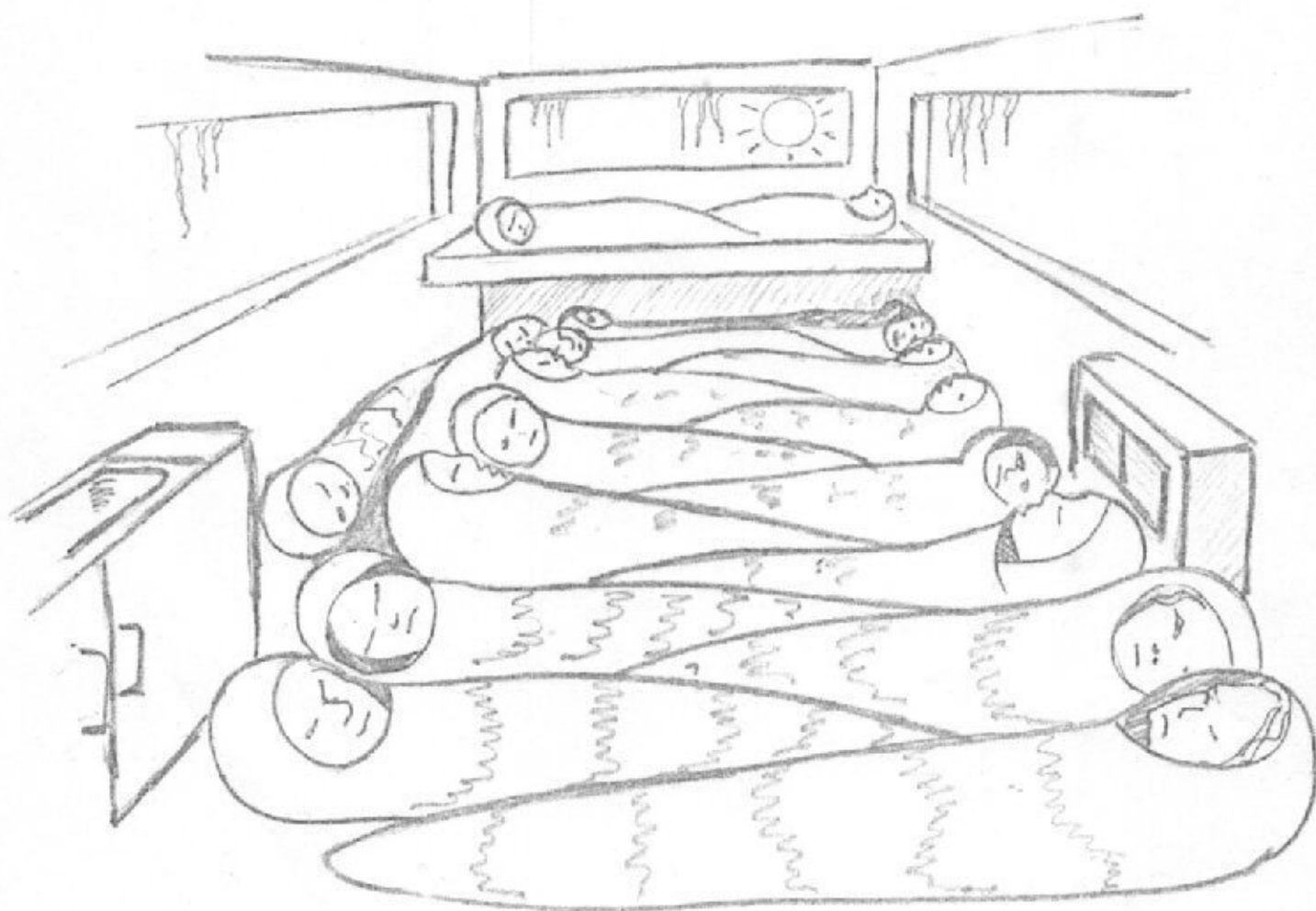


CCPC

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 14.



GREAT TRADITIONS OF CREWE CAVERS No.1 - THE MORNING LIE IN

S R T V LADDERS

In the previous news letter, Tipple explained the modern and proper techniques for lifelining cavers on ladders. He stated that the best advice for lifelining must be to "lifelime as you would like to be lifelined."

I have two pieces of advice for those who contemplate using ladders:-

- (1) Only use them for getting off a rope at the head of mineshafts.
- (2) Stick them in the loft until they become obsolete and inevitably achieve collector item status.

I would prefer to use SRT for all pitches, even those little diddy ones. I make this decision as I consider SRT to be an intrinsically safer system than ladders and lifelines. Not only are all the SRT components stronger than bits of wire, but the individual caver is in control of their own destiny at all times and not dependent on someone who may not be able to see them, and who may also not be paying attention to the task in hand, i.e. - protecting the climber.

Consider the recent Penyghent trip. There were three ladder pitches and two rope pitches, for which everyone carried an SRT rig of one kind or another. Thus people were protected on the rope pitches and unprotected on the ladders as there were no lifelines. Three lengths of rope would have been safer, especially considering that everyone had SRT gear. It seems unnecessary to use two methods of ascent/descent when one will suffice.

