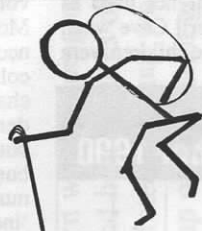


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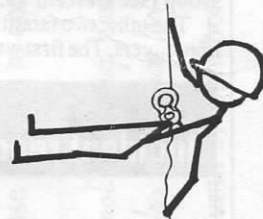


Newsletter

September 1991



GREAT ORME VISIT



This will be on 20th - 22nd September 1991. The venue will be the WEDGEWOOD HOTEL, 6 DEGANWY AV. LLANDUDNO (Telephone 0492 78016).

Bed, breakfast & evening meal for 2 nights is £28 per head (adult). This represents a discount of £14 off the usual price.

Activities : Caving in the Great Orme Copper Mines
Rock Climbing on the Great Orme
Rock Climbing in the Snowdonia National Park (approx 20 miles away)
Skiing on the dry Ski Slope
Canyoning (if anyone can find a canyon)
Walking
Drinking
Sleeping
Others



Most rooms at the Wedgewood are en-suite (first come - first served), have colour Tele's, tea making facilities and all the usual crap plus there is a LICENCED BAR!

If interested, please ring LIONEL PARKINSON Jnr on:

0782 388399 Ext 4414 (day) or

0782 771157(night)



He will need number of spaces required, sleeping arrangements (nosey sod) ie number of double/single beds, sinks and/or toilets, number of adults/children and a phone number he can contact you on if possible.



£434
£177



BCRA NATIONAL CAVING CONFERENCE

What a bitch! Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond Lionels control, this coincides with the Great Orme weekend. It will be the last one held at Manchester for some time. If you can't afford Llandudno this is slightly cheaper (providing you don't stay the night!) but not as much fun. See inside for details.



BCRC INCIDENT REPORT 1990

The British Cave Rescue Council has issued the following report for 1990:

General Notes

1. Although three underground fatalities are recorded, only one involved a caver, who drowned in Kingsdale Master Cave while going by himself for assistance for his group (see *Descent* 93, p10).

The other two fatalities involved non-cavers. The first was the recovery of the body of a 16 year old boy from Ivy Green Cave, Derbyshire (*Descent* 95, p18), who had disappeared 13 months previously while out jogging. The second was a man on a company management course, who died a short distance inside the Silica Mine at Glyn Neath, South Wales, from natural causes. The fact that he was underground was purely coincidental (*Descent* 96, p7).

2. The two cave diving incidents were (i), a cave diver in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, who waited for rescue in an airbell after his diving line became detached (*Descent* 94, p7), and (ii) the rescue of seven cavers trapped by floods when a section of Rough Hill Inlet in Old Ing Cave was sumped. NB: Cave divers were also called out (but not used as divers) to Ibbeth Peril Cave when two teachers and five children were

trapped by floods (*Descent* 96, p10).

3. The number of persons sustaining physical injury underground remains a very small proportion of those involved in underground incidents.

4. The total number of persons involved includes an occasional conservative estimate of the number in overdue parties.

5. Relatively few incidents involved recognised caving clubs. More incidents involved clubs connected with university/polytechnic/college clubs, which have a rapidly changing membership. Other incidents involved schools, scouts, outdoor pursuits, youth centres, and business groups, etc., plus a large number of small groups caving as 'individuals'. The silliest callout was to search for an overdue caving party (a minibus full) from an official authority. It was some time later that the caller had to ring back and admit that the party was not due to go caving until the next day.

6. There were at least ten non-caver incidents including searches for persons missing in a general area, potential suicide victims and a murder victim, plus other investigations for the police - all involving searches underground.

7. The CRO is based at Clapham, North Yorks.

8. The underground animal incidents involved 3 sheep, 2 lambs, 2 calves, 7 dogs and 1 cat.

9. The surface incidents include fell/moorland rescues/searches, climbing incidents, etc. Teams in the North of England carry out these duties as part of their normal rescue work.

10. The surface animal incidents involved 6 sheep, 1 lamb and 3 cows.

11. Alerts dealt with by telephone/local knowledge without the rescue team turning out, and standby calls, are not recorded.

BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL

Incident report for the year 1st January 1990-31st December 1990

	Cave Rescue Organisation	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	Gloucestershire CRG	Irish CRO	Mendip RO	Midlands CRO	North Wales CRO	Scottish CRO	South East CRO	South Wales CRO	Swaledale FRO	Upper Wharfedale FRA	Totals
Underground caving incidents	15	9	2	-	1	8	-	2	-	1	17	-	3	58
No. of persons involved	50	7	2	-	3	35	-	4	-	2	46	-	5	154
No. of fatalities	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
No. injured (non fatal)	4	1	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	13
Underground animal incidents	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	1	15
Total underground incidents	21	13	2	-	1	8	-	3	1	1	19	-	4	73
Surface incidents	16	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	11	13	43
No. of persons involved	27	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	18	22	72
No. of fatalities	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
No. injured (non fatal)	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	8	24
Surface animal incidents	4	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	8
Total surface incidents	20	-	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	12	13	51

Aid to other rescue teams

Underground accidents	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
Surface incidents	1+6*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7

*Search and rescue dogs and their handlers only

Quick summary 1980-1990	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Underground caving incidents	48	46	44	44	28	47	47	44	47	73	56
No. persons involved	104	99	108	109	63	121	102	109	123	184	146
No. fatalities	3	1	7	1	3	1	4	-	4	1	3
Cave inc. cave diving incidents	2	2	3	-	-	4	1	1	1	3	2
No. persons involved	2	2	3	-	-	5	2	1	1	3	8
No. fatalities	2	2	1	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	-

(Animal incidents are not included in this summary)

Summary of causes

The main cause of the underground incidents, excluding animal rescues, can be summarised as follows. In many cases there are contributory causes, but these are not included.

Falls	10
Party simply overdue	10
Exhaustion/exposure	8
Party lost	8
Missing persons	7
Floods	4
Other water incidents	3
Investigations	3
Physical jamming	2
Medical emergency	2
Recovery of body	1
Total	58

BOOKING FORM 1991

Name BCRA No
Address

Cheque/PO number enclosed to value of £
Please make cheques payable to: **BCRA Conference Account**

ADMISSION TO CONFERENCE

Individual members of BCRA	Rate	Number	Total
Saturday and Sunday	£6.50	()	(£)
Single day only	£4.00	()	(£)
All others	Rate	Number	Total
Saturday and Sunday	£10.00	()	(£)
Single day only	£5.50	()	(£)

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Individual members of BCRA; single night £17.00
All others; single night £18.00

	Friday	Saturday	Total No	Total Cost
BCRA members	()	()	()	(£)
All others	()	()	()	(£)

NOTE Name and membership number of all individual members must be given for all bookings. Please supply a list of all names requiring accommodation, stating twin room if desired, continue on separate sheet if necessary. Final booking date is 13th September 1991

CLUB STANDS

Name of Organisation
All club stands are included in the judging for Best Club Stand. Each stand is an area of 2 square metres and includes table and backboard.
Stands required @ £7.50 each () Total (£)

Call for speakers Like to give a talk? Then place a tick in the box ☐
to the right and include a brief description on an accompanying sheet.

Return bookings to:

Bob Picknett, 28 Potters Way, Laverstock, Wiltshire, SP1 1PX

BCRA National Caving Conference

Weekend of September 20th - 22nd
Renold Building, Umist
Manchester

Do you want to learn what is going on in the caving world? Come along to the conference and hear lectures on expeditions abroad, see the latest techniques demonstrated, find out what new discoveries have taken place in Britain or catch up on the latest gossip. All this and competitions too!

New features for 91

Photo Salon There will be a photo salon this year. Categories are Portfolio, Transparency, Monochrome print, Colour print, Cave life and Fun shot.

Crêche A crêche service will be available, but only during the day

Friday night The Renold building bar will be open 8pm till 12pm on

Friday evening so you can meet your friends here for a quiet drink. Conference admission tickets will also be on sale here so you can beat the Saturday morning queue.

NOTICE of BCRA Annual General Meeting.

This will take place at 5pm on Saturday 21st September in room C2 of the Renold Building. Admission free to members

Saturday evening entertainment will consist of both a Band and a Ceilidh from 8pm until 1am in The Harwood Room, along with the Renold Building bar for those wishing to conduct a quiet conversation.

The conference will not be taking place in UMIST in 1992! This may be the last Manchester conference for some time, so don't miss it.

