line "A building site in Knutsford" - they've got to be kidding I thought, still it's better than dogs!! Bill Whitehouse filled in the spare details, a worker had apparently fallen down a well. (This was later found to be incorrect.)

A small team consisting of Paul Holdcroft, Brian and self was despatched, and Marguerite busied herself putting others on standby. Liam and Ian Grindey (being the nearest) were requested to join the first three at about 5 O'clock.

On arrival we were joined by John Middlemist (Mouse) and were surprised to find not a narrow impossible, crumbling well half full of water, but a brand new, concrete lined model about 40' deep and 40' in diameter. The victim hadn't fallen but appeared to have been tunneling horizontally from the bottom of the well in sand WITHOUT SHUTTERING!

Around and at the bottom of the well there seemed to be dozens of firemen, ambulance personnel, mines rescue, a doctor, a nurse, several policemen and countless Irish navvies. However the experts had arrived! (or so the copper in charge thought) Trying to look professional (ie as if I knew what I was doing), I climbed the builders ladder into the abyss, the onlookers gasped in amazement - no lifeline AND no helmet!!

The victim was lying horizontally face downwards, buried up to his neck in sand. They had managed to sputter above him but the faster they dug the more sand came in - he was not a happy man!! Mouse joined me, a brief discussion followed and our professional advise was given allowing me to retire to the surface - foiled again - no tea wagon! Who the hell was running this rescue!, obviously Cheshire Police were not used to this type of incident and the needs of rescue personnel. Disappointed I donned my gear and returned to the hole with Paul and Brian.

The victim was fitted with not one but two drips(not counting Mouse and me) and pumped full of Entonox. (He didn't seem any happier!)

Miraculously our brilliant suggestion of shuttering the sides of the tunnel as well as the roof had worked and the extraction was progressing well. The fire brigade produced a stretcher consisting of a flat sheet of perspex fastened to a steel framework. They assured Paul that despite the lack of a footrest it could be used for a vertical lift if the leg straps were crossed and fastened TIGHT! "Like sh-- off a shovel" I thought, overruled the Brigade and rigged for a horizontal lift.

Now comes the exciting bit - the stretcher was lifted by a crane with me perched astride it holding the saline drips - and not a T V camera in sight! We were brought to a halt about 2' off the deck, an eager squad unclipped one side of the stretcher sending me arse over tit into the mud! Perhaps it was as well the BBC hadn't made it!

Nothing left to do except rescue the poor nurse who damn near died of fright half way up the ladder, we packed up, headed for home, my second shower of the evening and still made the monthly club meeting on time!!

Ralph.

# WEATHER FORECASTS

Many of you are no doubt aware of the fact that caves often contain water and that the volume is proportional to the rainfall! (ref - the Hammer incident!) Accurate information is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day on the numbers listed below.

Dial 0898 500 followed by:

Derbyshire	416
Mendip	405
Mid Wales	414
N. Wales	414
S. Wales	409
Yorkshire	417

## Info Time

Meetings which fall on a Bank Holiday will be held on the second Monday of that month.

## Journal No 3.

Flushed with the success of our previous two journals, we are now embarking on No 3. Please send articles to Ralph, preferably while he is still young enough to do something with them. Foreign trips, digs etc are particularly desirable.

## Meets List.

### OCTOBER

Sun 16th Juniper gulf/ Rift Pot/ Long Kin East

### NOVEMBER

Sun 6th Peak Cavern:  
Sat 12th Hunt Pot / Little Hull Pot

JAN

8th - Peak Cavern.

### DECEMBER

Sun 11th Kingsdale

## LA TORCA DEL CARLISTA 1987

Under the Cantabrian mountains in Northern Spain, near the small village of Ranero in La Torca del Carlista Parks, is one of the largest chambers in the Western World. The controversy over whether the Torca del Carlista is just bigger or just smaller than the La Verna chamber in the Pierre St. Martin was eventually resolved by an accurate survey, but I have lost the details and cannot remember which actually won. Anyway, Mulu put paid to the world record for which they both vied, so it is only accademic. Both chambers are absolutely enormous by any standards.

In the summer of 1987, shortly after completing the magnificent Cueto/Caventosa traverse (20 hrs) with our Belgian friends of the CRSL, Keith Sanderson and I were invited for a Sunday trip to Carlista. We gathered at Ranero; about 32 of us, cavers, women and children, and after some discussion took a track up to a quarry where we changed into caving gear before setting off up the hill for an arduous <sup>climb</sup>. Keith and I carried a 250m X 10mm rope between us. Alphonse and Francis the rest of the tackle.

At the top, the Belgians rigged the entrance shafts and the descents began. Because we were so numerous and one or two of the teenagers were doing their first descent, it was quite a long wait. However, the mountain scenery was a superb distraction to occupy the time between snacks and liquid refreshment. Eventually Keith and I were able to descend. After the 1000ft entrance shaft of Sima Cueto we reckoned that nothing could excite us now, but we were in for quite a surprise! The first 30m to a bolt was in the typical smooth yellowy rock of the region and led to a narrow 15m pitch to a sort of ledge followed by a lopsish 3m section, and then 10m to the final pitch of 100m.