But is it worth carrying all that gear for a 20ft pitch you may ask?? A length of 1 inch tape makes a suitable sit harness and a length of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tape makes a cracking chest harness. Two non-handled jammers, a figure of 8, foot loops and safety cord, cows tails and a rapide or two would complete a rig which can be taken off with ease and will get you up pitches of any length. Thus places like Giants, Penyghent, County Pot or any system with a lot of short pitches can be undertaken in safety, given proper pitch rigging, as the caver is protected against falling at all times.

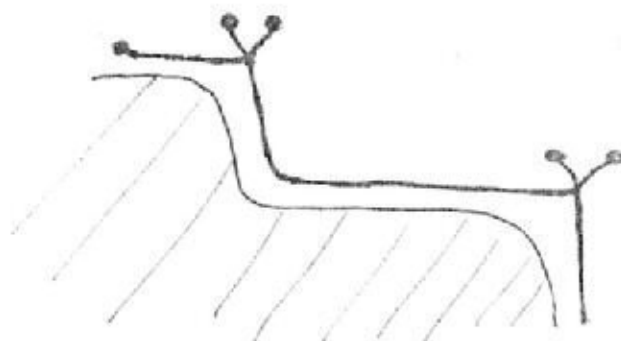
Which brings another point to mind. Consider the effect of a fall from the top of a ladder whilst attempting to step across to a place of safety. If lifelined one may fall and then swing until the fall is arrested by the lifeliner. Unlifelined the fall may very well prove fatal. The head of a ladder pitch will often present awkward and dangerous situations. Just think of the exposure on Garlands and Battleaxe pitch in Lost Johns. Both of which require the caver to make potentially dangerous moves to get on and off a ladder. How many people use a lifeline on Garlands?

On a properly rigged rope pitch you are protected by your traverse line. Traverse lines also come in handy over those wide, deep holes you often find around the top of pitches. It seems a shame that people often ignore such objective dangers and do not use a traverse line. Presumably they assume that because they are prepared to overcome hazards without protection, then the others in the party are willing to do so too. Even when there are spare lengths of rope lying around unused.

Three further points:-

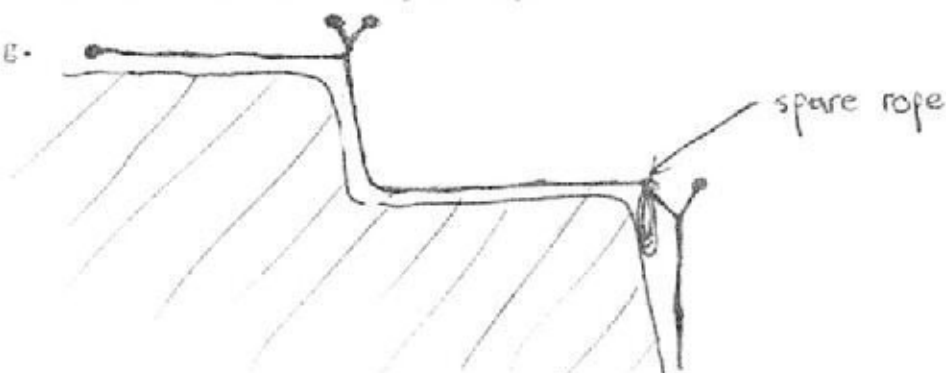
- (a) When rigging pitches which are close together, tie the end of the first rope into the belay of the second rope, leaving as little slack as is necessary. (See diagram overleaf.)

e.g.



- (b) Any length of rope which is unused at the top of a pitch should be coiled and tied off, in order to ensure that no-one abseils off the wrong rope by mistake. (This has happened.) At the very least, a large knot should be tied in the end of the spare rope.

e.g.



- (c) It shouldn't really need saying nowadays. When rigging a pitch always look for two belay points for the main hang, and if they are there then use them.

Pitch rigging is a fairly simple and safe exercise which requires thought and practise. Above all it requires consideration for all members of the party. Everyone has the right to expect this from the people they go caving with.

How to make a Sit Harness from 1 inch tape

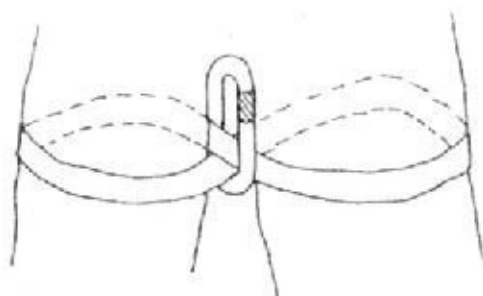
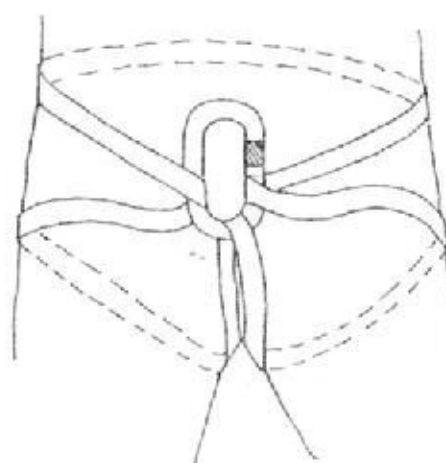