Door open 9.00am until 5.00pm both days. Lectures 9.30 until 4.30

Provisional Programme

This is a proposed outline timetable for the conference, it only covers the lectures confirmed to date, and accounts for under half the available time. We will endeavour to keep as close as possible to these times, but they may have to be varied to ensure a balanced programme. So don't turn up for a lecture with minutes to spare, the time may have changed!

FRIDAY EVENING

9.30 101 Ways to avoid going caving

Talk and slide show by Lank Mills

SATURDAY

9.30 Derbyshire Developments in Peak Cavern/Speedwell

11.00 Rumania Large format slides by Christi Lascu

11.30 Mendips Current exploration

11.30 Northern Dales Hydrology of Crack Pot - P Grant, plus update and new finds

13.30 China Behind the Bamboo Curtain including Gavin Newman's new slide sound sequence

14.00 South Wales Recent extensions - Bill Gascoine *et al*

16.00 Totes Gebirge Cambridge UCC - D Mace

16.00 Radon in British Caves

1991 Update - Prof J Gunn

Current developments - Dr P Glanville *et al*

16.30 Caving Helmets Latest Test Results

16.30 Scotland Explorations and discoveries - A Jeffries *et al*

SUNDAY

9.30 Journey Beneath the Earth

Dave Gill on 20 years of expeditions

10.45 Diving in the Dales Recent extensions - J Cordingley

11.15 Yorkshire Dales New finds - Magnetometer Pot - Ringle Mill

Cave - Sylvester Pot area of Easegill

11.00 Picos de Europa Oxford UCC followed by York UCC

Jim Birchall *et al*

13.30 Soviet Union

14.00 Forest of Dean

15.30 Hensler Memorial Lecture

16.15 Photo Salon and Close

Programme of events

FRIDAY EVENING

The Renold Building Bar will be opening 8pm until 12pm for a late pint. A humorous talk will be given by Lank Mills, other entertainment will be invited from the floor. Arrange to meet your friends for a drink before the rigours of Saturday. Final lecture programme and synopsis on display.

Friday evening 9.30pm

"101 Ways to avoid going caving"
a Talk and slide show by Lank Mills

Entertainment will be provided by you, so bring along your musical instruments/juggling clubs/equipment etc and do your party piece.

(Free entrance tickets to exceptional performances.)

SATURDAY EVENING

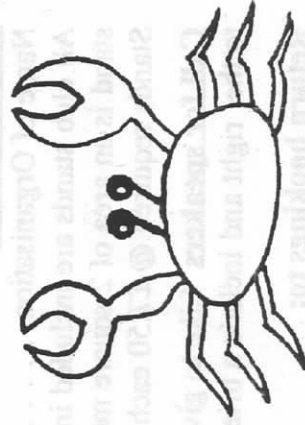
Two rooms, one with a Ceilidh, the other a Blues/Rock Band. Move between as you please. Bar 8pm till 1am. Two for the price of one!

The REALY DIFFICULT CAVING QUIZ

This will be run over the weekend to test your caving knowledge, your observation and your deviousness. The questions will be designed not only for the intelligent, but also the average caver. Join in and have a laugh. If you can answer the following without asking anyone else you stand a chance of winning:-

- 1) What is the cover price of Caves and Caving?
- 2) What is the diameter of Blue Water Rope?
- 3) What well known piece of caving equipment is depicted by the silhouette to the right?

They wont be that easy on the day!



***** RESCUE REPORTS *****

210. COLLAPSE NR. MOORFURLONG MINE, BRADWELL.

Tuesday 6 February 1990

The owner of a missing cat thought that it could be heard mewling from down a small cave or mine entrance that had recently appeared at the edge of a track off Granby Road, Bradwell. Two D.C.R.O. members and two R.S.P.C.A. inspectors attended. The cave turned out to be very short, quickly becoming too tight - even for a cat. No sign of the animal was found. The party then had a look down Moorfurlong Mine which was close by, but again, there was no sign of the cat.

211. GIANTS HOLE/OXLOW CAVERN, CASTLETON.

Sunday 11 February 1990

At approx. 11.30 a well equipped and generally well experienced party from the Antares Caving Club descended Giants and went to East Canal. On the way back out, some of the party went up Poached Egg Passage to look at the beginning of the Chamber of Horrors (the connecting passage through to Oxlow Cavern). One of the party went through the first duck, and after shouting back that he was through, he went on. When he had not returned after ten minutes a second man went through but found no sign of him. He concluded that his companion must also have entered the second duck, although it appeared to be completely sumped. The party waited for more than an hour and then decided to go for help, leaving three of their number in Poached Egg passage in case the missing man returned.

