



Bradford Pothole Club Bulletin

**Volume 7
Number 8**

Bradford Pothole Club Bulletin



Volume 7 Number 8

Published Feb 2023

www.bpc-cave.org.uk

**Bradford Pothole Club
Brackenbottom
Horton-in-Ribblesdale
North Yorkshire
BD24 0EU**

Contents

“The Lay Abouts” – <i>Unknown</i>	Front Cover
Editorial – <i>Cat Moody</i>	4
Distant Memories of GG – <i>Chris Benn</i>	5
A Bank Holiday Weekend – <i>Nick Hinchliffe</i>	6
BPC Lockdown Quiz – <i>John Edwards</i>	9
O Tempora! O Mores! – <i>Alan Brittain</i>	10
Wrongful Arrest – <i>Parky</i>	17
The Body in the Bath – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	18
Canine Capers – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	20
Heroes? – <i>Pete Sykes</i>	22
Let’s Go Caving – <i>Parky</i>	26
Remembering Gaping Gill Winch Meets – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	28
What's in a Name? – <i>Parky</i>	29
A Day Out – <i>Nick Hinchliffe</i>	31
Antofts Hole – <i>Alan Brittain</i>	33
Camping in the Lake District – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	34
In the Olden Days – <i>Parky</i>	36
Bounty Hunters – <i>Parky</i>	37
Operation 1000 – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	38

A Brief Outline of Blasting Practice and a New Project – <i>Nick Pratchett</i>	41
Climbs on Yorkshire Limestone – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	43
Underground in Bradford – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	45
A Winter’s Tale – <i>Alan Brittain</i>	47
The Dump in Days Gone By – <i>Ged Benn</i>	49
Grant Aid for Brackenbottom – <i>Michael Hartland</i>	50
Gaping Gill Memories – <i>Alan Brittain</i>	53
The Only Time I Got Stuck – <i>Alan Brittain</i>	54
Caving with Dalek – <i>Matt Setchfield & John Parrington</i>	56
Trip to Norway – <i>Nobby Clarke</i>	58
Dachstein – <i>Dave Haigh</i>	61
CRO Clapham 10K run – <i>Dave Haigh</i>	64
The Starting Handle – <i>Dave Haigh</i>	66
Mossdale: A Personal Recollection – <i>Michael Hartland</i>	67
John Birkbeck (1817–1890) and John Birkbeck (1842–1892), mountaineers – <i>Michael Slater</i>	69
Obituary – Chris Dufton – <i>Marjorie Dufton</i>	72
Obituary – Roy Tempest (Troy) – <i>Brian Simister</i>	74
Obituary – James Brown (Jim the Scot) – <i>Brian Simister</i>	74

Editorial

It's been a weird couple of years. In March 2020, the UK went into "lockdown" due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With everyone stuck at home, the club newsletter was rather lacking in trip reports but instead many members created cave-themed quizzes to keep the masses entertained. Over summer 2020, restrictions were gradually eased; although official club meets were still cancelled, the Dump reopened its doors to visitors and some people tentatively began to go caving once more. Unfortunately, this was all short-lived. The autumn saw restrictions re-tightened, a number of local lockdowns, followed by a second national lockdown in November and a third in January 2021. Going caving, once again, became essentially illegal for most.

A silver lining: members, either with more time on their hands and/or with a desire to break the monotony, became nostalgic and the monthly newsletter was regularly adorned with "Tales from the Past". This "lockdown edition" is a compilation of these tales, along with various other trips down memory lane. These include recollections of Gaping Gill, memorable days out, holidays and expeditions abroad and memories of the Dump in days gone by.

This bulletin serves a second purpose, as 2023 is a special year for the BPC: 90 years since the club was founded, 60 years of owning the Dump and 40 years since the connection between Gaping Gill and Ingleborough Cave. It therefore seems fitting to produce a commemorative bulletin regaling some of the history of the club, its headquarters, and its most frequented cave.

Thanks as always to those who continue to submit articles for the bulletin. I have lots in the pipeline for the next edition which hopefully won't be too far away in the future...

Thanks also to my proof-readers: Ian & Terry.

A reminder that all previous bulletins are available for members to access through the club website: <https://www.bpc-cave.org.uk/wp/members-area/>

Previous bulletin: Volume 7 No. 7 (21 Mb)

<https://www.bpc-cave.org.uk/publications/BPC%20Bulletin%20Vol%207%20No%207%202021.pdf>

Catherine (Cat) Moody
Hon. Editor

Distant Memories of GG

Whitsun Bank Holiday Saturday 1968 and MUSS were installed in their 'luxury accommodation' in Clapham (next to the phone box and now incorporated into the CRO HQ. Some of Bradford had escaped from the hill on the Friday night and were heading back up. I decided to walk up with them as far as Foxholes, which I fancied having a look at with a view to digging. However, when we reached the entrances, I was persuaded to continue with them to Gaping Gill and join a digging trip.

This was my first trip on the winch, and it cost the grand total of ten shillings. I think Farmer was driving and I got a good ride down and could really appreciate the size of the chamber. I had only ever seen it from trips down Bar Pot.

There were quite a number of cavers heading to the dig which I was told was at the end of Far East Passage. Mud Hall had been laddered so we went down and then climbed the boulder slope at the other side. It was all very awe inspiring. We negotiated the canal, which was very muddy and then came to a halt in a small chamber. In one corner a short slope entered a murky puddle. Excited voices could be heard, exclaiming about the beautiful formations they were looking at. There was no way that I was going to be left behind, and as instructed, I slid into the 'Font' with my helmet off and nose in the roof and gently pushed my way through, trying not to create waves. The exit was quite tight and I was grateful for the hands that helped me up the slope.

The new cave was very impressive with flowstone on some of the walls and a couple of very long and slender stalactites hanging in the middle of the passage. We followed the passage round and up a mud bank to where we met a cross channel and clambered down to explore it. There didn't seem to be an obvious way on so we climbed back up and continued at roof level, mainly on hands and knees until we reached a bend where a small stalagmite stuck up. This was later named as 'Rhubarb Corner'. We continued along the passage for a short way until it was deemed prudent to retrace our footsteps.

The return journey meant another immersion in the Font, but the adrenaline was still flowing. When we got back to the Main Chamber, there was a very long queue for the winch so we went back in East Passage and waited. By this time we were all getting cold as most people were wearing wetsuits and I was clad in traditional 'woollies'. Some kind folks (I think Pauline and Kath) sent some soup down the hole. It was so welcome! Eventually we got back to the surface, and I thought I might try the soup from my flask that had been on our adventure. It was full of broken glass!

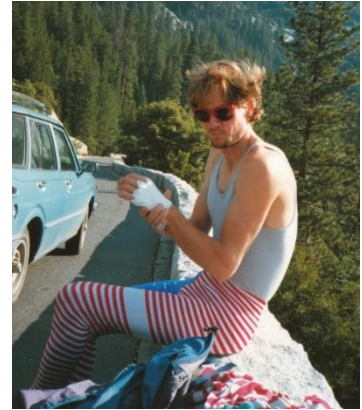
I set off back to Clapham, creeping through the grounds as I couldn't face Clapdale track by myself. The pub had closed by the time I reached our hut and MUSS were quite keen to throw me in the beck as I was so filthy but I managed to persuade them otherwise. It had been a great trip and a day of many personal firsts for me. Fifty years is a long time but the adventure made a huge impression on me, as did the BPC, so much so that I eventually joined them (when women were allowed to become Members in 1971!).

Chris Benn

A Bank Holiday Weekend

We have all met them, the really keen ones who can never get enough of their hobby. Driven is not the word, they can be irritating as hell, but they do get a lot done. If you climb with these people, you end up doing all manner of things that otherwise would have passed you by.

My regular climbing partner for most of my time at University was one such keen climber, Mick Harris. I was basically an aspirant mountaineer who wanted to climb in the Lakes and Alps in the summer and go winter climbing in Scotland, and this was the Eighties when rock climbing was all lycra tights and spending your holidays at Malham failing repeatedly on the same route. The University club was wedded to the latter, so at the start of my second year it was time to look elsewhere. There was a postdoctoral physicist who was known to be a member of the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club, one Mick Harris, so one lunchtime I went and found him and asked about joining the NMC. He was very helpful, at the time being the club Secretary I think, and what was more he had a girlfriend who was studying for accountancy exams and he was looking for someone to climb with. Being young, impressionable and reasonably (note that qualifying clause) keen, I was soon climbing regularly with him.



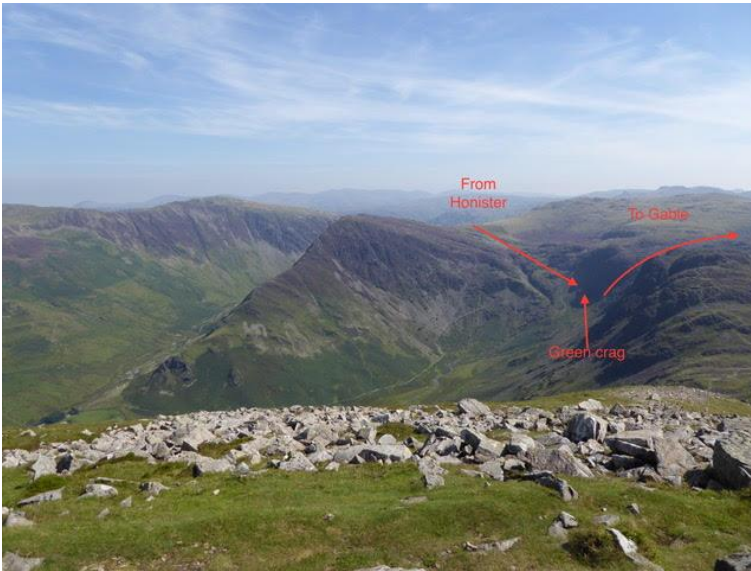
Mick Harris

As May Bank holiday in 1983 approached, Harris broached his plan. Hitch over to the NMC hut in Borrowdale Friday night, walk and climb Saturday, sleep at the Fell and Rock hut at Wasdale Head (he was a member of the mighty FRCC) for two nights, and back home after climbing on Monday, hitching of course. This all sounded like fun (I was young and foolish then) so I agreed.

The sub plot here is that Mick was trying to tick off every route in the old Rock Climbing in the Lake District hardback guide, and had identified a way of linking up some of the dwindling gaps in his list, but this of course was not revealed. We might "have a look" at some crags, depending on the weather but he was splendidly vague as to which crags or routes.

I managed to get a lift over to Borrowdale with two NMC members who were spending the weekend there. We got off early on the Friday evening and they went climbing on Great End as soon as we arrived, so I went and soloed a few routes on the nearby Woden's Face. It was a perfect quiet spring evening and I sat for a while on top of the crag just looking at the view. Mick arrived later having set off early evening.

Saturday was a lovely day sunny but chilly and the pale green grass of spring just coming through on the fells. We walked down to the road and set off, thumbs out. Luck was on our side, and we quickly got a lift up to the bottom of Honister. Walking up the pass – then the old mine road – with rucksacks full of food, climbing gear and sleeping bags, soon warmed us up, and we dropped down and round to Green Crag, which looks out over Buttermere from high on the eponymous hill. There



Looking back up Buttermere into Warnscale Bottom

were only a few routes on the crag and not much has changed in the latest guide; it is not a popular crag, despite a number of starred routes in the guide. Mick wanted to do Saraband which was HVS then but E1 now (truly a case of the older I get, the better I was) but we were concerned that it might be a bit overgrown. He peered up at the cliff, guidebook in hand, trying to see the line, but he is blind as a bat! I spotted an old peg which gave us some sense of being in the right place, and off we went. It turned out to be cleaner than it looked, and gave pleasant

climbing, with just a couple of wet streaks where feet needed to be placed carefully. We abbed back down to avoid a long and tedious looking descent route.

Now Mick being Mick, he suggested that we had plenty of time left so we might as well get to Wasdale via Gable crag, after all we had to walk past it, so we might as well bag a route there.

After a sweaty walk up to Windy Gap we had a bite to eat, (salami sandwich and a packet of KP Outer Spacers for Mick, always the same hill food, a creature of habit) off we went up Jabberwock, a big HVS which in those days got little traffic, maybe it is the same now. After all it's a long way from the road, it tends to be in the shade and catches any wind blowing. The UK climbing website claims it is referred to as "the Lakes' coldest crag", ironic in view of the next day (see below). It was a burly proposition, with an enjoyable crux up a jamming crack, but I like that sort of thing. All the more interesting for being climbed in several layers of clothes and a big anorak. The sense of adventure in being on a high mountain crag made the route feel quite special. We saw nobody else on the crag, as those with more sense were all climbing on sunny low level crags in Borrowdale!

So, that was that for Saturday, surely? Time to head to the hut and brew up. Or so I thought, until Mick mentioned that we would be passing Kern Knotts and there was this route called Buttonhook that he hadn't done. On the way we met another famously keen climber, Dick Tong, AKA Big Dick from Halifax, who I knew from back home in Huddersfield. He had climbed all the routes in Hard Rock (a coffee table book of climbs from all over Britain), a feat that few have managed, and Mick looked wistful when I mentioned this, a plan for the future no doubt taking shape in his mind. (Dick was someone we met a few times on big days out in remote places, and is now in his seventies, still climbing hard and setting routes at Leeds Wall).

Buttonhook climbs a crack, shaped like a button hook up a steep little wall to an overhang which is tricky to surmount, but there is a good hold to aim for. It felt pretty tricky at the end of a solid day on the hill, but was at least in the sun.

Finally, we set out for Brackenclose, the FRCC haven, and drank tea until we could drink no more. I was chatting to a chap in the hut who asked what we had been up to, and he looked a bit surprised when I told him. He walked away muttering "big day, big day" under his breath.

Sunday, the day of rest arrived, but not of course for us. Off to the East Buttress we went, Mick having set his sights firmly on Phoenix, an E2 which goes up where Ichabod breaks out right. The East Buttress is a big mean place, all overhanging walls and steep grooves and it's on the wrong side of the hill to get the Sun. And it was Mayday weekend. And it was bloody cold and misty, so back round to Scafell Pinnacle we went. Hopkinsons Cairn Direct and Woodheads climb gave a long outing at an amenable grade, and time for the weather to clear.

I led us up Chartreuse, another HVS now promoted to E1, and then it was time for Phoenix. Mick is perhaps the safest and most competent climber I know, but he is not a speed merchant. Everything is done methodically, gear placed and tested then moves worked out before committing to upwards progress. And I was on a tiny ledge in shadow, and it was bloody cold. I got more and more miserable until I was starting to think that I would be too cold to climb the route. I remember at one point deciding that fighting the cold might not be a good plan so I started muttering "I accept the cold, I do not fight it" over and over. I recall that I had been flirting with Buddhism a bit at the time, or maybe I was just cracking up. That belay still stands out in my mind as the coldest I have ever been. Finally, the rope went tight and a shout from above meant it was my turn. The initial crack was climbed whilst I was still numb with cold, but the groove above was awkward, and needed careful thought before things eased off a bit, and I was warm again by then. I was glad to lead the second pitch to keep the movement going. That, we felt, was quite enough for the day.