FIGURE OF EIGHT SEAT

Figure 8 Seat



DULFER SEAT

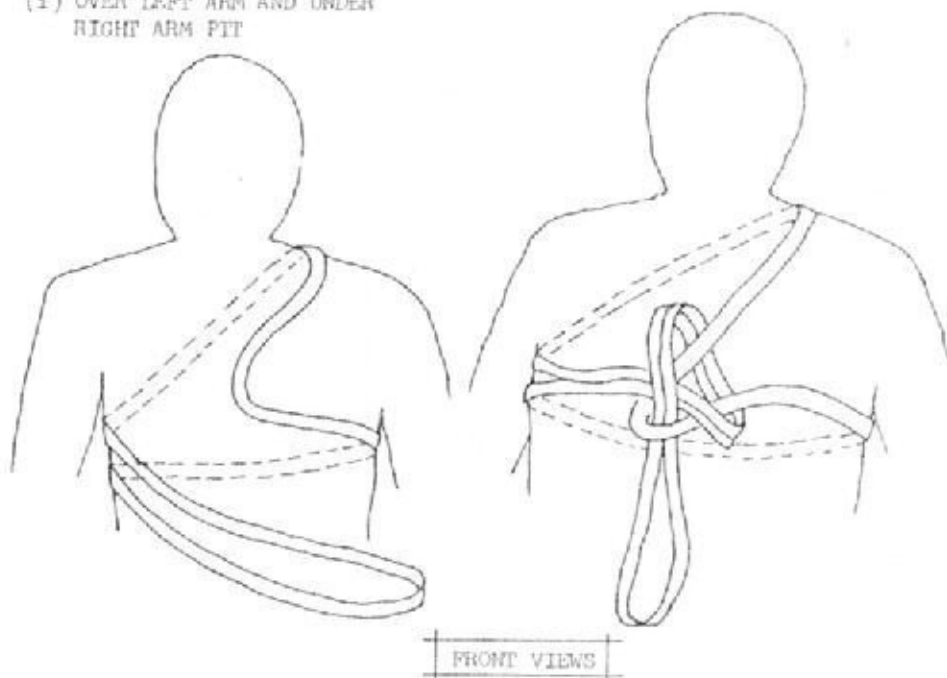
Dulfer Seat

How to make a Chest Harness from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tape

PARISIAN
BAUDRIER

(1) OVER LEFT ARM AND UNDER
RIGHT ARM PIT

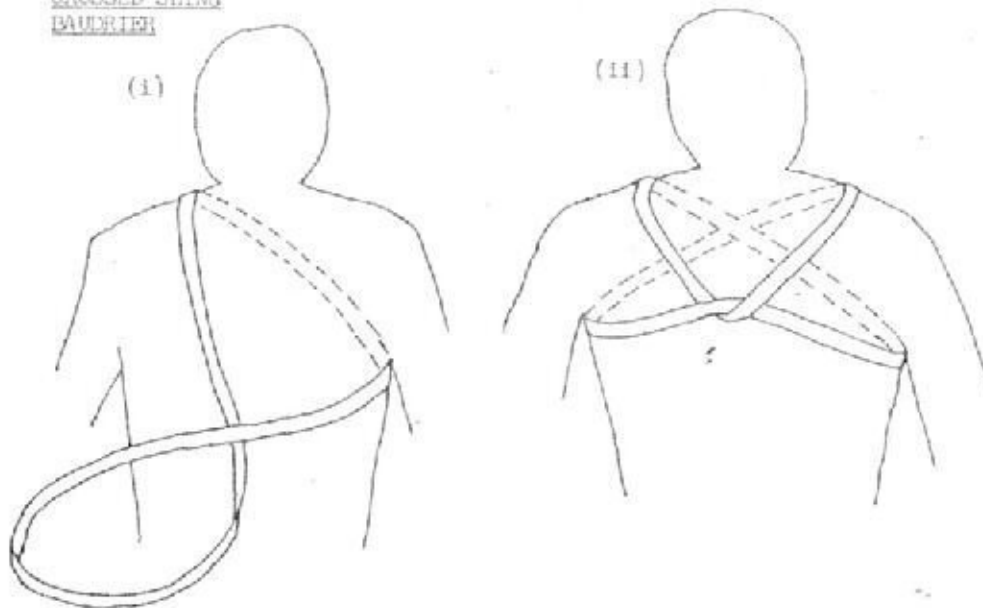
(11) TIE OFF IN A SHEET BEND



CROSSED SLING
BAUDRIER

(i)

(11)



I personally use a Duffer Seat connected to a Parisian Baudrier as I consider this type of chest harness keeps the chest ascender higher on the chest.
Those of you who are interested will find this information and other useful stuff in a book called Modern Rope Techniques in Mountaineering by Bill March.

Liam.

I'M NOT DEAD NA NA NA NA NA !

(or how to disappoint the press and survive underground)