D.C.R.O. were alerted at 20.05 and by 21.20 the first parties were on their way underground. One (with the Molefone) went down Oxlow to rig the pitches and then go on to see if the missing man was waiting in Oxlow or at the Oxlow end of the Chamber of Horrors. The other went down Giants (covering both routes) to relieve the missing man's companions. At the same time the diving team were called out as the information had been confirmed by his friends that the missing man had effectively dived into a "sump" and it was felt (pessimistically) that they and their equipment might well be needed. The Fire Service breathing apparatus tender from Chesterfield later came to the scene and refilled empty diving bottles in case they were to be needed. At 23.10 all cavers were out of Giants, but no news had yet been heard from the Oxlow party due to difficulties with the Molefone (partly use of the wrong ariel underground, partly trying to transmit from an unsurveyed location, and partly due to intense wind noise on the surface making hearing difficult). Eventually word reached the surface by more traditional means (at 23.15) that the missing man had been found in the Chamber of Horrors, very cold, rather lost, minus his helmet and with very little light. Reinforcements were sent underground to man the pitches in Oxlow and he was brought to the surface by 00.25 on Monday morning, warmed up and sent off home with his companions. In view of the nature of the incident, assistance had been requested from the P.D.M.R.O. to provide a communications link between Giants, Oxlow, the road and the Molefone surface point. Without those communications, controlling the incident would have been nigh on impossible. Weather conditions during the operation were very bad with high winds (est. at 100 mph +) and driving snow. Forty-two D.C.R.O. and six P.D.M.R.O. were involved.

212. MINESHAFT, SPARROWPIT.

Friday 16 February 1990

A lorry driver stopped near Sparrowpit to exercise his dogs and one of them disappeared. He searched for it without success and when he returned later in the day to renew the search he found a mineshaft he thought the dog might have fallen down. On the advice of the farmer he contacted the police who informed D.C.R.O. Two men turned out to investigate and using borrowed tools they managed to gain access through the shaft cap whereupon the dog could be seen, seemingly unharmed, at the bottom some 60 feet down. Alan Walker descended and hagged the dog which was then hauled to the surface.

213. CAVES etc. IN STONEY MIDDLETON DALE AREA.

Saturday 10 March 1990

As part of the re-opened investigation into the disappearance of Michael Boulton (see incident 200) the police requested a re-search of Stoney Middleton Dale, Eyam Dale and Cucklet Delf before the vegetation started to grow. A party of 11 team members searched 41 caves, mines and shafts, concentrating on those that might not have been visited by cavers since the day Boulton went missing in May last year. At the same time P.D.M.R.O. teams were searching the surface of the same areas. Nothing was found. In addition to carrying out an underground search, D.C.R.O. was also asked to search the River Derwent by boat downstream as far as Chatsworth. An elite D.C.R.O. naval division of five canoes was formed and the job was carried out, although, again, nothing was found.

214. HEONE HILL CAVE, MALTRY, SOUTH YORKSHIRE.

Thursday 5 April 1990

South Yorkshire police contacted Derbyshire Police operations room for D.C.R.O. assistance to investigate a cave in the magnesian limestone outcrop in the middle of Maltry on the edge of a supermarket carpark. The steel grid covering the entrance had been removed and they wanted the cave checking out before having it resecured. They were also concerned that the cave might be being used for glue sniffing, and also that three missing lads might be in there, possibly using it as a hideout. A D.C.R.O. controller and a couple of others attended and carried out a complete search of the cave before temporarily securing the entrance grid.

At about 11.30 one of a party of seven cavers descended Garlands Pot using a Petzl "Stop" device. He misjudged his descent, landed heavily and broke his left leg and dislocated his left ankle. His companions, aided by other cavers, got him back up the pitch, but he was in considerable pain and could not be moved further without additional help and equipment.

D.C.R.O. were contacted at 12.25 and the first members of Central team reached the scene at about 13.20. The casualty was examined, given Temgesic (pain killer) and had his leg put in an inflatable splint. He was installed in the Sked stretcher and made as comfortable as possible for the journey out during which he was able to self administer Entenox gas to help relieve the pain further. This proved very successful although both D.C.R.O. bottles plus one brought in from the ambulance on the surface were all used up in the seventy minutes it took to reach the entrance. The evacuation was slow but steady and the Sked once again proved itself ideal.