Nick climbing in Borrowdale (Shepherds Crag)

The last day of our weekend was Bank Holiday Monday, so off we went again, up Brown Tongue and back to the East Buttress where Mick still had unfinished business in the form of Morning Wall and Yellow Slab. Thankfully the routes gave a little morning sun and were out of the wind. The corridor route took us back to Borrowdale and then a hitch to Keswick. Here things slowed somewhat, and after half an hour and no lift Harris set off in search of chips. I managed a lift to Penrith soon after where by a great stroke of luck I was picked up by another car load of NMC members heading home after their weekend. The traditional stop for a pint at the Wheatsheaf in Corbridge was not neglected, and I got home feeling that my weekend had been well spent.

Looking back at my log book to get the facts right I am struck by how fresh it seems in my memory, was it really more than thirty years ago ?

Nick Hinchliffe

BPC Lockdown Quiz

Where was Colin Vickers' motorbike found in 1967?	Stainforth Foss
What was the first year that the AGM and dinner were held in different places?	1985
What year did the BPC winch operate at Alum Pot?	1950
What year did the CPC leave a bottle of whiskey for our diggers?	2004
What year did the first BPC electron ladder go into service?	1955
What year did the club go to the Antro del Chorchia?	1978
What was the original name of the club?	Acton Speleological Club
What year was the first Diggers Dinner?	1956
What year were the last fireworks set off at the Dump?	2006
What year did the CPC ask to hire our gantry?	1957
Where was the original Dump?	Golden Lion, Horton
What year did we scrap all rope ladders?	1959
What year was camping in Sand Caverns banned?	1966
What year were all ropes except SRT ropes scrapped?	1975
What year did the Lakes meets bus get stopped by the police?	1974
What year were women allowed to join?	1967
What year did the first lady join the BPC?	1971
What year did we lose our last Founder member?	2008
What year was beer stolen from GG?	1985
What year was the new roof fitted to the Dump?	1991

John Edwards
(April/May 2020 newsletters)

O Tempora! O Mores!

There was a time when the embryo Bradford Pothole Club had no base in the Three Peaks area from which to indulge in the sport we know and love. Fortunately, there were some far-sighted early members who decided to establish one, so they started a Building Fund, knowing full well that their caving lives would be too short for them to see their vision realised. But they carried on anyway.

In the meantime, a rented accommodation would be a step forward. A base was established at Clapham in the end of a row of buildings at the Flying Horseshoe pub. It was rough and ready and was known as the Dump. It was a magnet for those without their own transport and caving activity increased.

Later Brackenbottom was acquired, was converted and remains in continual improvement. The contrast was enormous, but the name "Dump" survived, The Clapham establishment became the "Old Dump" and began to fade into memory.

For the record, here are some of my recollections of the conditions of the Old Dump, its facilities and the activities surrounding it.

Clapham

Clapham in the 1960's was a quiet village, disturbed only by a few walkers and cavers at weekends, and the rumble of road traffic. However, things began to change. The road traffic between Settle and Ingleton became larger and heavier, faster and more frequent, and it had to negotiate two right-angle bends round the New Inn and then onto the narrow and the then hump backed bridge. This caused delays and other problems: indeed, on one occasion a long, low-loader lorry was left see-sawing on the hump. Worse, the arch rings began to deform, and for some time had to be supported by timberwork. Permanent strengthening had to be undertaken and at the same time the hump was eased.

There were few police road patrols in those days. Each village had its own village bobby. Clapham's Village Bobby was Mr Peckham, and a Village Bobby he was, in the best traditions of Village Bobbydom. As long as things remained quiet and there was no poaching or other forms of thieving, he wasn't too bothered if the pubs didn't close on time (chucking out time was 10:00pm). However occasionally the sergeant at Ingleton would phone him to say that he had heard that the Flying Horse Shoe was staying open after hours, and would Mr Peckham investigate? Mr Peckham did. He put on his uniform, got on his bicycle and pedalled down to the pub. There he marched into the lounge bar at five minutes to closing time to see if the law was being observed. Later he would report that all was well. Having said that he wouldn't stand any nonsense from weekend visitors.

Ingleton by contrast was lively, to put it mildly. It was the meeting place for cavers, walkers, cyclists, bikers and campers. Inter-club rivalry was taken to extremes and not always peacefully. Copious amounts of alcohol distorted perspectives, extended ambitions, reduced capabilities and eliminated all sense of responsibility. The older residents didn't approve, but some of the local girl's most certainly did!

The Pub

The Flying Horseshoe pub was built just across the road from Clapham Railway Station. When approaching it, to the left was a courtyard bounded at the far side of the pub from the Dump, where she kept her hens. She also had a magnificent golden retriever called Brandy. He was a good friend of ours when he managed to escape.

Mrs Armitage didn't really want us there and was frank enough to say so. However, we and several other clubs provided an income. She said that if another source of income appeared (Skipton Young Conservatives was mentioned) we would have to go.

Fortunately, it didn't, so we didn't.

The Dump

We occupied two rooms, one above the other and another narrow corridor like room with a lockable door where we kept personal gear in boxes and some club tackle. There was a staircase leading to a loft alongside our upper room. Originally our upper room was reached only by a flight of stone steps, external to the building built across the gable end. Now it was connected to the lower room via a hole in the floor/ceiling and a climbing frame ladder attached to the wall. The conversion had been done by Frank Croll.

Both of our rooms had doors which would close and sash windows that wouldn't.

Our upstairs (dormitory) room had four three tier bunks made entirely out of steel and two timber frame beds with canvas slung between the sides. On the bunks we slept on a lattice of steel slats set several inches apart, which allowed the sleepers hips to sink between them, so we frequently woke up stiff and bruised. The canvas on the two beds was uneven and just as uncomfortable.

Downstairs we had a trestle cooking bench furnished with twin burner hobs powered by Calor Gas (later by Bottogas, a name which caused some comment). There was a water tap and a pot sink, and a pot-bellied stove, reputed by a Great War trench stove. It had an iron flue pipe which passed through the gable end then turned upwards to the roof apex just behind the stone steps. There were some shelves on the wall which we converted into lockers. Also in the room were a sturdy table, a wood-and-canvas bed which served as a settee by day, and a variety of chairs which slowly changed composition as individuals got broken and were replaced.



The stairs at the back of the corridor room led to a large, airy loft. Its roof was supported by timber trusses. There was no ceiling, just roof slates. It had a floor of timber planks, many of which appeared to be rotten. We used to hang our wet and muddy woollies over the roof trusses where they dried and set solid fairly rapidly. To do this we had to cross the floor treading carefully on the supporting floor joists. Their locations were only marked by rows of nails – horseshoe nails – which anchored the planks. It seemed rather dodgy, but there were no accidents.

Eventually, a room became available to us at the far end of the garages, nearest to the pub. It had been used by the Red Rose Pothole Club but they were never there, so we took it over officially. It was upstairs and reached by a steep wooden step way with a handrail attached to the wall. There was a single beam spanning across the room and a skylight window close to it. There was also a window overlooking the courtyard. We had some steel bunks in there too.



Left-Right: U.P. Jones, Neil Armitage, Trevor Nash, Brian Leg and Pete Faulkner.

And it was draft proof!

Facilities

Sanitation? At the back of the building was a small outhouse which housed the Gaping Gill Elsan bucket. Most of us were reluctant to empty it. So, it often became over-full. The technique for remedying the situation was to push a sweeping brush handle through the bucket's carrying handle, the two of us would carry it very carefully (keeping the brush handle horizontal of course) to a manhole in the middle of the courtyard where the contents were poured into the pub sewer.

No account of our facilities would be complete without mention of the communal chip pan. It was an ordinary sort of chip pan, except that it had developed a thick black coating of rock-hard carbon which could have defied any attempt to clean it off (not that anyone showed the slightest inclination to try). Inside it was reasonably clean as was the wire basket. The outfit was completed by some antique fat which was topped up from time to time and blackened potato fragments were decanted as thought necessary. We all survived it.

The stove we had was much larger than needed, and so was hungry for fuel. Anything that would burn was burned and there was a constant scrounging for fuel. There were two old prams available and these were pressed into service for carrying it. One night, two of us were returning with a load of combustibles when a police car came into sight, so one scavenger jumped into the pram and the other continued to push. Fortunately, there was no investigation.

Considering the nature and quality of what was burned, it was no surprise when there was the occasional fall of soot, which sometimes was not contained in the stove. The flu pipe needed clearing and the rodding eye for that purpose was rusted solid. The remedy was simple; climb up onto the roof when the stove was good and hot and empty a beans tin of paraffin down the pipe. Followed by a match. The result was as effective as it was spectacular.

Sleeping on steel slat platforms is not to be recommended, even after a large amount of anaesthetic has been imbibed. Consequently, attempts were made to ease the situation by overlaying them with packing case cardboard. Such attempts came to nothing because the cardboard went into the stove.

Cavers

In the early 1960s the age of the average Dumpling was under 20 years old. Transport was minimal and there was a lot of hitch-hiking. I was lucky because I worked for the railway and could get cheap travel. The snag was having to catch the 03:45 train from York to Leeds and then having to wait for an hour for the Morecambe train. I'd get to the Dump in time to put the Kettle on.

We were young, energetic and irrelevant of mind. We were prone to breaking the conventional social rules and developed a sort of inverted etiquette – what was normally suppressed was flaunted. I hasten to add that the only laws we broke were the licensing laws, but then the locals did too. After all, illegal drinks taste much better. (It was a sad day, years later, when the 10 o'clock closing time was abolished.)



*"The Lay Abouts" - B Lee, G Shaw,
D A (Grassy) Greenwood, K B Tidswell*

Within the club there were two cliques. One was the heavy gang; to be a member you had to be 12 stones in weight. The other group was the Phantom Gang. They had their own transport and would appear at the Dump ahead of the Bus Meet, swipe the tackle and ladder the pot, usually to the annoyance of the meet leader of and the official group.

There was intense rivalry between the many clubs operating in the Three Peaks area. Occasionally it went too far, but mainly it was confined to caustic comments, friendly insults and minor pranks

which were almost de rigueur, but if anybody got into trouble underground, we closed ranks and went to help.

In the event of a rescue, Cave Rescue equipment appeared and a call-out swept the pubs bare of volunteers. We proceeded down cave passages that smelled of beer, not sweat, to do what was necessary. It was effective if somewhat chaotic until in 1960 or 61, it was put on a more formal basis. At a meeting of representatives of as many clubs as could be contacted, a formal well thought out constitution was debated. Clause by clause it was rejected. It was a setback, but with increased awareness, CRO thrived and developed into the organisation we know today.

Caving Equipment

Our caving equipment was very basic and as cheap as possible. Old trousers and sweaters were the order of the day, supplemented by army surplus items such as battle jackets and boots and if possible, boiler suits.

Goon Suits (neck entry rubberised cloth garments similar to boiler suits but with wrist and ankle seals) were rare. Some had a double skin and were inflatable, but not for long! Entry was through the neck with a draw-cord to close the opening. Anyone who had one was expected to do anything and everything wet. They filled with water in wet crawls and pitches and once in, the water tended to stay in.

SEIs, Submarine Escape Immersion suits were even rarer. They were chest entry and completely sealed. They worked well for a time, but they were not designed for the sort of battering they got in caves.

Hard hats were of the compressed fibre kind. Plastic ones came later, and fibreglass ones came later still.

For lighting it was a case of anything goes, or frequently out. Various hand-held torches, cap lamps with battery boxes holding dry cells were better but they generally didn't like being battered on rocks or dunked in water. Bicycle lamps gave a better light and were more robust but their weight caused the helmet to fall over the eyes. And there was the good old acetylene lamp, the "Stinky". They too gave a good light (until they ran out of water or clogged up with soggy spent carbide), but they tended to blow back and eject the liquid (whatever that was) in the reservoir down the neck of the user.

And electric light bulbs, whatever the system, burned out at frequent intervals.

Miner's lamps were unknown. They made their appearance towards the end of our time at the Dump.

Nothing much was waterproof. Pak-a-Macs (lightweight plastic overcoats) made a brief appearance. They were ineffective and didn't last long. There were few stemples and bolts were unknown. If a pitch was wet, you got wet or you didn't do it. If it was very wet and you looked up, you could get washed off the ladder. It was a mistake you only made once.

Happy Days

The table in our downstairs room was ideal for practising the gentle art of table traversing. For the uninitiated, this is a manoeuvre in which you start on top of the table then climb under it and back on top without touching the floor. Strength and technique are required.

In the “Red Rose” there was a low beam in the central roof truss. The challenge here was to climb over it three times without touching the floor.

In the pub back room there were two challenges. One was to climb right around the room without touching the floor; the “Room Traverse”. It was rarely attempted due to managerial disapproval. The second was a squeeze between one of the bench seats (which was fastened to the floor and its backrest (which was fastened to the wall). The gap was about eight inches at its widest.

Walking back from Ingleton in the early hours of Sunday morning was long and boring. We sometimes walked along the old railway formation. The rails had gone but the signals were still in place, so the thing to do was to do something awful off the top of everyone. There were too many for anyone to succeed. There was also a suggestion that we should do something worse off the viaduct, but nobody ever did. We were sober again by the time we got back.

There is a pool in the river close to the viaduct that is large enough and deep enough to swim in. The water is very cold, so we didn’t indulge in it very much. On one occasion when I had finally acquired an inflatable Goon Suit, I inflated it and floated around happily until John Parkinson arrived, sat astride me and canoed us upstream. It ended when we capsized.

Behind the Red Rose was an area of trees and long grass, in which Mrs Armitage’s hens would lay away. One hot sunny afternoon, Colin Vickers, and I found a large clutch of rotten eggs. We also noticed that John Parkinson had climbed out of the Red Rose skylight and was peacefully sunbathing on the roof. We seized the opportunity.... Sadly, the Guinness Book of Records has no entry for speed of climbing in through skylights.

The wooden steps up to the Red Rose room were very steep and not very strong and one day they died a death – so we climbed up the handrail instead.

The fold-up chairs we sat on had close boarded slat seats and similarly constructed back rests. There was a gap between. I have no record of what size it was, but I guess it was about 14 inches square. What better challenge for potholers than to go through it? Some of us could, some of us couldn’t and most of us didn’t try. The ones who had to be extracted enlarged the holes one by one and of course the broken pieces went into the stove.