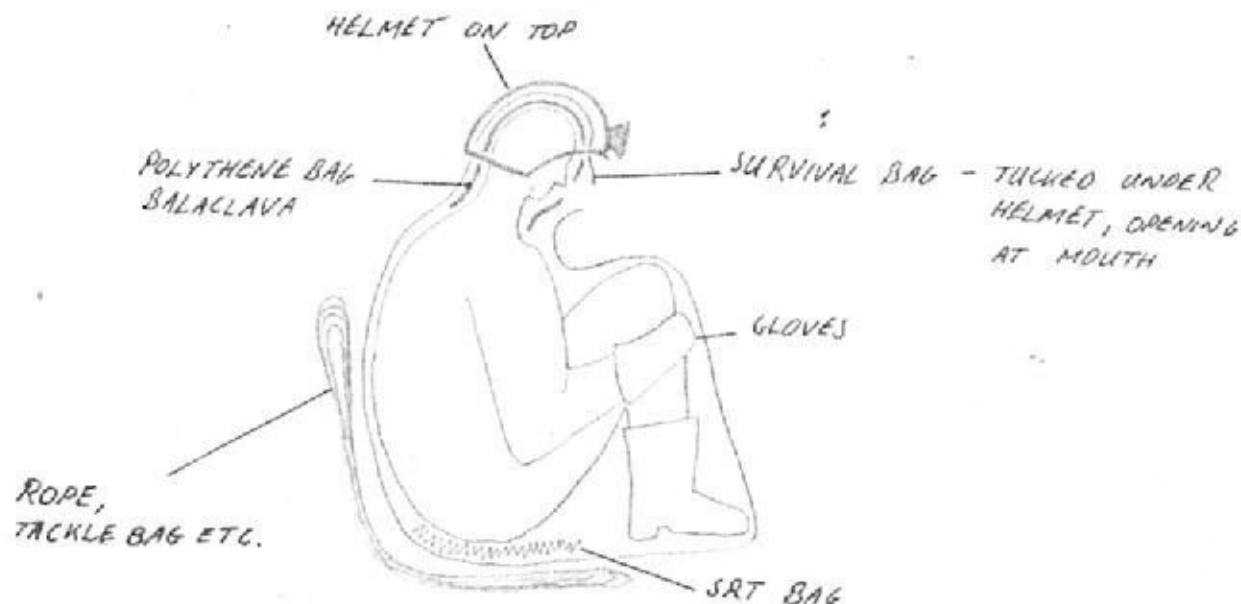
A fall and broken ankle deep inside a cave; a collapsed boulder choke; rising flood water; being totally lost - these are just some of the reasons why any one of us may find ourselves having to sit it out underground for several hours. So unpredictable are all of these events that it seems silly not to carry some basic survival aids and to know some survival practise.

If you do have to sit it out anywhere then you should carefully choose your waiting place. Cold is the main enemy to the caver - being out of draught is far more important than comfort. It's also helpful to find a spot large enough for everyone to sit huddled together. Huddling together conserves heat and the group should huddle together right from the very start as people will lose vital body heat before actually complaining of being cold. Also, as a group, people should be careful to rotate positions every now and again - then members spend equal time on the colder outside (and, of course, next to the warmest people !).

Survival Bags and Survival Position

A survival bag is the single most important piece of safety equipment to carry - it can help greatly to stave off the cold IF USED CORRECTLY.

Before getting into the bag try to make a comfortable, insulating seat - string out any rope to make several seats. Tackle bags and SRT bags make good insulation too. Stepping into the bag it should be brought OVER the head leaving the opening around the mouth (see below). The helmet should then go on the head OVER the survival bag, trapping it close around it. Some 50% of the heat loss from a well insulated body will be through the head so its probably well worth the minimum effort of carrying a second small plastic bag, just big enough to fit over the head and neck. This 'plastic balaclava' should be put on underneath the survival bag.



It is very important to sit up in the survival position when in the bag. Knees are tucked up against the chest and arms either fold around legs or are tucked inside against the chest. Backache will inevitably occur and be very uncomfortable but resist the temptation to lean against rocks/mud and definately do not lie down - the floor/walls will sap body heat at an alarming rate. As a treat now and again it's nice to breath inside the bag although, obviously, this shouldn't be done for too long of a time (unless of course you feel so bad that you want to end it all there and then !). Finally, the psychological side is very important - human beings, in the right frame of mind, are great survivors - help WILL arrive.

If you've read this far then you might even be the one actually enjoying the next rescue - afterall they could be your last few hours so you might as well !

PS The relative merits of pissing in a wetsuit to keep warm have been contested strongly by both sides - it clearly provides a few minutes of pleasure to the doer but, as a pleasant aftereffect, provides hours of heated argument over the foul stench to those sitting around HER(yes, we still haven't forgiven you !).

PPS A few people believe in carrying a 24 hour candle for emergencies. This is kept lit inside the survival bag for warmth. A great idea but personally I think the chance of burning down your survival bag is too great. Anyway, imagine the loss in credibility in staggering out before the press, from a cave 99% full of raging flood water with third degree burns! Credulous.

Tipple

I expect most of you have heard this story already, I've written it for those of you who haven't.

I remember when I first started caving and Brian used to say "It's too nice to go underground today lads" ; I never agreed with him as I was too keen in those days, however, on this particular day I wouldn't have argued with him. We all lay outside the caravan sunbathing in the hot early morning sun. I for one had no desire whatsoever to go underground today.

The Bath party had set off early to rig the system and our party (Derek, Jane, Ant, Tipple, Paul Rich (BUCC), Dave(BUCC), and myself), were to go underground at about 2pm and derig. At midday we walked up to Inglesport for a weather forecast as Hammer can flood very easily, as we were to find out! The forecast for the afternoon was showers so we decided the trip was on provided the water level wasn't too high in Sludge Crawl.

On arrival at Fountains Fell I proceeded to lead everyone about 1/2 of a mile past the entrance and insisted that the cave was over yet another ridge; at this point everyone turned round and went to look closer to the track we'd been on earlier, I carried on oblivious to their shouts. Five minutes later I heard cries of "Pau!"; they were about 600 yards down the fell in a shallow gully. I ran down to them and found two Bath members at the entrance who had decided it was too tight and had retired for the day. We told them we expected to be out by midnight at the very latest and if we weren't out by 1 am to call out C.R.O. The sky was clear and the sun shining (there had been a shower five minutes earlier) when we finally set off underground at 3 pm.