216. IVY GREEN CAVE, STONEY MIDDLETON DALE.

Monday 28 May 1990

At about 15.30 a party of cavers from Chesterfield discovered a badly decayed human body about 220 feet into the cave just beyond a very tight squeeze. They reported their discovery to the Police and at 17.00 D.C.R.O. were contacted and asked to bring the body out. Initially a doctor and two others entered the cave and went to the scene while a second party laid a phone line. The scene was then described to detectives outside, photographs were taken and the area near the body was searched for any evidence or clues as to what might have happened. When this was done the body was placed in a casualty bag for transport to the surface and further team members went in to help. At 22.00 the body reached the cave entrance and was lowered down the cliff face.

Not unexpectedly, the body was identified as that of Michael Boulton, the 16 year old boy who had gone missing from Eyam on 7 May 1989. D.C.R.O. had been involved in the searches that had followed his disappearance (reports 200 & 213). During the first search in 1989 there had been no evidence that Michael might have gone caving and the search effort concentrated on searching shafts and entrances only as far as a non caver might have fallen or been dragged for concealment. Even so, this effort absorbed over 850 man hours and involved the investigation of over 300 locations! The second re-search in 1990 involved detailed searches of all caves and mines in Stoney Middleton Dale etc. that might have attracted the interest of a curious and adventurous youth with little or no equipment. Forty caves and mines were fully searched, but it was not thought necessary to visit those caves that would have been visited by cavers in the year since Michael disappeared. Following this criteria Ivy Green Cave was not searched, and even with the benefit of hindsight it still seems inconceivable that it was to be a year before cavers went far enough to discover Michael's remains.

217. IVY GREEN CAVE, STONEY MIDDLETON DALE.

Fri. 1 & Thurs. 7 June 1990

At the request of the police investigating the circumstances of Michael Boulton's death, D.C.R.O. were asked to carry out a thorough search of the cave for anything that might help to solve the mystery and at the same time compile a photographic record and survey. The underground work for this was carried out by small teams during two evening trips but nothing of any relevance was found. Somewhat surprisingly, no sign of Michael's light was found, and it is most unlikely he would have gone far into the cave without one. It is quite possible, of course, that he might have lost his light nearer to the entrance and that it had subsequently been removed by cavers who did not go far enough into the cave to also find his body. The coroner, at an inquest on 5 November 1990 recorded a verdict of accidental death.

218. MINESHAFT, ELDON HILL, PEAK FOREST.

Monday 2 July 1990

At about 19.00 D.C.R.O. were invited to renew their acquaintance with Milo and Liz Jeanmaire's dog, which had, yet again, ended up down a mineshaft! Members may recall that they had acquired the dog after it had been rescued from Eldon Hole in September 1985 and that after a couple of days in their care it had thrown itself down a mineshaft and had had to be rescued again. During its new escape attempt it managed to stay hidden 25 ft. down a shaft on a very unstable blockage of rubbish for ten days until it was located. The shaft top was blocked by rubbish but after a way had been cleared and made safe, one team member descended and hagged the dog which was then hauled back to the surface.

219. KNOTLOW CAVERN, MONYASH.

Saturday 4 August 1990

A party of three cavers descended the climbing shaft route using a mixture of ladder and single rope techniques. Two of them descended the Waterfall Pitch but one was unable to climb back up, even with the help of his companions. D.C.R.O. were contacted at about 18.00 and a team attended and removed the lid on the Waterfall Shaft (210 ft.). The bipod was rigged and one team member descended with a harness and the Molefone. The exhausted caver was put into the harness and hauled up to the surface, seemingly none the worse for his experience. A small team also descended the climbing shaft route to derig the pitches.

At about 11.30 on Sunday 16 September two well equipped and experienced cavers entered the cave and made their way to Puttrell's Chamber and then beyond into Tiger Passage. On their way back they missed the way, became disorientated and got lost. They tried to find the way out for some hours, and when their lights began to fail they made themselves comfortable and settled down to wait. Fortunately they had space blankets and a stock of Mars bars. They were not missed until Monday morning and the alarm was raised only when their transport was located still parked at the head of Lathkill Dale. D.C.R.O. were called about 10.15 and whilst it was reasonably certain that the missing men had gone into Lathkill Head, parties were sent to check out other possible caves as well. Concern was expressed that they might have had an accident in the loose boulders at the end of Tiger III and with heavy rain forecast, it was important to find where they were and effect their rescue as soon as possible. Three men went into Lathkill Head to go to Tiger III and report back by Molefone and it was with some relief that they found the missing men safe and well in Puttrell's Chamber. After additional lighting had been sent in for them they were able to make their own way back to the surface where they emerged at 13.45.