We always slept with the door wide open. (Rain and snow) could (and did) blow in across the floor and the nearest sleeping bags. Why did we do so? Because it reduced the aroma of beer and socks in the morning. At the time there was a rather pathetic advertisement for a washing powder in which you were urged to take your newly ironed whites to the window and admire their cleanliness. Our version was to throw your socks at the window. If they stick, they need washing.

There is a legendary mantra: “Let’s have a Dump Stew. I have a potato”. It was coined by Mike Boon, who had probably swiped the potato anyway. Believe it or not, there actually was a Dump Stew.

Just one. It was developing nicely until someone stirred in a spoonful of fluorescein. That was the end of it for most of us, but Pete Faulkner claimed a definite resurgence.

There was however one serious incident. A camera disappeared from the Dump and a police complaint was lodged. Mr Peckham appeared in full uniform to investigate. He asked a lot of questions, then decided to make a list of the names of everyone present. To save time and for completeness I presented him with the Dump Book. He opened it at the appropriate page: the top name was Three Balls Parkinson. Mr Peckham was not amused.

Envoi

Times change. The Old Dump is history.

The pub is no longer a pub, and the Old Dump is now a cottage.

Those who knew it are getting fewer. Memories fade and attitudes change.

Yes, we were mischievous, unconventional, noisy and wild, but we didn't do any harm, none that I know of anyway. Rough and ready, makeshift and ramshackle, the Old Dump was our haven. It enabled us to pursue the sport we love. We were going caving!

Perhaps some of the spirit of it can be preserved on paper.



Dicky Dobson and ATMB

A.T.M.B. (Alan Brittain)
(Photos from the BPC Photo Archive – photographers unknown)

Wrongful Arrest

You might think things are tough now but back in 1962 the Bradford Smallpox outbreak recorded nearly half those infected died. It occurred to me the best thing to do was to flee the town before the infection rate exceeded fourteen with six deaths. By a lucky coincidence I was just about to start my new job. I passed my selection riding passenger from Bradford to Clapdale Farm on a dark and windy night with only side lights in Bob Jarman's grey van. He worked at English Electric, perhaps in research, but I did think his crusade to conserve electrical energy was a little overzealous.

My first morning. Was I ready? Of course, I was. My brief apprenticeship nurtured by Mike Boon had prepared me well. On the left the Cocky Jap, the tufa rimmed pools looking like cauliflower but you'd have to chew for ages if you mixed it up and the endearing pair of stalagmites Maidens Delight and Maidens Dilemma. This was going to be a doddle.

The morning broke with Dawn's rosy finger painting the sky crimson and pink. The weather was great for GG and I thought of sundry mates up at the hole sleeping the sore heads off while I contemplated the busy day ahead.

I opened the shed and got the Tilley lamps primed and pumped up burning brightly, checked my stock of crisps and sweets, brushed the mouse droppings off the counter and sat outside on the bar stool I had found on the track a few days earlier and taken in to protect from the weather. As I looked down the track, I saw my first customer exiting the gate from the grounds. As the figure drew closer, I recognised the bulky frame of Constable Peckham. The first thought I had was that those BPC riff raff were in for an earful from the law but no, he was coming towards me. I greeted him with a cheery, "I hope you remembered to pay your shilling at the cottage" The expected smile did not break across his face. "I'm here on police business. What's that you're sitting on?" I pondered my response. Here was a man whose intellect clearly bore a direct one to one correlation to his weight. The little voice in my head advised me to avoid this opportunity to be facetious and with the lack of an audience anyway why take the risk? I answered with the response I thought he wanted, "a bar stool?"

"No! It's stolen property. You'll have to accompany me to the station to make a statement and I can look in at Clapdale farm on the way. There's more stolen goods missing." Should I appeal for clemency, after all it took me about half an hour to get all those temperamental lamps working. My story of altruism saving the afore said stool from the ravages of the weather was not going to carry any weight here.

I cleared up, locked the hut and we strode off like Laurel and Hardy, down the track to the steep path leading up to Clapdale. Did I take delight, a fit seventeen-year-old looking back down the steep path at an overweight, red faced, overdressed guardian of the law? A policeman's lot is not a happy one!

We arrived at the door and I politely asked what he might be looking for. Now with his tunic undone and his face puce between gasps he said, "Stolen goods."

Being confident of my “wrongful arrest” I sensed a growing feeling of resentment towards this man who I now hoped would be able to perform CPR on himself as there was no one else there to help.

We conducted the room by room search together and no “stolen goods” manifested themselves. I felt the threat of holidaying in Armley receding when he decided to lift the mattress in the room Farmer was occasionally inhabiting. I froze as my eyes fell on a rifle. I had been in the same class as Farmer through school and he was a tough old boot and this wasn’t the story of The Princess and the Pea playing out. How could someone sleep on a mattress with a rifle underneath I knew this analogy would have passed PC Peckham by when he drew my attention to the fact that “Guns were police business.”

The walk down Clapdale track, through Clapham and to the police station, was conducted in silence and I duly signed my statement and was released to jog back to the show cave and the eager waiting crowd, oh and those temperamental lamps.

It just happened that I was relating this story to Swampy a couple of years ago up at GG and he revealed, “Oh that would have been about that bar table and stools from the New Inn” - I leave you to draw your own conclusions.

Parky

(November 2020 newsletter)

The Body in the Bath

There was a time in the late 50’s when motor bikes were the main method of transport for members of the BPC. Now, the main reason for this was finance. As a youth and certainly into teens a bicycle was regarded as a luxury, but at the age of 16 a second hand BSA Bantam was procured to allow me to start work at the opposite side of Leeds. Starting work also introduced me to some fellow enthusiasts for caving.

Geoff Thorndike and Frank Croll were both members of the BPC. They both told many stories of caving adventures along with tales of late nights in the Flying Horse Shoe Hotel at Clapham. The club had a tackle dump in an old barn at the back of the pub. It had been converted with a pot-bellied stove and bunk beds to form some rudimentary accommodation. The beds were on the second floor reached from inside by a rough ladder and a hole in the floor. The beds were three tier metal with no mattresses. But who cared, it was away from home and the caving was almost on the doorstep.

On a Friday night the race was on to leave that mundane job and head for the Dales. Motor bikes would arrive from all directions, but mostly Leeds, Bradford and Halifax. The race really was to bag one of the lower bunks of the metal beds as the top bed required great climbing skills and rocked around like being at sea. The bikes were mostly British and varied. John Thompson had a racing 7R AJS and was regarded as a professional, he raced at most of the home circuits as well as the Isle of Mann. There were at least three Vincent motorbikes belonging to Geoff Thorndike, Trevor Nash and

Ken Tidswell. Others I recall were Frank Croll and John Davey both on BSAs, Barry Hopkinson had an Ariel Leader and Gerald Benn on a Matchless (I am sure that Ged will remember the registration number along with the bore, stroke and horsepower). And of course, Alf Hurworth had a Velocette and the story of the body in the bath revolves around him.

Motorcycling did have its downside, apart from the cold and the wet, accidents occasionally happened. One dreadful Easter Saturday, either 1958 or 59 we raced to the 3 Peaks café at Ingleton, after the pub had closed. Brian Dobson, whose nickname was Moose, had a Panther sloper with a sidecar attached. He offered John Barker a lift in the chair. Unfortunately, they failed to take the right-hand bend going down the hill into Ingleton and hit a telegraph post on the other side of the road. Brian died at the scene but luckily John escaped unhurt. Accidents were fairly rare and the benefits and freedom of travel did tend to overlay the dangers.

The ability to travel to other caving areas was a huge plus, including trips abroad. Alf Hurworth, who was Secretary of the BPC for many years, was also a member of the Cave Research Group. They held their meetings at different venues around the country and always included a caving trip over the weekend. I spent many weekends with Alf on these events and after much talk about caving subjects, along with the many academics of the CRG we tended to consider ways of escaping the rat race and spending more time caving and travelling. Little did I know then that Alf had signed a lease agreement along with Bob Jarman to take over the running of Clapham Cave.

Moving forward a few years, but still riding a motorcycle, I had a call from Alf. Could I go up to Clapham on Friday night and open up the cave on Saturday morning as he couldn't make it till later on. He said I could stay at Clapham Farm as he was now renting it. I rode up the track to the farm on my new Triumph twin, stopped at the first gate and put the bike on its stand when a very strange thing happened. This was pre helmet days so the fashion was flat caps or berets. As I opened the gate a family of barn owls attacked, at least four or five, swooping and screaming with their claws outstretched. I have never met anyone who has experienced this behaviour before. This was obviously a forerunner to what happened next.

The farm was in total darkness. A solitary building probably built in the thirteen hundreds and fortified with five feet walls. Some think it was to keep the Scots at bay, but others connect it with the Wars of the Roses. Whatever the reason, it presented a dark lonely picture. After locating a key, the true nature of the building was exposed. There was no electricity, either mains or via a generator. With a flickering torch I explored the kitchen. It had a stone sink with a dripping tap and a Primus stove. The lounge was totally empty with an open hearth but no wood. I quickly took the decision to get my sleeping bag and retire to bed. Upstairs a long corridor had six stable doors all open. The floor sloped over to the right, due to subsidence and it was difficult to walk in a straight line without bumping into the outer wall. I settled down on the floor of the first bedroom, after first closing the door with the Suffolk latch. It was damp and freezing cold and difficult to sleep. Then the door opened on its own. It was no good: sleep was impossible, must find a toilet. With the last rays of my torch, I found a toilet and bath. But there in the bath was a body face down.....

The night passed slowly waiting for the dawn and some light but who or what was in the bathroom? The mystery was soon solved as laid in about six inches of water was a pair of britches, a pair of long

socks and finally an old brown anorak with the hood fully up, all placed carefully to deceive the unwary.

When I met Alf the following day and related the details he apologised and said he was sorry, he should have told me he had given permission for Raymond Stoyles (farmer) to stay there as he had nowhere to live.

So, was this just a case of Raymond doing his washing or was there anything more sinister? We will never know.

Nobby Clarke
(December 2020 newsletter)

Canine Capers

It's not often that you exit a mine and find a Police Notice telling you to report immediately to Hawkshead Police Station. What possibly could have gone wrong? The trip we were undertaking had been meticulously planned and was being led by a true legend.

We were up at Coniston copper mines and attempting a pull through trip from the upper levels of the mine and exiting at the Hospital Level a few hundred feet below. Our leader was Eric Holland, a man who had spent a lifetime exploring mines and caves. He has published many books on the subject. His early works included the "Underground In Furnace" series which was a guide to the geology, mines, potholes and caves of Furnace. As a member of the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club he was active in the development of Easegill/Lancaster hole series of caves. Posted for military service in Malaysia he was overjoyed to find himself only a few miles from Batu Caves. And the result of his exploration resulted in "A Guide to Batu Caves" Discharged in Malaysia he became managerial assistant on a large open cast tin mine.

Later together with like-minded colleagues he formed the Cumbria Amenity Trust, a mining historical society carrying out active exploration and preservation of mines. He published several books on the subject including a "Field guide to Coniston Copper Mines" and a "History of Mining at Coniston."

A good man to have as leader of this group of BPC members so popular in fact that a fairly large group assembled at the upper entrance to the mine. Because this was a pull through trip we had left rucksacks and excess gear down at the final exit of Hospital Levels. We had also left our Airedale dog on a long lead near the stream. This decision had not been taken lightly as it was a warm day and too hot to even consider leaving a dog in a car, even with the windows open. The dog was happily left with tail wagging by a stream next to a pile of personal gear.

We entered the mine via one of the upper levels. Inside it was cavernous. There were levels going off in all directions. Huge cones of debris had formed along with old timbers that had once supported levels. Looking down was a yawning chasm under our feet. Eric told us a story of a dog called Guinness who fell through a tiny hatch over South Shaft. The dog was out walking with its

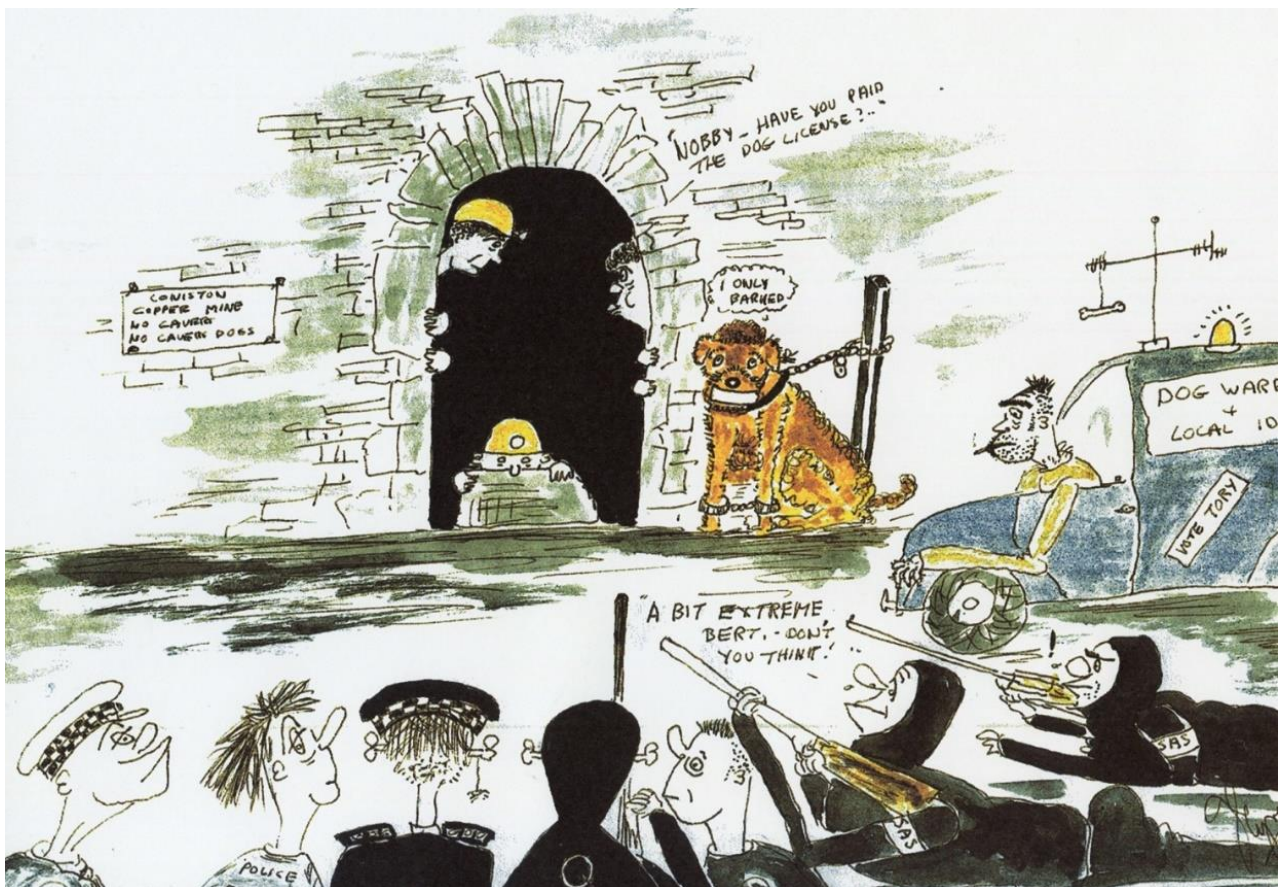
owner, when it disappeared. The shaft is about 180 feet deep so it was decided not to risk trying to rescue a dead dog. Miraculously the dog was found alive 27 days later.