There is an awkward S bend about 50 ft in and Derek decided he didn't like it and was going out, I told him it was easy if tackled properly and he got through it eventually. We all reached and negotiated the first pitch O.K. and set off into Stemple Rift - it was like a dream without tacklebags. We struggled slowly through and free climbed the second pitch. At this point it is possible for the first time to stand arms outstretched without touching the walls!

Arriving at the next pitch (50ft) I found the lifeline tied on the ladder about 10ft down as it was obviously too short. I decided it was better to fall 10ft if the ladder broke than 40 or 50, so I untied ^{the rope} and tied onto the main belay thus necessitating one to unclip near the bottom of the ladder. We soon met the other party who told us they'd been into the Master Cave, but hadn't managed to descend the final pitch of 50ft as the lifeline was too short. I was disappointed as it was my third attempt to bottom Hammer.

The fourth pitch was short but wet and consequently more enjoyable than the rest; Sludge Crawl led off from the bottom. There was flood debris on the roof as usual, which was a little off putting, but the water level wasn't too high. It seemed a long 400ft in the gritty cold water, but the roar of water ahead indicated the end was in sight. I passed the inlet into the crawl and emerged into a somewhat disappointing master cave, only 10ft high and 8ft wide; I was expecting a streamway of O.F.D. proportions. One feature curious to the cave were the many rock/stal bridges which one had to constantly get down and crawl underneath or stoop under. Derek, Tipple and I arrived at a 6ft cascade and as there was rather a lot of water going down it we climbed above and to the side to descend a rift into the streamway below. Everyone had by now caught up and we decided it was time to get out as it was 6.30pm. Tipple traversed out to look at the last pitch while Derek lifelined. I, for some unknown reason, had decided I didn't particularly like the place and turned around to head out. It seemed a struggle walking against the water, I tried in vain to

catch the rest up who kept going out of sight. "It's flooding", someone shouted, and I realised they were right. Everyone speeded up and countless straws were broken from the roof in the frantic bid to get clear of the water. Sludge Crawl was spewing out water at a phenomenal rate. Paul Rich attempted to get into the crawl but was shot out like a cork from a bottle. He then became what I can only call hysterical, shouting "We're going to die" repeatedly. We eventually managed to calm him down somewhat, and Jane assured us that we'd be O.K. if we climbed the mud bank she'd found behind her, as it was about 20 ft high and appeared to be free of flood debris. My fears for the others were growing by the second so I decided to try and reach them by keeping out of the water. I progressed very carefully for about 100ft and then gave up all hope of reaching them as the water was already too high. On returning, the level had risen so much, I had to get in at one point and found it extremely difficult forcing my way through the waist deep water. Helping hands reached down to pull me out and we all climbed up as high as possible on the slippery mud. "We'll have to sit it out, everything will be O.K." said Jane; I wasn't so sure. Out came the survival bags, three of them and four of us, Jane being without one. At this stage I was more worried about the water level than keeping warm so I slid carefully down to the waters edge and sat watching the water rise slowly for 1½ hours. Convinced we were in very serious danger of drowning I returned to the others and told them the news. Thoughts of being trapped for days were going through my head, the whole situation didn't seem real.

The three of us huddled around Jane to try and make up for her not having a survival bag. I suddenly realised the seriousness of the situation; no one had mentioned Dave, Tipple and Derek, everyone obviously fearing the worst. I wondered what was going through Jane's mind but decided not to say anything to her. There was one safe place between us and the pitch head, the narrow rift next to the 6ft cascade; if they couldn't reach this they would have no chance at all of survival.

Time passed surprisingly quickly, we had started to play 'I spy' but given in as everyone was dozing off. At 1am we heard voices, - they were safe! Dave didn't seem at all bothered by the situation, he treated it all with an unreal calmness. Tipple said that they'd watched the water level rise by about 6ft - it then being within 2ft of them! I was glad I hadn't been with them.

I soon discovered why we had all been so cold. We had been lying down rather than sitting back to back in the survival position, the difference was amazing. The seven of us huddled together as tightly as possible and tried to sleep. I had some strange dreams about possible means of escape including one where we were all asleep in Tipple's bedroom and we just had to climb out of the window! Then I'd awake to the bitter reality.

At 4am, Dave went to check the water level. It had dropped substantially since 1am, but Sludge Crawl was still not passable. During the night, Dave was to disappear a further three times up the crawl, until, at 8.30am we heard the welcome sound of the C.R.O.

We all cheered loudly as they emerged from the crawl. "Is everyone O.K.?" "Yes", we all replied, "Then let's get moving now," said one of them.

The thought of seeing daylight again stirred us all into action; the crawl was still emitting a substantial amount of water but proved alright until we reached the flat out section. There was 4-6 inches of airspace, but with everyone moving so fast a surfboard wouldn't have been out of place! I heard Paul swallowing water and crying "Help" but it was everyman for himself, and I crawled on to emerge in a more comfortable sized passage. Derek had disappeared but the impetus to get out hadn't, my speed increased until I stood up in the small chamber at the end of the crawl.