221. MINESHAFT, MASSON HILL, MATLOCK.

Wednesday 26 September 1990

On Tuesday 25 September a young cow fell down a 25 feet deep shaft when the ground at the edge of the shaft edge gave way. It was injured but still alive and the farmer requested Fire Service assistance. The Fire Service attended, but unfortunately, they were unsuccessful in trying to make safe a large boulder at the surface and it fell down the shaft partially blocking it about ten feet down. They subsequently abandoned their attempt to reach the beast. The following day the farmer, via the Police, requested D.C.R.O. assistance as he was concerned that the animal might still be alive and in distress. Three team members attended and on investigating the fallen boulder they found it was securely wedged and could not move or fall further. The shaft was rigged and one member descended, squeezing past the boulder. He reached the animal and was able to ascertain that it had died.

222. P.8 JACKPOT, CASTLETON.

Monday 17 December 1990

A party of one experienced caver and two novices on their first trips went down the cave at about 19.00. They went just beyond the Second Pitch when one of the two novices wished to go out as he was cold and tired. All went well until the First Pitch where the by now exhausted man was quite unable to climb the pitch (which was laddered and lifelined). They rerigged the pitch out of the waterfall but he was still unable to get up and so one of the party went to the surface for help. The police contacted D.C.R.O. at 23.15 and a team of about a dozen attended. The exhausted man and his companion both had nearly exhausted their lights by the time the team reached them but they were brought to the surface by 00.45 without great difficulty - a fairly standard P.8 First Pitch rescue.

This was the first incident at which the new police issue radios were used for surface communication and turned out to be the first incident at P.8 where surface communications worked from the road to the cave entrance!

INSTANT WORLDWIDE TRANSLATION SYSTEM!

In order to avoid any linguistic difficulties as experienced by some people on the French trip, here is a handy cut-out-and-keep definitive guide to the languages of the world.

ENGLISH

Hello Goodbye Please Thank you Yes No My friend will pay

ARABIC

Salaam Aleikum Saeeda Manfadlak Shoekran Aeewa La Sachbee Raeyetta (sach like loch)

ARAMAIC

Pareb Manak parof Cete gare lie Shenor hegalyem Aeeyo Vobj Pare gamus beedee vjare (vdchare)

AUSTRIAN

Gruiss Gott Veeder-showen Bittschoin Dankeshoin Yo Na My friend do zehit

BULGARIAN

Dober Dan Dovish-dene Moiya Blago-darya Da Ne Moyat preeate plashta

HUNGARIAN

Yo Vissont-latastra Kerem Kossonom (Koissoin-oim) Eegen Nem Baratom fog fezzetnee

KOREAN

Anyong hasheem-eeka Anyong hee keeso Tooseo Kamsa hammeeda Ne Anyo Tcheeboul hal coopneeda

MALAYAN

Selamat Selamat jalan Toolong Tery-Makasey Ya Teedak Saya punya kovan bayah

THAI

Sawasdee Lagone (like gone) Galoonar Con Coon Club Mae Breen pem jai hai (dchai hi)



BIKES

FOR SALE: 2nd hand (but still good) "F CELLS" (see August Newsletter, FX4 article). Bargain at £13.50 each (£11.30 new) Lionel

NEW GREEN ONE-PIECE SUITS for sale. All sizes, small → X large, £13.50. You too can look like Kermit the frog! Lionel

TITS! BOTTOMS! SEX! DRUGS! BOOZE! Now I've got your attention, check your name, address and phone number in the last Newsletter and if it is wrong LET ME KNOW before next month! This will save me having to put up with all the usual wingeing and bellyaching after I've issued the list!

Mark

ANYBODY seen my wellies? Mark

WEIL'S DISEASE

The national rat population is increasing and between 50% and 60% of rats carry and excrete the organism *Leptospira ictero-haemorrhagiae* in their urine. Infection of humans with this organism causes an illness (commonly called Weil's disease) which has been known to result in death in 10% of cases.