The big pitch was rigged double with the two halves of the 250m rope so that Keith and I were able to make almost simultaneous descents. As I crossed the bolt off the 3m section, Keith was on the big pitch. The 10m pitch seemed oddly quiet and I could sense a sort of emptiness below me; no sight or sound of Keith. I slid down to the twin ropes and found it hard to decide which was free as the weights seemed similar. Below me seemed like the blackness of space.... a tiny spark of light far below was Keith's caplamp and further below three or four pinpoints of light could be seen. Quite high!

I crossed the last bolt and started my descent. Within a few feet I was sailing off into the middle of nowhere. The incredible size was over whelming and although I had a powerful light, I could not see the walls or the floor; it was like a trip in outer space. My descent seemed to be taking sometime and I started to worry. Cueto/Caventosa

had worn out the three top bars of my rack, so I had taken them off and turned them over. Somewhere like half way down I began to wonder how much alloy was left. At least it would be quick! Soon I could discern the others below me and hear their shouts. They wanted me to stop for a photo! No such luck, I preferred to reach terra firma whilst there was some of my rack left! A rapid descent and I grounded on the floor of the immense chamber. High above I heard a faint shout, and looking up I could see a tiny spark falling from the sky like that from a dying firework.... it was Francoise following on down. After a short rest to recover my senses I clambered over the boulders to explore the chamber. Soon I was alone in the vast blackness trying to find the way to the beautiful grottoes below. The size of the place generated silence that pervaded the atmosphere like cotton wool. I had that impression of being alone on another planet after a journey through space. I never found Keith, and after a while decided to turn back and seek refreshment before the need for ascent.

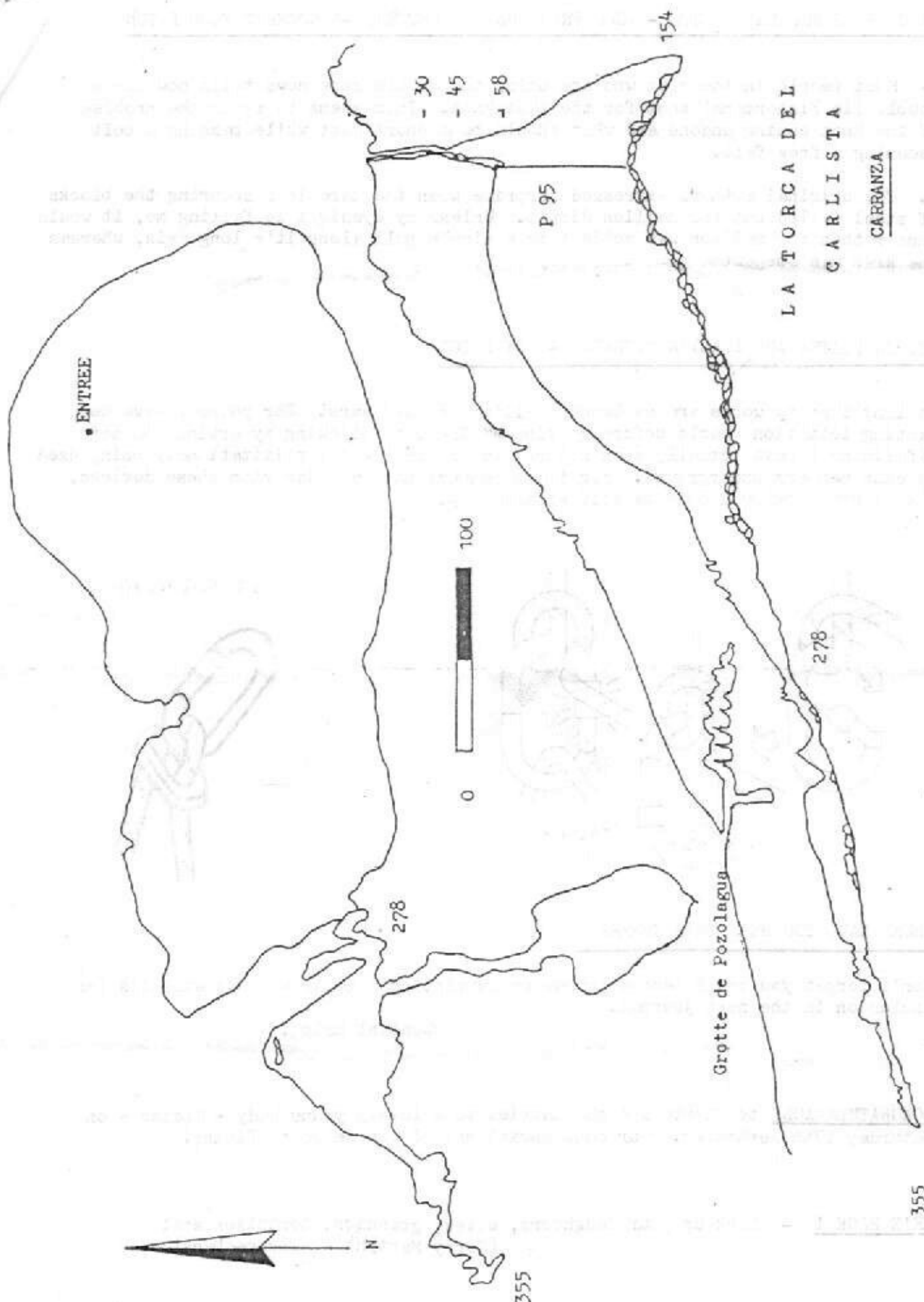
Back at the pitch, the last descents had been completed and the ascents began. Alphonse and Francis went up in tandem, but it looked so unpleasant that the rest of us went up solo. Even Simon aged 13! It was a long wait for my turn and I was glad to get moving again. The bounce of the rope enabled me to 'swim' up the first hundred foot. It's a most peculiar sensation being on a long springy rope. Once the rhythm of bounce and the movement of the ascenders gets into the right phase, the upward moves seem effortless, just like swimming. However, soon I was out of maximum bounce and the real work started, but at least I did not have the bother about worn equipment to distract me. A few minutes exertion and the bolts loomed out of the darkness. The remaining pitches presented no problems and the ascent to the surface was soon over. Welcome beers at the top to cool a strong thirst. An excellent Sunday outing was over, but I still had that infinite blackness stored in my mind.