The first abseil of about 90 feet was carried out in total silence as the least vibration, even the sound of a voice, was sufficient to send rocks and debris falling on our heads. The party tip toed its way to the second drop which was a similar depth to the first, until we finally reached the hospital level. Large piles of copper ore lay all around some covered in various shades of Verdi Gris. The daylight beckoned and so we exited to the sunshine and that police notice.

Unbelievably a member of the do-good public had called out the police to attend to an abandoned dog. The police then called out the local rescue team to remove it from the fell. We attended the police station as requested and found it shut, it being Saturday. The emergency number produced a rather grumpy officer who cautioned Brenda--- "Anything you say will be taken down and may be used in evidence against you" etc.

The story does not end there, as the dog had been removed to a centre for miss-treated animals. And so, the saga continued?

On a lighter note, I was relating the story to Jim Eyres who was itching to get his pens out and do some of his classical sketches...





Cartoons by Jim Eyres

References: Underground in Furness by Eric G Holland; Coniston Copper Mines A Field Guide by Eric G Holland

Nobby Clarke

(January 2021 Newsletter)

Heroes?

Some of the more observant at GG might have noticed a strange Baines/O'Connor/Sykes mutual shouted greeting of 'Hero'. This is not flattery but a reminder that we share the survival of an eventful trip.

On 16th April 1994 the club trip was a Large - Rift exchange with lots of interest leading to a group of five for each direction. This was to be my 22nd SRT trip so I was still pretty green but had done more than Basher who was on his first 'big' SRT trip as a guest of Matt O'Connor. Our group was led by Des Crowley who was the only previous visitor, backed up by Alan Millward, a seasoned veteran. Matt was shepherding Basher and I was tackle hauling.

The Rift - Large group was Pete & Sara Spillet, Andy Jackson, Paul Wood and Matt MacLaren, a much more capable group given the more difficult direction of travel.

During kitting up in Masongill Lane we were treated to the sight of Basher in his new 8mm wetsuit. I felt a bit shabby in my Dalesware teabag over suit although Basher was already half cooked before we even got underground. After a good shamble whilst the entrance was found we got underground at midday.

I don't remember what order we set off in but I distinctly remember the problems I had trying to persuade the tackle bag to accompany me. Part of the entrance was like a spiral requiring squeezing forward the dropping down. If the bag was in front it got jammed and refused to be kicked clear, whereas if it was behind it would get jammed out of reach. I also remember a narrow rift, where vertical progress came to a sudden halt as the tackle bag had found a parallel rift to fall down and I found myself hung up on the hauling cord. No amount of pulling or swearing would release it so a change-over was required to get it out. Thankfully the others were oblivious to my problems - if it was this hard to get through with the aid of gravity what would it be like to reverse? The rest of the trip seems to hold no specific memories and we made slow steady progress until the Secret Seven passage in Arcadia with a section that required climbing up to a larger section in the roof then down again. Word was passed that there was a problem - Des had injured his back exiting the top section. Soon a message came back to say that it wasn't too bad and that we were carrying on which we did but by the last pitch, Colossus, it was clear that all was not well. Des had in fact slipped a disk and could not use his legs. Des was angry with himself for his perceived weakness and was determined to drive forward despite the pain - a very hard caver. Having already experienced a similar injury he was unfazed by the experience leaving everyone else appalled that they couldn't talk him into stopping. As only Des had done the trip before we had to accept that it just might be easier to perform a rescue from Rift Pot as the entrance of Large Pot had not filled us with confidence. All we had to do was assist him to Rift Pot and link up with the other team, what could possibly go wrong?

We had expected to find the Rift Pot team waiting for us in the chamber below Colossus pitch but all was silent and I remember thinking that we were taking an injured man a long way down to bring him back up again. Luckily it was a straight SRT hang so the lack of legs was not an issue.

Once together in the final chamber it became obvious that the way on was not apparent but Des couldn't search for a recognised route. We were forced to spend ages searching every bedding passage, still without sign of the Rift Pot team. At last the correct way was found in a bedding passage but Alan had trouble squeezing his chest through. Ahead of me Basher jammed with his wetsuit jacket and trousers combining to 16mm of neoprene above and below making him too big as well. This was solved by me crawling behind him and he used my head as a step to push on, eventually popping out like a cork into a small chamber.

At this point things took a turn for the worse again as the mouse hole passage which should have just been a crawl looked completely sumped. As the only person in a wetsuit, Basher was volunteered to try it and was pushed into the water, gradually disappearing followed by silent darkness. As he didn't come back, we had to decide whether he had got through or drowned. As he would probably have made a commotion drowning, we decided that he had probably survived and decided to follow him through, again I can't remember in which order. The technique seemed to be helmet off pulled along by the Oldham lamp cable, one hand dragging SRT kit whilst the other was used to feel a way forward. With nose pressed on the roof it was just about possible to keep your

face above water. I remember thinking “don’t make any waves”. A slight bend in the passage was followed until it felt like a dead end. A check underwater revealed air beyond some submerged formations which was easily dived under, no wonder Basher hadn’t returned. The thought of going the other way was very unappealing so we could now understand why the exchange group hadn’t appeared. How Des got through I have no idea; the man was as hard as nails.

After the team regrouped, we discovered that having ears full of freezing water had affected our balance, now it wasn’t just Des who found it hard to stay upright. Being wet made it interesting to negotiate the following mud banks as we had to have two hauling Des up whilst two chocked his feet, the whole time trying not to all slide into each other. After numerous attempts we slid down to the starting point yet again with Matt laughing to Des “you’re not going to get out of here are you” and Des replied “nope”. Eventually we succeeded but were all knackered.

After much struggling along easier passages we found the end of the rope which the other team had thankfully left rigged just in case we were mad enough to do the through trip. It was obvious that a rescue was way beyond the capacity of our group so it was decided to send two out to get help. We decided to talk through all the information that the CRO would need to make sure that nothing was forgotten, with the whole group chanting the information to get it set in memory. We then had to decide who was going to get help. The obvious choice was Alan as our most capable caver and Basher as he was dehydrated and totally exhausted. Alan was on the rope and gone almost before we realised it. Des was in good spirits having gone as far as humanly possible so we settled him into what appeared to be a sheltered place where we could see the pitch and watch the others leave.

As Alan hadn’t left the only watch in the group, we decided to guess how quickly time passed by watching Basher climb the pitch and guessing how long it took. Unfortunately, the re-belay above us had somehow evolved into a straight piece of rope but Basher had never been taught how to pass a knot on a rope. It took quite a while to teach himself whilst we wondered what he was up to. What we estimated to take 20 minutes was nearer to an hour. By the time Basher got to the top of the pitch Alan was already running down the lane to his car, in fact by the time a totally done in Basher finally hauled himself out to the surface he was passed by the CRO going in!

In all the excitement we had forgotten to ask the leavers if they had any survival equipment to aid our wait. Des and I both had survival bags and all three of us had soggy balaclavas of dubious worth. I was amazed how much difference a thin plastic bag made as my over suit had all the insulation properties of a colander. Matt could only look on with jealousy as we shivered inside our thin bin bags - he has carried one ever since. It was a bit like a scene from planes, trains and automobiles as we chatted to pass the time trying to ignore the fact that we were having to hug each other to avoid freezing to death. As laying in total darkness was a bit disorientating, we alternated using one lamp at a time on pilot light only to ensure that nobody ended up with a totally flat battery.

Eventually, a light was seen far above and became the figure of Slug from the CRO doing an advanced check on the casualty. After introducing himself he expressed relief that the casualty didn’t have a broken back as he had expected - us getting the facts clear for the message had been a waste of time as expected.

After a while Slug wiped some mud off my face and realised that we already knew each other, we must have been pretty filthy.

More lights appeared above and the sound of drilling as extra anchors were installed ready for hauling. We were loudly enlightened to what opinions were when the drill battery failed and another was required. Other CRO members arrived to prepare Des for hauling and brought a Mole phone with them. We were each allowed to pass a message to the surface with both Des and Matt passing messages to their partners explaining the delay and telling them not to worry. As I was single I decided to be a smart arse and asked for a pizza to be delivered as it could not possibly be delivered within an hour so would be free. The CRO strangely denied this request and took it as a sign that morale was still good or we were going a bit crazy. In remarkably quick time Des was strapped into a full body harness and was hauled up a double line hauling system. This was our cue to follow him out carrying some of the CROs kit - serves me right for being a smart arse. It seemed to take ages to get into a proper rhythm on the climb up and I didn't manage to catch up with Des so the CRO haulage was pretty slick. I don't recall the journey out except for numerous stops to take SRT off to fit through holes, it didn't seem the doddle of an exit that Des had described. I do remember being slightly offended by being called 'another casualty' as I exited, after all I'd got myself and some of their kit out under my own steam. I was too tired to care much, as it was 2 am on Sunday morning and we'd been underground for 14 hours. I was given a guide to take me back to the vehicles across the dark, foggy fell but it soon became obvious that we were lost and I ended up leading him in the right direction - we agreed not to mention it to the others. Basher had thankfully left my clothes with the CRO so I got changed, bit a lump off the Mars bar that the CRO had given me and was then taken to the CRO headquarters in Clapham for a debrief. The CRO were unimpressed that we had moved a casualty with a damaged back even though I explained that stopping had been the preferred option and it was Des who was not going to be stopped. We had been faced with the choice of helping him or immobilising him. Before I was taken to Brackenbottom it was relayed that Des was safely in hospital so at least I had some good news to take with me. Once back at the dump I was chucked into a hot shower where I realised that I was very cold and still had the lump of Mars bar in my mouth, being unable to melt it. The BPC were magnificent with various unidentifiable hot meals and endless cups of tea being passed into the shower. Hours later I went to bed fully dressed but couldn't settle and ended up driving home with the heater on full blast. I didn't get properly warm again for about a month, maybe the CRO were right when they called me a casualty.

Matt surfaced after 2:30 am and drove to the hospital to collect Des and take him home. Des had treatment for his back and regained the use of his legs to the point of caving again. Being happy with the help he received getting through the cave, he bought his fellow survivors a gallon of beer each at GG misspelled 'Heros beer' by Cas, hence the Hero greeting.

The following year I decided that I had better do the trip again to prove it hadn't put me off. This time I was with Sharon and Ruth and it all went smoothly, probably because I knew where I was going. At the mouse hole the water level was much lower than before but Ruth was still reluctant to try it. Sharon dealt with this by throwing her in and barring the way out saying 'you'll be alright flower, just get on with it'. It seemed a very familiar technique.

The same year as our epic trip saw the release of the long-awaited Northern Caves 3 guide book covering the three counties area. It's description for Large Pot starts:

Warning - Great care should be taken throughout the pot as the awkward entrance would make rescue very difficult. An accident in the far reaches of Arcadia would be extremely serious

Pete Sykes

(February 2021 Newsletter)

Let's Go Caving

A cold hard analysis would struggle to define the lure of caving for any warm-blooded primate lacking the ability to both see in the dark or breathe underwater.

When just a lad of fourteen in the early 60s I had a mate Phil who was a keen scout and as part of the scouting programme he went along with a local Cave Photographic Group on a trip down Pan Holes on the St Ives Estate above Bingley. He related the adventure and we decided to repeat the trip, Phil and I. Phil, being a scout, be prepared and all that, said we needed to do some training as it was a dangerous adventure we were embarking upon. Phil's mum and dad ran the Perseverance Pub at the top of Lumb Lane and Phil decided the cellar would be ideal for me to receive my training induction. We arranged the heavy barrels and wooden crates of beer in a tight maze around the damp stone floor. We checked our torches and put the lights out. Phil led the way squeezing through the tight corners and obstacles. This pseudo underground labyrinth did hold an appeal but sadly was all too short as the lights announced the arrival of Phil's dad, "What do you silly buggers think you're doing?"

It was wet, drizzly Saturday morning as we got off the bus and started the uphill walk finally arriving at a small hole underneath a wall partly hidden by bracken amongst some trees. Would we meet Lewis Carroll here? We changed into our "caving clothes" and Phil lay in the entrance puddle and was soon out of sight hidden in the murky darkness. I followed on and we were soon exploring the muddy grit stone rift passage. In what seemed to end all too soon, our flickering torches lit our way back out and we smelt the air outside as we slithered into the entrance puddle we had left three hours earlier. The cold hard analysis didn't follow, it was replaced by "That was just great."

Monday morning saw the group of mates congregating in the playground. There was school business to attend to first: Chris Whelan, Farmer and I copied Cas's physics homework, then we copied Cas's maths homework. Life was tough for school kids before Google. Then at last we shared our weekend news. I gave a compelling account of Pan Holes and the following Saturday the four of us descended into the darkness. We all shuffled along through the squeezes and the ups and downs that were Pan Holes and when we emerged it was smiles all around. The bug had bitten. We wanted more. Perhaps there was a club?

By now all our parents had found out about our underground trips, in culverts and quarries in and around Thornton and Allerton and we were all banned from setting foot underground. Cas's mum and older sister conspired to put an end to Cas's caving exploits by introducing him to Don Leach, a man seriously crippled by rheumatoid arthritis, the idea being that this would put Cas off this new pastime. Cas now related the story that this backfired as Don was a great enthusiast and introduced Cas to the BPC. Cas's mum conceded it would be safer for him to be with experienced and sensible adults. A plan we all embraced.

The only problem for us fourteen-year-olds was the BPC had a minimum membership age of sixteen. The passing of time has misted my memory and I can't remember if we were allowed on the monthly Bus Meets as prospective members or if we claimed to be older than our years. Cas became a member in July '62, me in September '62, Farmer in July '64 and Chris in September '65.