PROFESSOR
KRISTOFFERSON
PONTIFICATES

ON THE ART OF THE

RAPPEL

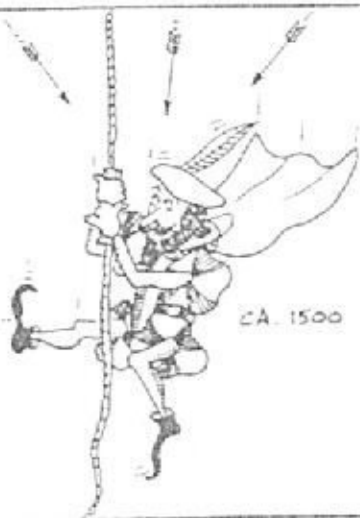
(ABSEIL,
ROPE SLIDE)

NK 1780

THE FIRST MECHANICAL
RAPPEL DEVICE, INVENTED
BY LEONARDO DA VINCI,
ALLOWED TIMELY ESCAPE
FROM DIRE STRAITS BY
SPRITELY KNAVES...

DEVICE WAS TWO HALF-
CYLINDERS HELD AROUND
ROPE BY HAND PRESSURE...

A FULL STOP WASN'T
POSSIBLE, OR USUALLY
DESIRABLE...

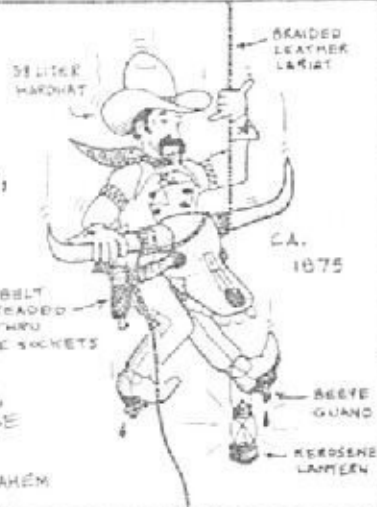


MUCH LATER TEXAS
COWBOYS EXPLORED
PITS WITH THE

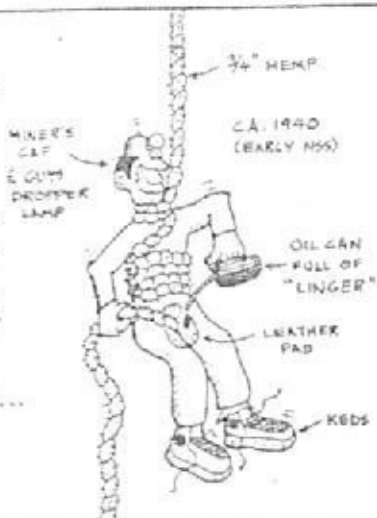
LONGHORN AND
LARIAT METHOD,

WHICH ALLOWED A
FULLY CONTROLLED
DESCENT...

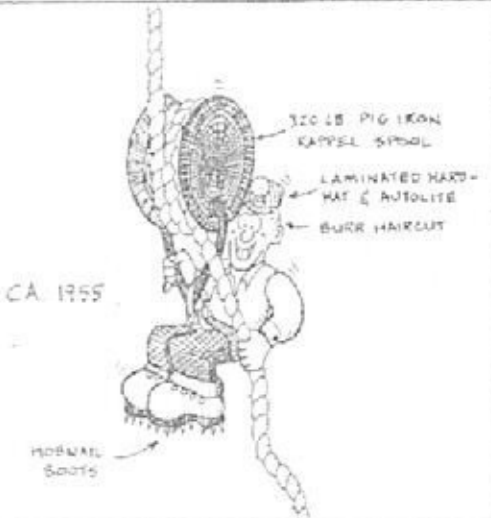
LASSED BOAR
ARMADILLOS WERE
USED AS ASCENDERS,
BUT THIS IS A TREATISE
ON THE RAPPEL, SO
LET US MOSY ON... AHEN



ALAS, THESE ARTS
WERE LOST AND
OTHER METHODS
CAME AND WENT.
IN THE HAIRY-
CHESTED DAYS OF
THE HEMP AND
BOD RAPPEL,
A DROP OF MORE
THAN 100 FEET
REQUIRED
LUBRICATION...



THEN CAVERS
GOT REAL
SMART AND
EXPERIMENTED
WITH SUCH
THINGS AS
THE
RAPPEL
SPOOL!



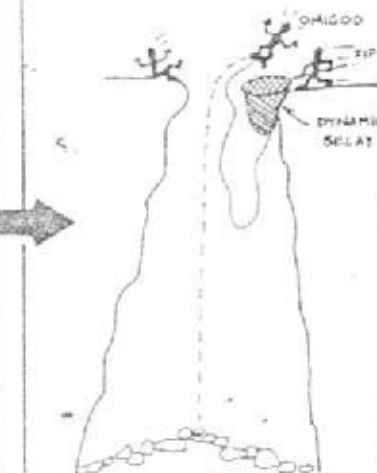
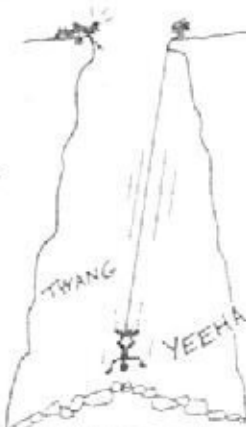
WHEN GOLDLINE
BECAME POPULAR
IN THE '60'S
SOME BRAVE SOULS
CAPITALIZED ON
ITS AMAZING
ELASTICITY...