#### EQUIPMENT

- |              |                |                |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. 30m rope  | 3 or 4 hangers | } = (one rope) |
| 2. 15m rope  | 2 hangers      |                |
| 3. 3m rope   | 1 hanger       |                |
| 4. 10m rope  | 1 hanger       |                |
| 5. 100m rope | 2 hangers      |                |

#### SURVEY OVERLEAF.

John Gillett.



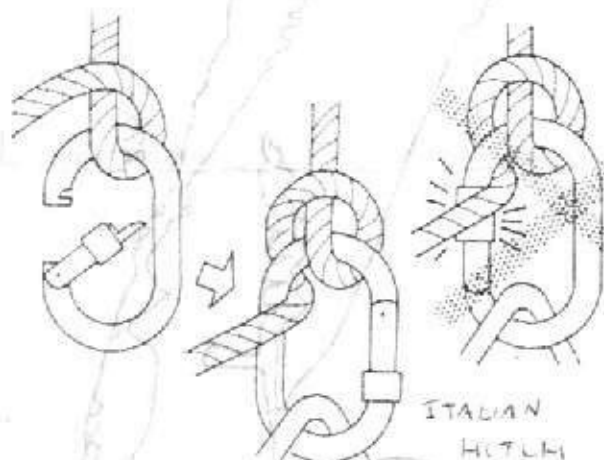


COWS TAILS AND DROP TESTS - (SEE PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER) - A COMMENT FROM P.TON

1. Most people in the club who are using the double rope cows tails now use a double (ie Fishermans) knot for the last knot. This seems to avoid the problem of the knot coming undone and what should be a short rest while passing a bolt becoming a free fall!
2. The original authors expressed surprise when the karabiner securing the blocks of steel failed but the maillon didn't. Unless my eyesight is failing me, it would appear that the maillon was subject to a single pull along it's long axis, whereas the krab was subjected to a three way pull.

STITCH PLATES AND ITALIAN HITCHES - BY P.TON

At long last my words are no longer falling on deaf ears! For years I have been casting imitation pearls before genuine ~~one~~ fine but following my article on safe lifelining I have actually seen stitch plates (well - cheap imitations!) being used by club members underground. For those members not familiar with these devices, the diagrams below should be self explanatory.



STITCH PLATE



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN THIS SUMMER ?

Don't forget you could become famous by submitting details of your exploits for inclusion in the next journal.

Contact Ralph.

CONGRATULATIONS to Tipple who got married to a lovely young lady - Elaine - on Saturday 17th September. Our commiserations, of course go to Elaine!

HE'S BACK ! - Lock up your daughters, wives, grannies, tortoises etc!  
(Sorry Martyn) - Welcome back!

### A Tale of Two Bulls.

Do you remember the story that appeared in the newsletter a while ago about the young bull and the old bull. You know, the one about the young bull wanting to run out and screw a cow before getting too drunk and the old bull suggesting that they should take their time and screw them all.

Well the analogy was that if you take your time in this world and pay careful attention to the weather then you will be able to go down all the caves in Yorkshire and never get caught out by floods.

Well it seems to me that this is a load of old bull on the part of the storyteller, who it would seem is incapable of taking his own advice. All that I can say is remember Meregill !!

I hope that when I get to old bull status that I will quietly retire to the Marton Arms or wherever it is that old bulls hang out by that time. I certainly hope that I will not be talking so much bullshit by then that it would seem that I've got bulls for a brain.

C. A. R. Ton