There has been a recent increase in the incidence of this disease: 32 cases were notified in 1986, 68 cases in 1987 and 133 cases in 1988.

Formerly the disease occurred mainly among sewage or abattoir workers, farm workers and miners but recent records show that the majority of deaths are now related to water activities. In 1989 there were 19 deaths and 13 of these were associated with water users.

"Water users" of course includes cavers and, although there have been no deaths of cavers attributable to this disease recently, there have been a number of cases of cavers becoming infected, some of whom became very ill.

ABOUT THE ILLNESS

The organism enters the body through breaks in the skin such as cuts, blisters and abrasions, or via the lining of the nose, throat or alimentary tract.

The incubation period is 7 - 13 days and the disease starts with a fever, muscular aches and pains, loss of appetite and vomiting with prostration. Subsequent bruising of the skin, sore eyes, nose bleeds and jaundice may occur.

The fever lasts about five days and may be followed by significant deterioration.

It is vital that the doctor be told that the patient may have been in contact with a source of infection. The symptoms can easily be mistaken for those of flu and, if the patient has a clean occupation, the possibility of Weil's disease may be overlooked in the early stages.

Laboratory testing of blood will confirm the diagnosis but this may take undue time in an ordinary hospital lab. If Weil's disease is suspected the samples should be sent direct to:

The Leptospiriosis Reference Unit,
Public Health Laboratory,
County Hospital,
HEREFORD
HR1 2ER
Tel: 0432 277707

where they will be tested within 24 hours. Treatment is usually by Penicillin Antibiotic.

RATS AND THE ILLNESS

Rats commonly live near water and in areas where there are sources of food such as animal feed, grain, or food residues from human habitation or other animals: farms, stables, high density animal husbandry units, around canals in such places as quarries and along river and canal banks.

The *Leptospira* organism is passed in the rat's urine and, while it does not live long in dry conditions, can survive some time in water.

Salt water soon kills off the organism but there is a significant risk in tidal waters such as the lower parts of the Wye in the Forest of Dean and other rivers. The risk increases upstream and is greatest in canals, ponds or areas of slowly draining water; thus there is a significant risk in caves carrying drainage from farm land, stables or quarries.

PREVENTION

Cavers on Mendip and in the Stoney Middleton area are known to have contracted the disease. Others have suffered a mild dose which was not diagnosed at the time, but which has been detected in subsequent blood tests.

Any skin wound or blister, old or new, may be infected if immersed in water polluted by the organism. By the nature of their sport it is difficult for cavers to avoid cuts and abrasions on their hands, particularly when "digging." Wearing gloves probably provides the most effective protection since waterproof surgical plasters on their own are unlikely to stay in place. Clean, fresh water should be used to wash wounds as soon as possible.

BE AWARE

The disease is curable if recognised in time, but many doctors in urban areas will never have encountered it. If you have any reason to suspect that you may have been infected, you may need to draw your doctor's attention to the possibility that the symptoms could be Weil's Disease.

THE SYMPTOMS

The incubation period is 7-13 days.

Early Symptoms are:

Fever
Muscular aches and pains
Loss of appetite
Vomiting with prostration

Later symptoms may include:

Bruising of the skin
Sore eyes
Nose bleeds
Jaundice

The fever lasts for about five days, and may be followed by significant deterioration.

Testing for the disease

If Weil's Disease is suspected, the samples should be sent direct to:

The Leptospiriosis Reference Unit
Public Health Laboratory
County Hospital
Hereford
HR1 2ER
Tel: 0432 277707

CAVER TRAINING

There is to be a DCA/NCA Caver Training Workshop organised for the weekend of 12th & 13th October 1991 at the Whitehall Centre, Long Hill, Buxton. Topics offered include:

Ladder & Lifeline
SRT
SRT Rescue
Cave Leadership
Cave Photography (Sunday only)

Expedition Planning (Saturday only)
Technical Sessions are run by Nigel Atkins, Dave Baines, Nigel Ball and Paul Ramsden. Each session costs £10 per day (£8 to BCRA members or members of member clubs).

To register for a course, send a check payable to Derbyshire Caving Association plus a SAE to Nigel Atkins, DCA Training Officer, 51 Darklands Rd, Swadlincote, S Derbs DE11 0PG (Tel: 0283 216507).