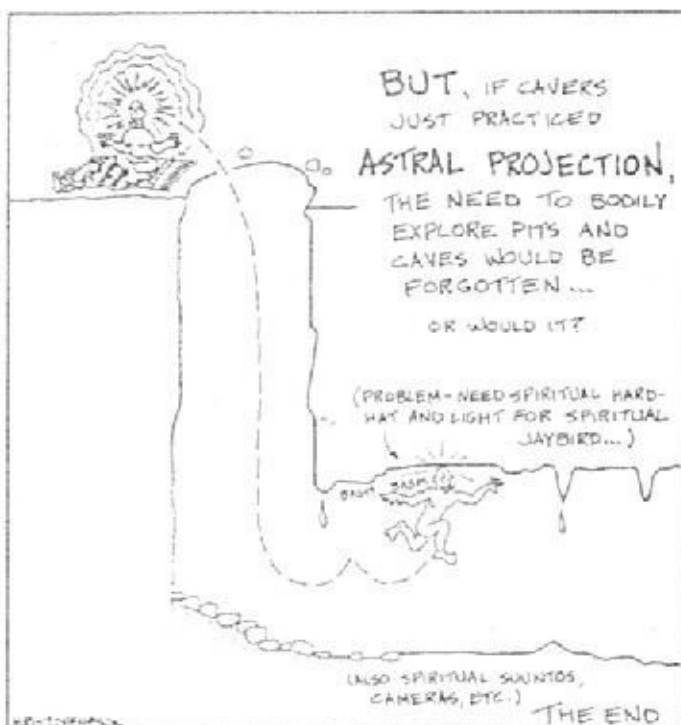
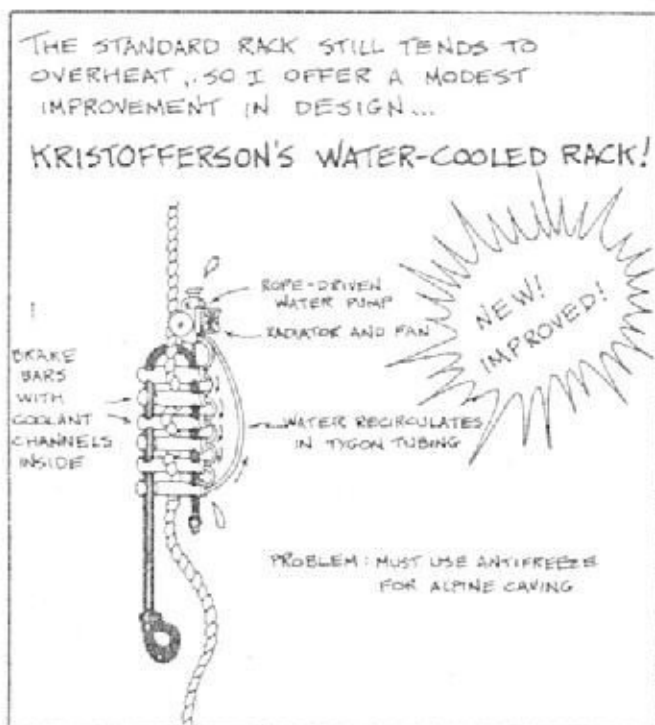
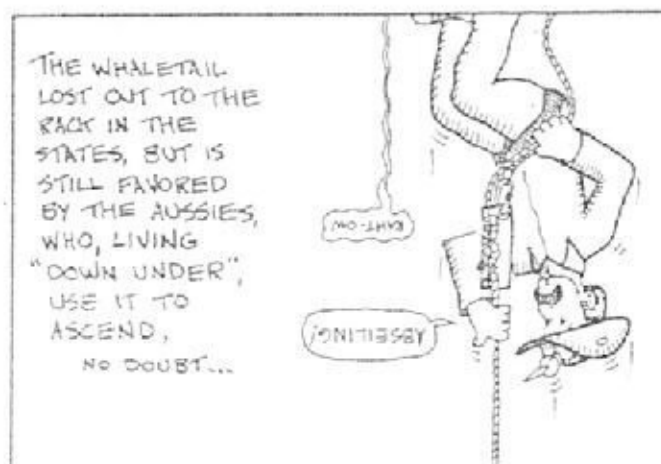
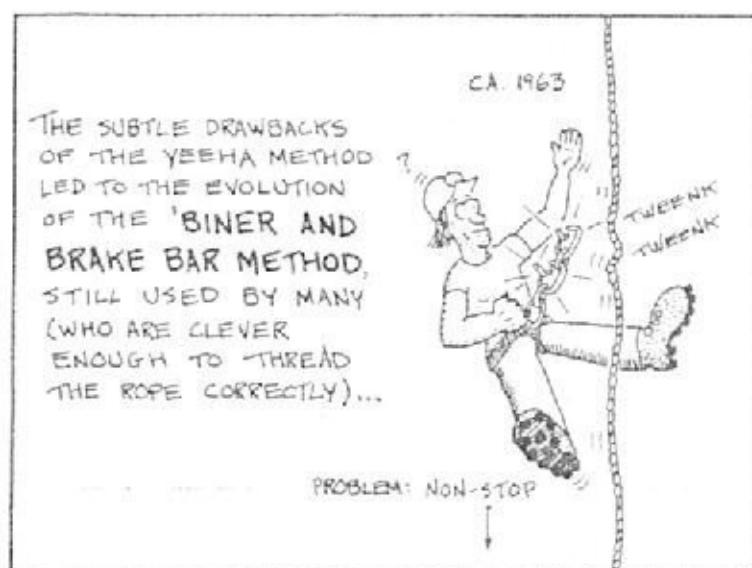
THE
YEEHA
METHOD!