The bus meets left Hall Ings on Sunday mornings. Ernest was the stalwart driver. Two trips were planned, an easy and a more difficult trip. As a beginner I was happy with the easy cave trip, secure in the knowledge, as were my parents, that I was with experienced and sensible adults. I was with the group that descended Long Churn and the big boys went down Alum by the open shaft. The sky was a leaden grey as we set off and the water was already providing a sporting trip. We arrived on the ledge and looking into the shaft saw a monsoon and a thundering waterfall. The water behind us was now a raging torrent. I was assured we were safe on the ledge and just needed to sit it out. After about an hour, ladders began dangling down the main shaft away from the waterfall. We were tied on and in turn began our ascent up the ladders. This was one of my first ladder climbs and was certainly the fastest. On reaching the moor there were crowds of rescuers, my rope was pulled by half a dozen or so men who simply grabbed the rope and ran across the fell and I popped up like a champagne cork. We were all fed hot soup and returned to the bus and drove down the flooded Ribblesdale valley. The songs rang out, Ernest put the pedal to the floor and we all arrived back in Bradford safe and sound.

My mum always asked me about the trip and on this occasion, I thought it prudent to just say it was a really wet cave. Somehow the confidence my parents had in the safety of caving, even when with experienced and sensible adults, was shaken by the headline in Monday night's Telegraph and Argus "Bradford Pothole Club Rescued From Flooded Cave".

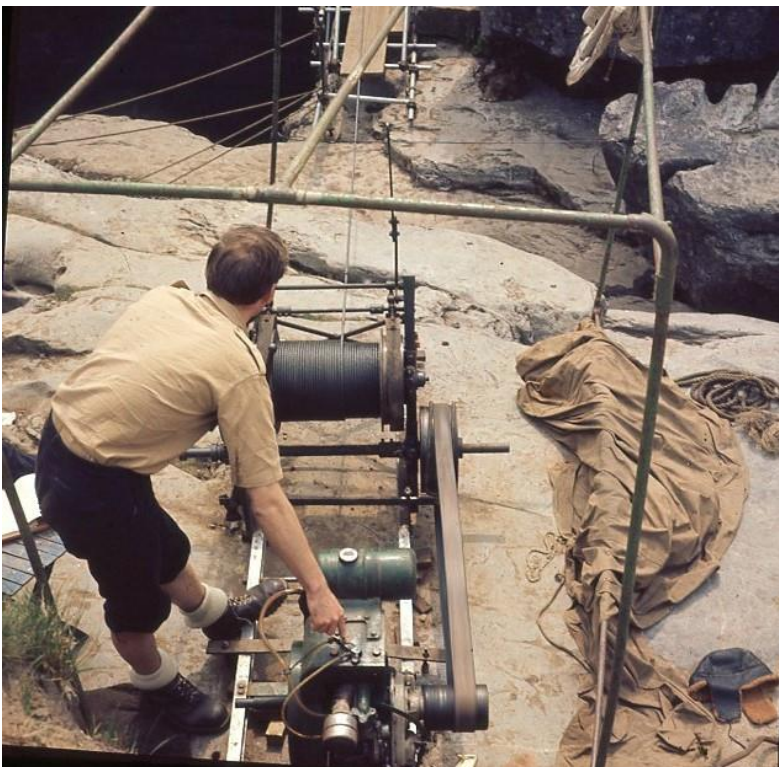
Parky (& Cas)
(February 2021 Newsletter)

Remembering Gaping Gill Winch Meets

During the latest “Lock Down” I made a pledge to sort out some of my old photographs and slides. A trip up to the loft produced an old box of 35 mm colour slides and negatives, some in card mounts, and others in glass. After viewing a few I found myself up at Gaping Gill and decided to try and copy them onto the computer. And really that’s where the exercise ended.

The first one of interest to me showed the old winch. It was not really too different from the current rig we use, except there was no hydraulic hoses or big ugly fuel tanks. The engine was a small Petter industrial unit, petrol driven and a full two and a half horsepower. It had to be started with a starting handle which always caused much amusement if you failed to disengage the handle when it burst into life. Also, the engine was only used for ascending as all descents were done by gravity. The drive from the engine was by belt driven pulley, a relic of the woollen mills around Bradford at the time. The intermediate drive shaft had two plain pulley wheels, one was neutral and free to rotate, whilst the other was keyed to the drive shaft. So to rotate the cable drum it was just a matter of moving the drive belt from the neutral pulley to the fixed one. This was achieved by a large lever, with a fork attached, which physically moved the drive belt from one pulley to the other.

The driver was always a busy person and the routine was as follows: When descending, the engine was stopped, the drive belt was on the neutral pulley and then the small drive pinion was disengaged from the large toothed drive wheel. Additionally, the two pawls had to be lifted from the large toothed wheel. The pawls were instrumental in preventing the chair from running away if either the engine failed or when the chair reached the gantry. It was also important to apply the brake when the pawls were removed. So now a descent could take place under gravity and using both brakes for control. Many passengers were subjected to free fall with a rapid deceleration just before the bottom. It was important not to fall out with the driver!



When ascending the passenger had control of the whistle, which was attached to the chair and the driver had to wait for two clear blasts before starting the engine with the hand wind. Also, whilst waiting for a signal he would have replaced the pawls and the pinion as well as releasing the brakes. On receiving the signal, he wound up the engine and then operated the clutch lever which moved the belt onto the drive wheel. The cable was marked with tape, just as it is now, but at the top it was only necessary to disengage the drive at the right moment and kill the engine.

The picture shows the driver with his finger poised over the spark plug; this modification was on trial for that particular year. We had screwed a conduit clip on top of the spark plug lead so that the driver could stop the engine instantly by grounding the magneto lead. The system worked a treat unless your hand made contact with the engine housing then several hundred volts ran up your arm. Anyone who has had a belt from a plug lead will testify. Needless to say, changes were made.

Over the years, there have been many slight hiccups during the winch meet but to my recollection none that has caused sufficient problems to stop operations. There was a problem when the left-hand drum brake broke during gravity descent, so it was lucky that both brakes were being used at the time.

The incident almost caused the meet to be cancelled until a unique repair was devised. Someone noticed a clamp that was holding the winch frame to the ledge. It had a right-angle shape with holes and slots and would have been used on a milling machine. So, this combined with a Rawl bolt and several assorted bolts became the repair. The bracket had a tendency to lift so some farmer's band was wrapped around the end, just to add a nice touch.



Nobby Clarke

(February & March 2021 Newsletters)

What's in a Name?

Memories of the BPC

The Dump in the corner of the courtyard of the Flying Horseshoe at Clapham not only provided luxury accommodation affording the highest standards of hygiene but also boasted a characterful ambience for its transient residents. The stacked tin lockers provided high rise living space for the various rodents who seemed happy enough to share with the fee-paying visitors. The perimeter of the room was lined with an array of chairs, each one differing from its neighbour and all would gain David Dickinson's approval. In the centre of the room was a rustic table and heating was provided by a belly stove. A vertical ladder gave access through a hole in the ceiling, to the sleeping quarters, rather cramped with three tier bunks lacking mattresses.

As usual on Fridays I gave afternoon school a miss to hitch up to Clapham with my weekend provisions, a tin of Tom Piper Irish Stew, a jar of Roses Lime marmalade and a small Hovis Loaf. Early arrival afforded a pick of the bunk. I signed into the dump book and selected a middle tier bunk, easy enough to access whilst reducing the risk of being vomited on by a factor of one. The evening wore on, the numbers grew and trips were being thought about as we studied our copies of Pennine Underground, the definitive guide by Norman Thornber listing and grading the known caves of the time. Whilst the gradings provided some help the deciding factors were, can we walk to it or can we muster up enough transport to get us all there?

We began to drift across to the "Shoe," an OK venue for Friday and as befits the BPC the ale flowed freely and I regained consciousness as the sunlight poured through the single window of the bunkroom. My head was thumping, my vision blurred as I observed a strange ritual. A silhouette in front of the window was adopting a flamingo pose shaking what looked like the corner of Miss Havisham's tattered tablecloth. My vision finally focussed to reveal Pete Faulkner deciding which leg hole of his underpants to select that day. There seemed to be several to choose from.

Having decided the venue the previous evening we set off, Alan Brittain, Bill Frakes, Colin Vickers, Nobby Clark, Cas, some bloke with a metal plate in his head whose name evades me but I'm sure he'll have a mention in that troubled book and a tall bloke with blonde hair and a lisp. We trudged through Trow Gill and passed Bar Pot and descended some grubby hole or other, had a half-hearted prod around at the bottom we passed off as a dig and got ready to return to the surface but not before something to eat. This is the age before wetsuits and rumour had it that wearing wool next to your skin was the most thermally efficient clothing. Warm when wet-hmm I'm not sure. Mums, aunties, sisters and girlfriends were commissioned to knit woolly long Johns and vests out of all the left-over balls of wool resulting in shivering covers looking like stripey psychedelic wasps getting changed outside the hole. The offshoot of this meant that all the thrutching, bending, crawling and squeezing to reach the bottom produced a small woollen fluff ball which lodged in your navel. This was retrieved and rolled into a small wick which was placed in the turned back lid of a tin of pilchards in oil and lit from the carbide lamp flame. Only ten minutes to wait for a nutritious snack to fortify you for the trip out.

Saturday night meant the obligatory trip to the bright lights of Ingleton. The shortest route was along the railway line and we dragged the pram with us. On reaching the platelayer's hut a mile or so down the line we loaded the pram with coal ready to pick up on the way back. The Marton Arms was the pub of choice followed by dance in the village hall, a bit of jigging around leaving the Ingleton females totally underwhelmed, usually a scuffle or two exhibiting a flagrant disregard of the Marquis of Queensberry rules then back over the viaduct and along the line picking up the pram along the way.

Supper was next so the belly stove was lit and the mess tins of dripping and chips were soon bubbling away on the stove. The steam coal gifted from British Rail soon had the belly stove glowing red hot. We could have opened the door but that seemed to cause the belly stove to draw more air and get hotter so the only option was to shed a few garments. Soon underpants alone were the choice of dress but still the overloaded stove showed no mercy and we were all pinned against the wall as far away from the stove as we could get. The sleepy quiet that had descended on the room was then

shattered as two burley bobbies burst into the room. They took a few moments to assimilate the scene before announcing a rucksack had been stolen in Ingleton and they were checking local club huts. It was clear the fun of a strip search of everyone had been denied them so they took everyone's names and departed.

They returned the following morning and wanted to further check on names and Nobby, being a senior member, had to produce the dump signing in book. Now this weekend just coincided with the appearance of a small scrotal swelling which I was happy to embellish into a title for myself. Perhaps I shouldn't have used it to sign into the dump with. Following the interrogation Nobby came back into the room and walloped me on the head with the dump book. Signing in with a pseudonym must have breached club protocol and I had received my just punishment. As time progressed the welcome embellishment faded away unlike the name which seems to live on despite the lack of any validity.

Parky

(March 2021 Newsletter)

A Day Out

When I was a student, I went to the Alps; Chamonix to be precise, with my friend Rupert. We camped on Snells field as did many Brits, near to a bunch from Oxford University, one or two of whom Rupert knew due to a mutual friend. There was a chap called Harry who we got along with, he was doing a doctorate in Metallurgy, and was keen. Very keen. We ended up doing the Cordier pillar as a group of pairs along with two other Oxford climbers, Simon and Charlie.

Fast forward eighteen months, I moved to Oxford (there was a woman involved, there usually is) and one Saturday I was walking along the Thames and saw a couple of fellows running, one of whom seemed to have a plaster cast on his arm.

“Well bugger me, that’s something you don’t see every day” I thought, and as they came closer the casted one seemed familiar.

“Harry!”

“Nick, man, what are you doing here, listen, we’re out training, you wanna come climbing tomorrow? Going down to the Avon gorge. “

“Err, that sounds great, but what about your arm? “

“Oh, that.... It’s bound to help it heal”.

So, a rendezvous was arranged for the morrow, and I was introduced to the Oxford Old lags, a group of doctoral and postdoc students plus the odd civilian like me who hung around the fringes of the University club using our own transport and making our own arrangements when we could, combining forces when we could not. Simon from our Cordier pillar ascent was also still around and always excellent company.

Harry climbed all day, his cast was falling apart by the end of the action, and he was somewhat shocked that when he went to the hospital the next day and asked them to mend it as he had broken it climbing, he got a stiff telling off.

This was the start of one of the best climbing partnerships I have had, Harry being mad keen and me having a Company car. And most of the old lags happy to share Harry with someone else, did I mention how keen he was?

Anyhow, you ruffty tuffty caving types are starting to nod off, so lets cut to the chase. We were at some college party one Saturday night, (Harry knew the guy playing the bongos so we got in free) when he said that on the following day he was going caving with the University club and did I fancy tagging along?

Now I had done a few trips pre-University with my local climbing club: Yordas, Valley Entrance, Bull Pot of the Witches and Lancaster Hole (on ladders) so was quite keen, but mentioned that I had no caving gear at all. No bother, Harry would lend me his wetsuit and use his furry and oversuit: Deal! So, the traditional crack of noon start and a slow trip to South Wales due to the club lorry being ancient and knackered saw us heading underground around one in the afternoon. The wetsuit fit Okay but was not ideal, however, it wasn't too long a trip I was told.

I think the cave was called Aggen Allyd, or something similar, no doubt many of you will know it well (*Editor: Ogof Agen Allwedd, presumably*). It was a warm day and we were glad to get underground, soon arriving at a large boulder choke. Fortunately, we had Graeme with us, one of the hard cavers in the club, I think he later took up cave diving but didn't really know him that well so we lost touch. He found a way through and we all followed, there must have been about a dozen of us all told. We were doing a round trip which involved turning left all the time, and all went well until we found ourselves in a large chamber with, of all things, a music stand and some sheet music upon it. Most entertaining but the words were in Welsh, less entertaining was the fact that of the handful of the party who had done the trip before, no one could remember being here.

Harry and Graeme were delighted, new caves to explore, so explore we did, until it was time to be getting back on the round trip. So, on we went, Harry and I now in front, moving quite fast, so fast that a couple of times we had to wait quite a while for them to catch up, time we filled in by singing folk songs in the dark. There was one lovely bit of stream passage where I taught him. And the band played Waltzing Matilda, as we waited for the team.

Eventually someone announced that we were utterly lost, must have missed a left hand turning somewhere. Oh good. Much back-tracking and generally fumbling about followed, until a couple of hours after I had given up hope of ever seeing daylight again, when Graeme announced that we were back on the right route.

We exited about midnight, just eleven hours underground, not too long a trip my arse! We were somewhat thirsty and peckish. Imagine the look on the face of the all-night filling station attendant as one by one we filed up to the window about one am, muddy and dishevelled:

Two bottles of coke, a pork pie, two packets of crisps and a Mars bar please.

A large bottle of water, a block of cheese, a packet of bread buns and a packet of chocolate Digestives please. Etc etc. And we all sat and picnicked round the forecourt, before heading off into the night.

I got a couple of hours sleep after a bath, and found that the backs of my knees were rubbed red raw from the wetsuit. Off to work I went for the Monday morning sales meeting, wincing with every gear change and step. My boss asked if I had had a good weekend, and I said I had enjoyed a long day out in Wales. Best not to elaborate to those who would not understand.

Nick Hinchliffe
(March 2021 Newsletter)

Antofts Hole

Nobby Clarke's account of unexpected events when emerging from the Underworld (see above) reminded me of an event which happened to me in the late sixties or early seventies. It happened when a group of us were investigating Antofts Hole in Duncombe Park at Helmsley, which was closed at the time to cavers.

No, it wasn't clandestine as has been suggested in later years. One of us had excellent contacts with the park authorities. We were given permission (unofficial) and nothing would be said provided we did no damage and were inconspicuous.

It was an interesting trip in a deep narrow fissure. Progress was by back-and-footing and ledge hopping. Eventually we reached a place where we didn't dare to climb down and with time pressing, we retreated, vowing to return. I was leading the way out. When I reached the surface, I was delighted to see six deer peacefully grazing. They weren't at all delighted and cleared off.

We returned later to finish the exploration and soon reached the point where we didn't dare to climb down. We didn't dare to climb down again, but we did traverse across the problem area. Alas! The end came too soon. The fissure became too tight, onwards and upwards. The floor was of jammed boulders.

I surveyed the way out and leading the way up the entrance slope, I wondered if there would be any deer in sight. There wasn't, but there was a Park Ranger with a rifle waiting for us. Fortunately, he knew all about us and our permission. We had a pleasant chat and left without a critical word or comment on how inconspicuous a bunch of lads we were when plastered from head to foot in moon milk.

Alan Brittain
(April 2021 Newsletter)

Camping in the Lake District

Just after Christmas 1962 a discrete group of BPC members decided on a camping trip to Wasdale Head in the Lake District. The idea was to walk off the excesses of the festive season, maybe attempt some rock climbing and then see in the New Year at the Wastwater Hotel. This Hotel was renowned as a Mecca for rock climbing and mountaineering in the English Lake District. It was the Headquarters of the Fell and Rock and other climbing clubs and the area was described as “The Switzerland of the British Isles”.

We arrived the evening before New Years Eve and, after seeking permission from the local farmer, pitched our tents within sight of Wastwater lake. The weather was cold and clear with a good forecast for the following day. Sure enough, next morning as the primus stove roared the sun broke through the clouds. It was to be one of those rare Lakeland days of crystal-clear skies and spectacular views.

We set off early and followed the Sty Head track to just past Burnthwaite farm and made for the conspicuous grassy spur which leads to a broken outcrop of rocks, known as White Napes. This provides a fascinating way up to the summit of Great Gable. We carried on towards Gable Buttress and Napes Needle. This pinnacle of isolated crag is unique. As a climb even the inaccessible Pinnacle of Skye must take second place. But if we had any intentions of being the first group to attempt the climb we were too late. Two other members of our BPC group had beaten us to it. For there standing on the summit of Napes was Peter Livesey and sitting on a ledge just below him was Kenny Hesselden

Pete Livesey had been a member of the caving club for just over a year. He had already established himself as a keen all-round athlete. I remember his first bus meet with the club. The bus first picked people up in Halifax and Pete lived in Huddersfield so had run down, with a rucksack on his back, to catch the bus. He was still only a teenager but was more mature than most of us. He meticulously logged his activities and wrote accounts of his trips. Frank Croll once said, “you should keep ten feet behind him as that young man is going places”. I tried for a while and followed him through Dow cave and Province Pot. It took two hours but I couldn’t keep up when he ran back up to Dow!

After a full day on the fells, as the sun finally set, we made it back to the tents. The evening meal consisted of a tin of Tom Piper Stew, warmed up



Pete Livesey on Napes Needle 1962

quickly on the primus. We were conscious that this was New Years Eve and the pub was just across the meadow. Everyone was in high spirits as we entered the Wastwater Hotel. We learned that the landlord was called Wilson Pharaoh and he was a track and field athlete who competed in the discus throw at both the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and the 1956 Melbourne Olympics; he was also an international shot put and hammer thrower.

The pub had an opulent feel to it, decorated with portraits of famous climbers; there were old coiled ropes and ice axes on the walls and old leather boots with Tricouni nails. We headed for the snug bar where the rest of the BPC were. Pete told us about the Napes Needle climb. Evidently it was first climbed in 1886 by Haskett Smith without ropes. He also returned 50 years later to repeat the climb. Pete said that the pillar had been worn smooth over the years so it was a good job he was wearing his Hush Puppy shoes (he was not joking). We talked to a young lady and her 13-year-old son. She said the boy was losing his sight and was nearly blind. She had brought him up to the area for one last look at the scenery. But what a day to choose for your one last look at the Lake District.

The evening shot by and soon they were calling time at the bar. But wait a minute it's only 10 o'clock and it's New Years Eve. We decided to sit tight and thought this is just to satisfy the licensing laws. But then this massive figure appeared at the door, swaggering and swaying. He said in a drunken slur; "leave or else I'll throw you out". Naturally we obliged and slunk back to our tents. The moon was out but it was bitterly cold. In no time I was asleep and dreaming of spinning across the moonlit lake having been thrown by an Olympic discus champion.



BPC members attending; Nobby Clarke, Warwick Peirson, Barry Hopkinson, Pete Livesey, Kenny Hesselden, Pete Noble

Nobby Clarke
(April 2021 Newsletter)

In the Olden Days

The walk up to GG is always full of anticipation and excitement for what lies ahead. For some the thrill of a dig or a dive to discover unexplored passages, for some the exhilaration of a hard trip, for the camaraderie of great nights in the Fell Inn, or for the ride up and down on the winch. The latter now a smidging less exciting since the diesel up and down driven winch robs members of the free fall sensation once enjoyed in the olden days of the petrol winch when "friends" would lower you down until you were hanging in free space and then hang you there for up to five minutes before releasing you to enjoy your stomach in your helmet at thirty-three feet per second squared. This wasn't the only added excitement to be had as the fire waterfall livened the downward trip as Bill Frakes poured petrol into the stream trickling over the lip and lit it. It wasn't dangerous as the communication between the winch driver and the pyromaniac was well coordinated and the free fall experience kicked in just before the flames arrived. But are we missing something?

The steep walls of Trow Gill can be a great source of fun and entertainment.

It was the Saturday morning of the members meet and Nobby and I set out to climb one of the steep cracks on the right wall. The time was the olden days before the evolution of climbers' hands having developed suckers for fingers so we were using pitons and little stringy three step ladders to sit in. The crack was capped by an overhanging block about the size of half a mini but had a wide crack to the right which would provide an escape onto the rock above. I started placing the pitons and was soon underneath the overhang. From here I could reach out to the right underneath the overhang and bang a wide wooden wedge vertically upwards in the crack and sit in my stringy ladders to reach further right to place the next wedge. This wasn't a hard move, securely attached to my first wedge I placed the next wedge and began hammering it into place. After a few wallops, the wedge I was attached to let go, swinging me downwards back to the top of the crack. Well, this sometimes happens so off I went again but the same thing happened. It happened again and now my arms needed some respite so Nobby lowered me to the ground and tied himself and was soon below the overhang. As I was belaying Nobby on the boulder slope between the path and the wall, Brave Duck (*Dave Brook*) arrived by my side and we had a chat. I was whinging about my aching arms and being a gent Dave offered to hold the ropes and I retired to watch from the path and nibble a sandwich. Nobby placed the first wedge and reached to place the second wedge only to be dropped down as the first wedge let go. After another couple of tries Nobby was again swung into the air but this time he was accompanied by the now detached block. What happened in the next second, seemed to me watching an eternity, as Nobby spun upside down under the falling block which scraped past his head as Dave held tight onto the ropes. The block dislodged his glasses but ignoring the predicament he was in, Nobby reached into the air and caught his free-falling glasses before the ropes stopped his fall, swung him into the wall as the block carried on its downward fall. Now the block hit the ground, no longer a block but an explosion of dry-stone walling materials but travelling in all directions. At that moment I heard Dave give a groan and as I ran towards him, I could see his kneecap somewhat at the side of his leg and not at the front where it should have been.

All this took place in the olden days so Nobby shuffled down retrieving all the pitons, wiping the blood off his head, checking his glasses for scratches and now armed with the knowledge of how to

remove limestone blocks using wooden wedges. Dave recovered a bit, wriggled his dislocated kneecap back into place and continued his walk up to GG and I got to finish my sandwich.

Many years later in the Fell Inn up at GG I have the hazy recollection, in amongst the singing, the swinging from the roof struts and the generally falling over, Baby Duck sidling up to me and saying "My Dad still has trouble with his knee because of you" but I'm not sure if that happened or if I'm still carrying the guilt.

Parky
(April 2021 Newsletter)

Bounty Hunters

With only odd jobs and spending money to support my caving and climbing budget things were a bit tight in my teenage years. Club discounts helped and I tried this at Potters Climbing Shop on Thornton Road. The owner could have been a Brian Blessed clone and was reluctant to give any discount on climbing gear to a Bradford Pothole Club member. However, in the course of conversation he revealed he could offer a discount to people he climbed with and he did have a car.

Shortly afterwards I found myself in Langdale with Mr Potter and Dave Cording at the foot of a damp groove on a damp day on an equally damp crag. The crux pitch was a tight chimney and my gaze flipped between Dave and our stout sponsor of the venture. Dave had the guide book and being more experienced than me



scanned the description working out how he would avoid the greasy chimney pitch so I set off at the front with Pansy Potter in the middle. As could have been predicted I was left hauling Pansy up the chimney to giggles of delight from Dave below. A hard day's work for 10% off a few pegs and crabs.

By the time I was 17, my climbing kit had grown. Finding left kit on climbs was helpful and it was accepted that kit left on climbs was bounty for the next climber on the route. I was between "O" and "A" levels and had loads of free time to study. However, I didn't waste this time as the metalwork teacher was a climber and he let me have free range of the workshops casting chock, forging pitons and making miles of electron ladders for the club. Nobby would drop off the tubing, the bungs, the wire and the chain for the C links and then pick the ladders up. My dedication to the

BPC was my downfall as reflected in my lamentably poor “A” level results. The doors of academia were closed to me but ironically, I was offered a route into the profession that had failed me and indeed that I had failed but still another three years before having to earn a living!

It was a dim and misty cold Saturday morning when Pete Livesey and me packed up our tent and set off on the short walk to the foot of Kilnsey Crag. The guide book gave an estimate for the route as 12 hours but Pete was confident it would be shorter. As we neared the crag just next to the large “No Climbing Allowed” sign there was a high scaffold structure. Strange we thought but we ignored it as we had to get onto the crag quickly before anyone could stop us. Pete started up the first pitch leading to the overhang and shouted down that there was loads of gear already in place. I followed up and from the stance below the overhang could see along the roof a line of slings and shiny crabs dangling in the breeze. We debated the moral dilemma about taking or leaving this kit but decided to finish the route and see if anyone would be waiting to claim it from us at the end. I completed the roof and brought Pete along and he did the last pitch and we then assessed the booty we had gathered. It was still only 11 in the morning and we were the only two on the top of the crag so we shared the kit and were on the bus down Wharfedale and into Skipton for fish and chips and a lunchtime pint.

The scaffold tower turned out to belong to the BBC who were planning to film, I think, Pete Crew and Ian McNaught Davies doing the route the following week and had prepared the climb the previous week. Well, all this took place in Yorkshire so they were lucky the scaffold tower was still there.

Parky
(May 2021 Newsletter)

Operation 1000

The Gouffre Berger hit the headlines in 1954 when it was announced that a world depth record for a cave was set at -748 metres (-2428 ft). This displaced the Gouffre Pierre St. Martin from the premier position it held until that time with a depth of -2395 ft. Exploration of the system was carried out by the Speleo-Group of the Club Alpin Francais (SGCAF).

The Gouffre Berger was discovered near Sassenage in 1953 by Jo Berger and so named after him. It lies on a limestone plateau in the northern part of the Vercors near Sassenage. In 1955 a huge effort was made to bottom the pot by the SGCAF but the team was halted at -985 metres by technical difficulties and by insufficient equipment.

Members of the French caving club SGCAF worked all winter organising a mega expedition to descend below 1000 metres. This was called “Operation Moins Mille”. At a relatively late stage in the planning, it was decided to invite cavers from various European countries to take part. The British invite arrived on the 15th June 1955 leaving little time to ask for volunteers (tigers). The BPC nominated Nick Pratchett and the CPC nominated Bob Powell, both were accepted by the French club.

Nick Pratchett was a stalwart in the BPC, always leading meets and attending monthly bus meets. He was also well known due to his profession which was a coal miner who worked at the coal face as a shot face blaster (explosives expert). He was in great demand in caving circles and I can certainly remember him removing a slice of rock in Simpsons Pot to make the duck easier to pass and also his work in Clapham Cave. Just by chance I found a copy of “newsletter January 1958” with an article by Nick entitled “A brief outline of blasting practice” which would be worthy of a reprint in a Bulletin. (Editor: see article below)



Bob & Vera at the back; Shelia & Nick at the front

Nick jumped at the chance to take part in the Gouffre expedition and set off on his motorbike along with his girlfriend Sheila on the pillion and all their caving and camping gear as well. He told us a funny story regarding his journey down to the Berger. He received a letter prior to setting off for France on his motorbike, from the SGCAF confirming his selection. He hoped the letter would contain details of where to meet or at least a map of the area, but all it said was “see you up at

Sorin” and signed Louis Potie. Luckily the letterhead mentioned the “Cuves de Sassenage”, so after a trip to the local library to look at a map of France, Nick set off for Sassenage.

At a similar time, Bob Powell set off by train and with him was Brenda’s Sister Vera. She was an avid caver in her day and had volunteered to help the expedition as a support worker.

Nick started his trip down the pothole on 9th August along with 6 others, the purpose being to transport about 20 sacks of equipment down to the “Boudoir”. He was lined down the first pitch by Fernand Petzl of Trou de Glas fame. He became world famous later on for his design’s of SRT equipment no doubt expedited by having to move masses of ropes and heavy ladders. The job was made slightly easier by a teleferique system they rigged using a steel cable and control line. Nick became one of the support party transporting equipment and stores for the final assault party; he also did sterling work in helping to rescue one of the party who got into difficulties. Bob Powell was chosen to be in the final assault party which reached the sumps at -1122 m.