(ALSO KNOWN
AS THE
OMIGOD METHOD)



PROBLEM: YOU SPEND ONLY
2 MILLISECONDS ON BOTTOM...





There was a young climber called Tipple,
And oh, how his muscles did ripple,
On a 50ft wall,
He took a bad fall,
But hung on for an hour by his nipple.

There was a daft caver called Pau',
With an incredibly large big toe,
He worked out the knack,
To use it as a rack,
And was last seen descending Knotlow!

Poor old Derek and Jane,
Went caving one day, in the rain,
But they ran out of luck,
Got impossibly stuck,
And nobody's seen them again.

Ralph was a caver of note,
He knew all the caverns by quote,
But it didn't help much,
'Cos he talked double dutch,
And no one could read what he wrote.

Melv, as good a caver as any
Went drinking one day with our Lenny,
That night in his tent,
Many sweet hours were spent,
And she didn't even cost him a penny!!

Two amorous lads, Cliff and Brian,
Each pretty girl they'd have their eye on,
But through those cold crawls,
They'd loose both their b---s, (boots?)
All they'd get was a shoulder to cry on.

There was a young caver called Phil,
And he gave all the girls quite a thrill,
So Kev, his "best mate",
Fixed him up a blind date,
- Quite a "goer" - she's called Gaping Gill!

A Nony Mouse.

WELL WELL !

The unusual request came on an otherwise uneventful Saturday afternoon. Sunday saw Paul, Jane, Derek and Ralph in an outhouse to an old farm (reputedly 8th Century) peering down a 90ft deep well dug by monks about 800 years ago and supposedly containing "Black Gas" (?) plus water.

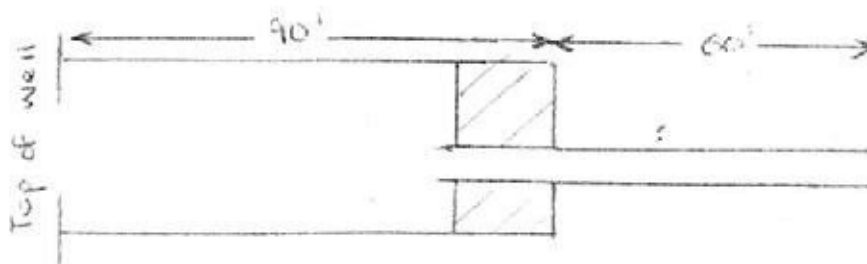
Paul disproved the gas theory by abseiling down to water level yet still remaining fully conscious! Balanced on a pipe protruding from a borehole sunk in the well bottom about 80 years ago, Paul directed operations. A pump from the borehole was hauled up and dropped into the water in the well - the borehole was empty, the well was full. An hour later the water level had dropped, but not enough for our intrepid explorer to take a dip. We departed for home.

Tuesday saw Ron and Ralph on site having first instructed the farmer to leave the pump running for a couple of hours. The intention was to inspect the base of the pipe with a view to clearing blocked holes which were supposed to exist. The water was about chest deep on Ron (!) and very cold. No holes could be felt.

Discussion followed and at the farmers request it was arranged to drill holes in the pipe. 240 V was out, due to the wet conditions, and so was oxy-acetylene, due to ventilation problems.

Mid day Friday saw Paul, Kev and Ralph on site, removing a leg from the pump to facilitate pumping. Paul had a minor accident here followed by a cup of tea (despite warnings from Ron) but that's another story!

4pm Paul, Ralph and George arrived to drill $\frac{1}{2}$ inch holes in the pipe with a 110 V drill. This took about an hour. E40 exchanged hands, and a tentative arrangement was made to clear silt from the bottom of the well. No doubt volunteers will be needed.



Amendments to Members List

Chris Daniels

Andy Martin

Pete & Barbara Allwright

Redacted

MEETS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meets 1986

Nov 15 - Dale Head
Nov 22²³ - Lancaster etc.
Dec 21 - Peak Cavern

Meets 1987

Jan 10-12 Instructing youth leaders, Yorks.
Feb 27 - Peak Cavern
April 14 Penyghent
May 4 - Washfold Pot
July 4 - Gingleing
October 4 Gaping Gill etc
November 14 Lost John's

Easter 1987 - a week long trip to Ireland is being organised- anyone interested should see Paul Shenton.

STOP PRESS

MARTYN FARR will be giving a slide show at the Biddulph Arms on Friday the 9 of Jan. Subjects are to include expedition caving (Sarawak) and the Blue Holes expeditions. Tickets £2 (to include buffet) from Paul S.

FOR SALE. LAMPS (8 hour min) £10
CELLS (8 hour min) £6-50
AMMO BOXES, GOOD CONDITION. 2 SIZES £1.50
NEW! T-SHIRTS £3.00 ANY COLOUR AS LONG AS ITS WHITE!
AND DARK I SAY - SWEAT SHIRTS £6 FOUR SIZES
BIG, MARGE, SMALL, MICROSCOPIC. APPLY J.R.J.

STOP STOP PRESS. APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR
THE P.S.M. NEXT AUG. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.