Carrying gear up to Gouffre Berger 1956

Meanwhile the surface party was doing a magnificent job. A telephone had been taken down the pothole to keep in touch with the cavers and this was manned for 24 hours a day. It was vital when heavy rain was imminent and the underground teams could be warned. Although Vera did not descend the pot on this occasion, she played a sterling part in the expedition and made many caving

friends. She made a lifelong friend of the expedition leader Louis Eymas and kept in touch with him on a regular basis for the rest of her life. She made many more trips to France and visited the Gouffre Berger on a further two expeditions descending a considerable distance into the system. She never lost interest in caving and communicated regularly with her French caving friends. Her prized possessions included a copy of "A Thousand Metres Down" by Jean Cadoux and signed by a host of cavers from the 56 expedition such as George Marry, Louis Eymas, Ferdinand Petzl, Aldo Sillanoli and many more. She also received a personal copy of "Gouffre Berger Premier" signed to Vera from the author, George Marry.

The expedition of 1956 was a huge success and achieved its aim of reaching over 1000 metres. It took many more expeditions over a lot of years to dive the sumps and reach a point at -1141metres. But it's good to know that the BPC and CPC played a big part in the original exploration of the Gouffre Berger.



The Team celebrates success. Nick 2nd left Bob 2nd right.



The notice on the bus window says, "Operation 1000".

References:

- CRG- Occasional Publication No 1 “Exploits of the British Members Nick Pratchett & Bob Powell.
- BPC newsletter January 1958
- Operation -1000 Jean Cadoux, Jean Lavigne, Geo Mathieu, Louis Potie.
- One Thousand Metres Down by Jean Cadoux and others.
- Gouffre Berger Premier- 1000 by Georges Marry

Nobby Clarke
(May 2021 Newsletter)

A Brief Outline of Blasting Practice and a New Project

On the 1st November (1957), explosives were used by our Club for the very first time. Four shots were fired in all, three of them were “plaster” or “lay on” shots and the other was in a drilled shot hole. For the benefit of those unfamiliar with the use of explosives I should perhaps explain that both types of shots described above are technically known as secondary shots, or in other words, shots used to break up stones or boulders already detached from the parent rock or rock face. (Primary blasting will be explained later).

A “plaster” shot is set up by pressing a quantity of explosive tight up against the widest face of the boulder, or in a slight indentation of any, and then “priming” it by the insertion of a detonator. The whole is then plastered down with a few handfuls of clay and all is ready. When detonated, the explosive breaks the rock by pure shock energy.

Such shot-firing as the club will more commonly need will be of the plaster type where stones are required to be broken. In digs the “plaster” method is very suitable for breaking stones of moderate size, i.e. from 6” to a maximum of about 3 foot thick. The shots can be prepared fairly quickly, but about 4 times as much explosive must be used as against breaking the same stone by using the shot-hole method.

This is of small consequence, however, as explosive is relatively cheap and in the case of a 6” thick stone, a plaster shot of only two ounces is necessary. In the case of the larger rock, about a pound would do. One must also take into consideration the fact that hand drilling of a ¾” hole about a foot deep takes an hour or more and there is not always room to swing a hammer properly.

Shot hole blasting is prepared by drilling a hole to the centre of the rock and then lowering a cartridge of explosive already primed with a detonator. The remainder of the hole is then plugged or “stemmed” with clay. In this case, shattering is partly due to shock and partly to the pressure of confined gases.

Having dealt briefly with the uses and application of secondary shots, I will now work backwards to primary shot-firing. I have done it in this order as primary shot-firing is rather a more heavy and serious undertaking and we shall not use this method very often. In short, the difference between the two is this:

Primary blasting breaks rock from the solid ground (e.g., a quarry face)

Secondary blasting is used in such instances merely to reduce any large rocks produced by primary blasting to a suitable, handy size.

Primary shots are fired by placing the explosive charge at a suitable point inside the mass of rock. This is done by putting the explosive into a drill hole or holes, The explosive when detonated exerts a bursting effect towards the free face of the rock, so bringing the material down.

To give an example of where a primary shot needing a borehole would have to be used, one only has to consider a cave passage ending in a six-inch bedding plane or a narrow fissure where rock has to be removed from the solid in order for exploration to proceed. In some instances, quite a number of shot-holes would have to be bored to clear a passage. The boring of a large number of holes by hand in a confined place would be very difficult if not impossible and it is in connection with such a project as this that I make the following suggestion and invite comment and advice from anyone who is interested.

I would like to have a means at the disposal of the club for boring shot-holes mechanically. A brief outline of my idea is to have a power plant consisting of a petrol engine and electric generator supplying current to an electric drill via a power line. The idea of using a compressed air plant did cross my mind but a compressor is more difficult to maintain and is heavier. Also, due to exhaust fumes, the power plant would have to be situated on the surface and as transmission losses over only a small length of flexible hose are fairly high, poor drill efficiency would result.

If the construction of such a boring rig is possible (and it should be, judging by past achievements), it would be an advantage, for ease of transport, for the petrol engine and generator to be easily separated and detachable from the bed frame so that it can all be carried in sections.

It is a tall order but quite a challenge too. Such a machine would open up much ground where all thought of further progress had previously been abandoned.

(Editor's note: How lucky we are in this modern age to have battery powered drills!)

Nick Pratchett
(January 1958 Newsletter)

Climbs on Yorkshire Limestone

Recently we heard from John Parkinson who was extolling the virtues of rock climbing in Trow Gill. The Gill holds a certain magic for anyone on their way to Gaping Gill. It's different to your normal Dales footpath, steep and wet in places, and requires a certain amount of dexterity when carrying a heavy rucksack. We are told it was formed many years ago by ice and water or maybe it was a cave in its own right and then the roof caved in.

But to the rock climbers amongst us the Gill presents a challenge. Over the years many BPC members have climbed the steep walls. The first climbers are recorded as John Sumner and Dave Sales but over the years many members have climbed its walls and not recorded their routes, names such as John Parkinson, Dave Cording, Dave Hall and Pete Livesey to name just a few.

Recording first ascents of climbs is not a science but requires to be done methodically in one of the many magazines or journals. At the time no guide book for Yorkshire Limestone climbs existed, that came later.

Within the BPC there were many members who recorded first ascents. As long ago as 1954 Neville Rhodes was accredited with breaching the walls of Gordale Scar by climbing the West Face Route. Neville was an enigma in the caving and climbing world. He discovered many potential caves in his day but he had an unfortunate habit. He could not stop talking so no sooner had he discovered something, then the whole world knew about it. The same applied to his inventions. At the time the only rucksack available had a metal frame with many pockets. Neville had two made to his own design by Bradford Cover and Twine. They were just a canvas bag with two shoulder straps and a hauling loop plus an inner lining which pulled out to make a bivouac bag. He gave one bag to Sir John Hunt of Everest fame to test. Sir John passed it on to Karrimor who was one of his sponsors. Another of Nev's inventions was a surfboard and bearing in mind this was the early 50's. He loosely attached a pole to his surfboard with a sail attached. If only he had taken out a patent. He then went round the sailing clubs in the area to show how good he was. The rest is history! (Neville died penniless)

Other members who recorded first ascents were:

Charlie Dracup at Gordale - he recorded CD, Cresus and Little Cave Route.

John Barker and Pete Livesey at Langcliffe Quarry - Tabula Rosa

Pete Livesey at Malham Cove - Douk.

Peter was very active in the Limestone areas before he turned his attention to the Lake District and elsewhere. He developed many routes on Norber Scar along with other members of the BPC. He wrote the chapters in the Guidebook, which was finally published in 1968, for Norber as well as for Trow Gill.

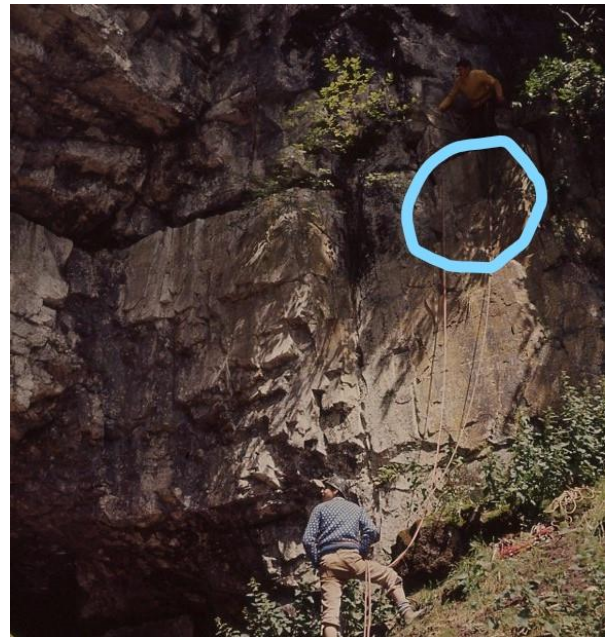
Prior to the publishing of the guide book a great scramble took place to try and nab a new route. The prize of course was the kudos of a first ascent and having your name in the new guide book. Many options were tried and considered without success. But there was one unclimbed rock face

right on our doorstep with routes from easy to extreme. The only problem was it was very public and also it contained a show cave.

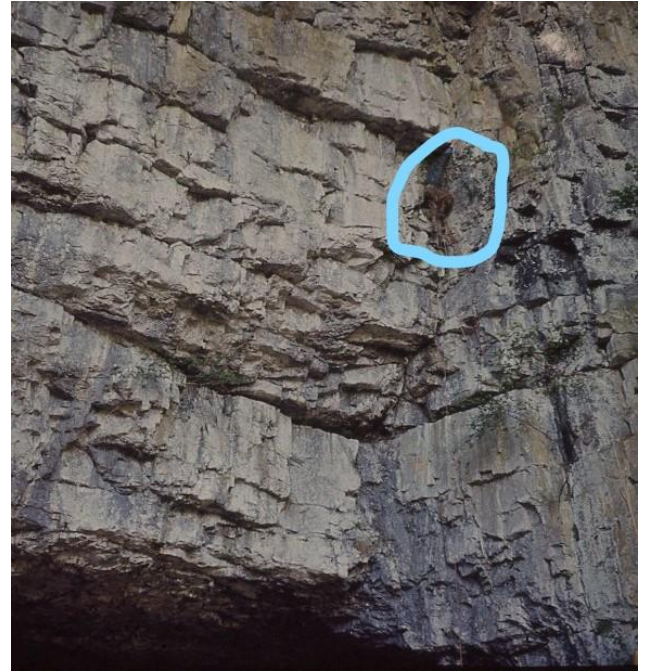
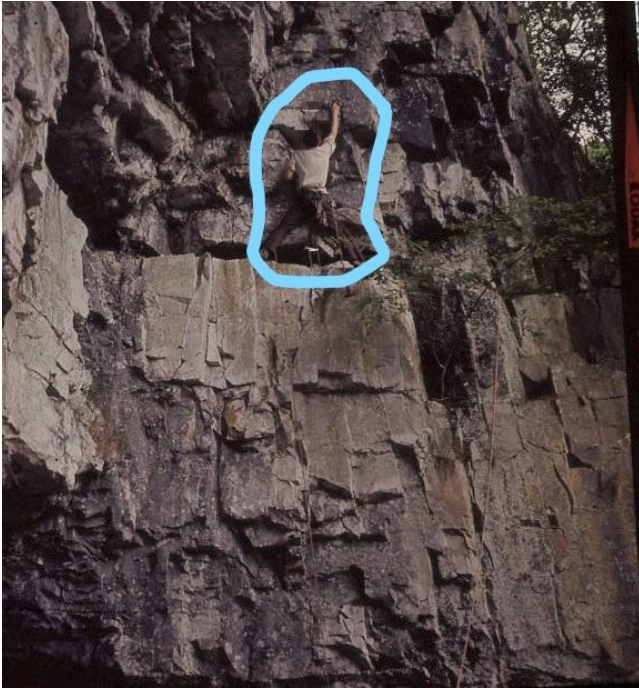
Many BPC members, at that time, were helping out at the cave as cave guides as well as willing tradesmen. A new reception centre was being built to replace the old wooden hut used by the old permanent cave guide Arnold Brown. So, a plan was hatched by a group of potential rock apes to volunteer to help out at the cave and during those quiet moments scale all those potential new routes. The plan worked for a while until one morning a member of the Farrer family was walking through the estate and enquired what was going on. Things soon took a turn for the worst when firstly the estate office banned all climbing and then so did the lease holders.



Roy Dixon and Neil Thorpe



Jack Ackroyd – Ex President



So, did any new routes get discovered and did any names get added to that guide book? We may never know...

Nobby Clarke
(June 2021 Newsletter)

Underground in Bradford

I think it's true to say that the heart of any Club revolves around the Secretary. The central focus for any enquiry or query is always the Hon Sec. The BPC has been well blessed with people in this post and certainly the current Secretary, Ian, has been in office for many years and done a fine job.

The affairs of every organisation rely on good communications and certainly the modern-day technical innovations with the development of mobile phones and the internet have helped make a secretary's life easier, except more technical. There was a time not too long ago when the club relied on a monthly newsletter, through the post, to advertise forthcoming meets and events and distribute meet reports. The occasional hard copy Bulletin and Journal helped spread the caving news.

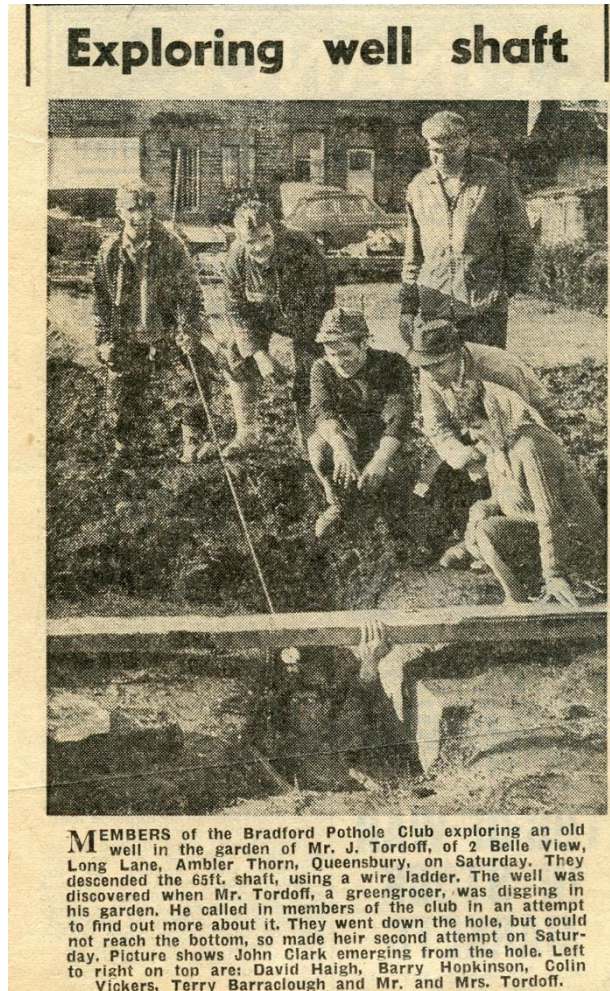
Another very effective means of spreading the word, certainly for those living around Bradford, was the mid-week pub gathering. Every Thursday regardless of weather conditions a goodly group of interested folk would meet in the White Lion just off Rawson Square. It's no use trying to find it now; it went years ago as part of the town's redevelopment. It was not just cavers that met there but it attracted the good and the great from many sporting activities. The main meeting night was Thursday but most nights attracted a hard core. The Landlord, Clifford, would accept and relay

messages past on from various sources. So as a club Secretary it was most important to visit the pub regularly.

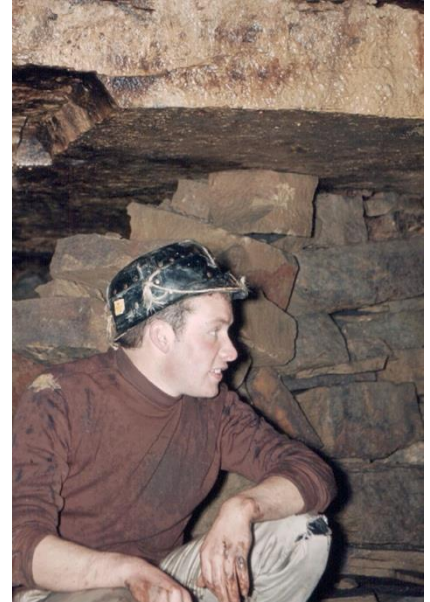
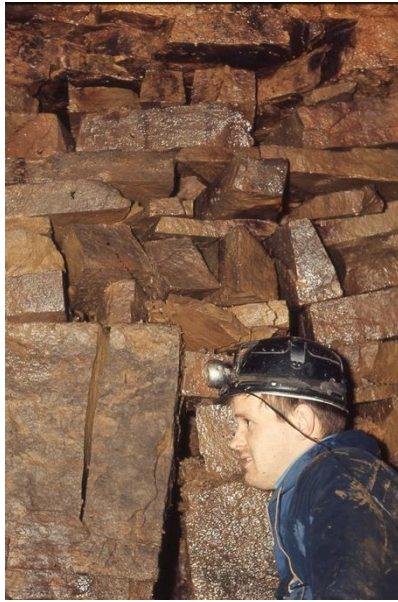
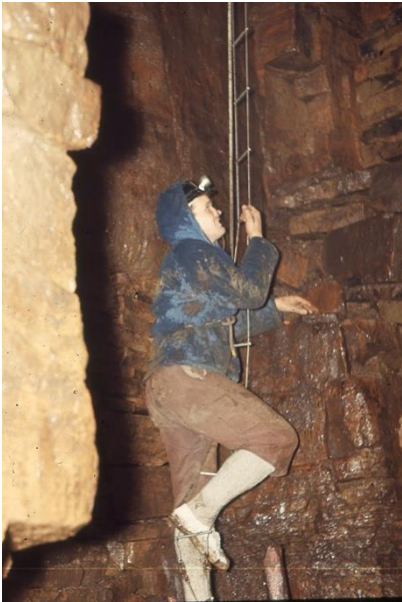
It was on one of these mid week visits that Clifford passed me a message from a man in Queensbury. Could I ring him? Evidently, he had been digging in his garden at the weekend and he lost his spade down a hole. He tried dropping stones down the hole and could not hear them land. (How many times had we heard that before)? So, I rang the man from the pub as I didn't have a phone at home. He said you must come quickly as I need to make the garden safe,

I passed the word round for a visit on Thursday that week. A light was charged up so straight after work it was up to Queensbury. The jungle telegraph had worked a treat as a number of members were there already. The man certainly wasn't kidding about the size or depth of the hole. We man-handled a sizable slab from the top of the hole and moved an old wooden beam to act as a belay. After peering down the hole and dropping a few stones, the decision was taken to come back later better prepared with ladders, belay and lifeline.

The exploration was carried out on Saturday morning and proved most interesting. The shaft was about sixty feet deep with levels going off at different depths. It had been a stone mine and cut blocks of sandstone were stacked everywhere. There were no roof supports or signs of winches or mechanical aids. We pushed along some of the passages but were acutely aware of the dangers of falling blocks. After several people had descended the hole we decided to finish the exploration.



*Left: Barry Hopkinson, Dave Haigh & Roy Dixon.
Above: Roy Dixon.*



Left and centre: Barry Hopkinson. Right: Colin Vickers.

PS: The hole was sealed after we finished our exploration, with a large slab. We searched the maps and records for Queensbury but found no evidence of workings in that area. We returned the spade to Mr Tordoff.

Nobby Clarke
(October 2021 Newsletter)

A Winter's Tale

One Saturday evening in early 1971, some of us were sheltering from the icy blasts of winter in the back room of the Flying Horseshoe. We got chatting to some of the NPC lads who had begun doing something at Hunt Pot. They were no longer interested in it, so we could have it. We decided to have a look.

“Shrapnel” was a rift development on the Hunt Pot fault and in the same rock exposure. We did a little digging – a very little digging – and it looked interesting, so we went back to the Dump, vowing to return.

On our second visit, better equipped, we went down the rift, and there we found a crawl, leading towards the waterfall. It wasn't your ordinary crawl. There was very little roof and even less floor. It was roundish, not very large and amounted to twin ledges separated by the fault rift. It was easily passable and easy to get a boot (or ladder) stuck in the gap. It emerged in a shaft with a splatter of water coming down. Above could be seen the roof and a ledge; below there was nothing but

darkness, and at the other side a boulder floor in what appeared to be a chamber. A rusty NPC ladder hung from a piton driven into very doubtful rock. We couldn't pull it down, so we went back to the Dump, vowing to return.

On our next visit, Snake pegged up to the ledge using loft ladders as etriers. From there he edged his way along the ledge by the process of feet on one and hands on the opposite wall, staring down into the depths and passing straight through the water. I was lifelining from the end of the crawl but there wasn't much I could have done if he'd fallen. He reached the chamber, which was only the widening of the shaft, but there was no way on at that level. There was a hole between the boulders and he could see another boulder floor which seemed to offer prospects of further progress. We needed to move tackle, so we went back to the Dump, vowing to return.

Our next attempt was Snake and Barry Lee take ladders and a lifeline across the traverse. The ladders had to be trailed through the crawl, and soon got stuck. The water was coming down more strongly now. Snake descended, only to find that the ladder was too short. We had no option but to retreat, but we went back to the Dump, vowing to return.

On our fifth trip, Snake and I rigged the ladder, and Snake went down some fifty feet to the lower ledge but there was no way on except downwards. By now our lights were beginning to fail so we left the tackle there and got out quickly. We went back to the Dump, vowing to return.

Our next visit didn't go too well. Snake crossed the shaft (the water was running even more strongly) and pulled up the ladder. I was lifelining from the end of the crawl and Barry was behind me waiting for the tackle. Snake began to come back along the traverse and his light went out. Completely. He had to do the rest lit only from below by my light, which wasn't famously bright. However, he did it safely and passed the tackle to me. That was when Barry's light went out. Completely. The ladder then got stuck in the floor of the crawl, and there ensued a period of technical words about ladders. Snake retrieved the remaining etrier and passed it to me. Barry managed to free the ladder in the darkness and retreated. I backed down the crawl and Snake wriggled into it. That was when his right boot came off and vanished into the depths. To make matters worse, when we reached the surface, we found it had been snowing. Snake had to walk back through two inches of snow with only one boot. So we went back to the Dump, vowing never to return.

Those involved: R Lee (Snake), G P Benn, D C Brook, B Lee, T Robshaw, Alan Brittain.

A.T.M.B. (Alan Brittain)

The Dump in Days Gone By

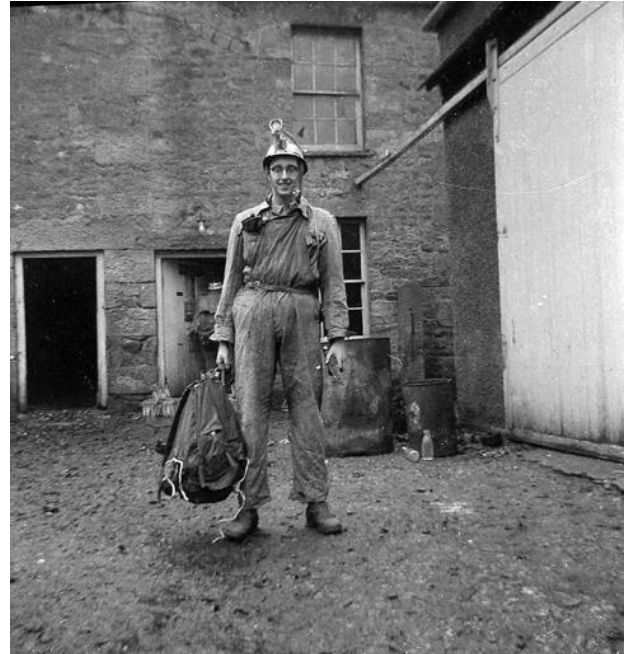
I was recently flicking through a Facebook site called "Back in Settle" which has lots of old photos of Settle and the surrounding area when I came across this one of which older members will have fond memories. It's an aerial photo of the Flying Horseshoe pub at Clapham known to all as The Shoe.



This was the home of the Club until 1962/3, The Dump being at the far end of the left-hand range of buildings.

The dark coloured vehicle next to it probably belonged to a member and may have been Old Jonah's Bradford by Jowett. To complement this, I am including a few photos of activities around The Dump.





Ged Benn
(December 2021 Newsletter)

Grant Aid for Brackenbottom

In the 1950's, I was an enthusiastic but very average rock climber who, along with a group of friends from Leeds Technical College, was out midweek and weekends at the local crags and the Lakes. No one had transport so we joined in with the meets of local clubs who gave us every encouragement and let us fill any spare seats to get out to the crags. One of these meets was a joint meet of a couple of long-established clubs and was at Gaping Gill. I had never heard of it, nor been caving, so it was something of a shock to find myself tied on to a lifeline manned by a team of a dozen or so and climbing down the Main Shaft on rope ladders. A quick trip through to Bar etc and back up the rope

ladder saw me collapse into the large camp marquee where I met with cavers some of who had joined various caving/climbing clubs in the 1920's and 1930's, I feel sure some were BPC. We had the ambition to climb the routes of W.H. Murray described in his book "Undiscovered Scotland", in particular the Glencoe/Etive and Ben Nevis climbs. It was a time when it was possible to travel by steam train from Leeds to Glasgow, change trains to Oban and then go forward on tank engine No 55208 to Ballachulish to backpack into the hills for two weeks and still have change out of £10. This all came to an abrupt end with the Suez Crisis call up for my older friends who were reservists after their National Service and others who became eligible for National Service. There were just two of us left but then he was called up to do his National Service as a member of the RAF Mountain Rescue team, I was deferred to enable me to complete my 5-year HNC course and found myself alone, I decided to join a club. Remembering conversations up at the GG meet I contacted BPC and was invited by Alf Hurworth to the next bus meet. The meet was a great success with a bus full of enthusiastic cavers/climbers, a great day underground and calling at a pub on the way back to Bradford. I was invited to join so eventually became a member.

Elected onto the Committee, I met up with Arnold Patchett and we became friends; he had been on many joint club meets over the years and remembered the GG meet and we also had a few mutual friends. He was very enthusiastic about the possible purchase of a property for a club HQ, in the first instance for the YRC but their hierarchy did not support the idea and insisted owning a property would detract from club meets, so he directed his efforts to finding a caving HQ for the BPC. He visited a number of properties to check them out and I remember a number that fell through; in no particular order: a cottage at Ingleton, the old Police Station at Settle, Toll Bar house at Clapham, a row of railway cottages near Selside, Winskill above Langcliffe, Winshaw near Gearstones Ribbleshead. He finally had success in finding Brackenbottom Farm for sale and considered it to be ideal; the Committee agreed and after a great deal of hard work by experienced members the legal and financial complexities were overcome and Brackenbottom became the BPC Headquarters.

Following the completion process, a great deal of thought was put into how the building should be adapted to make it suitable for the BPC. A number of club members put their expertise to good use and in particular John Thompson who was an architect pulled all the various suggestions together and produced a blueprint for alterations and improvements for the immediate and future use of the building. The committee endorsed the architect drawings and the process to obtain costings for the works commenced. As Hon Secretary I was tasked with exploring the possibility of obtaining Grant Aid towards the cost of the proposed works and alterations. To make an application for Grant Aid the club had to prove that BPC owned Brackenbottom and were financially sound, therefore a number of club members put together the relevant paperwork.

In 1966 we obtained the necessary forms from CCPR which were forwarded to the BPC's solicitors for scrutiny and completion. I cannot remember the exact sequence of events but I recollect that we had to alter the club constitution to be inclusive. In the meeting to approve this, a number of older members expressed the opinion that ladies would not want to join and go caving. A few years later I remembered this when one of the first lady cavers proved herself to be harder than most of us and I for one could not keep up with her underground and even now is a force to be reckoned with although she has a soft spot for our canine friends.

Eventually all the relevant documents were returned from the solicitor for signing and forwarded to the CCPR and on to Sir Alec Clegg the WRCC Chief Education Officer for approval by his committee. In August 1966 the forms were submitted to the Department for Education and Science in London for their consideration. I was contacted to arrange a meeting at Brackenbottom between their officials and the BPC for them to examine the property and discuss the project in detail. John Thompson and I met them at Brackenbottom, along with U.P. Jones, who had set up a photographic display of club activities which was very professional and impressed the officials. They were very helpful and gave us lots of advice before returning to London.

John Thompson took the lead in dealing with local builders/plumbers etc to compile a fixed cost estimate of all the proposed works. The BPC Committee approved the drawings and estimates and the plans and relevant estimates were submitted to the Ministry and were accepted and approved on 27th February 1967. Work commenced in August 1967 with the first project being the drains, toilets and septic tank. John Thompson had designed the new layout to ensure that all wet activities took place at one end of the building i.e. cavers would enter, strip wet and muddy clothes off, get cleaned and showered in the area we are now familiar with without having to enter the common room and kitchen. It was twelve months before this major work was completed because the contractor experienced a number of setbacks, the major problem being that he hit bedrock in the yard between the building and the septic tank. We were yet again fortunate in having a club member who could liaise and keep the work moving; Jack Ackroyd who was in a very senior position with a national company with retail outlets throughout the UK was very experienced in dealing with contractors and was frequently meeting with the contractor at Brackenbottom to resolve problems and discussing the fixed cost estimates for the project to ensure that both parties were satisfied with progress and costs. He worked on the principle that we should maintain good relationships between the BPC and the local contractors. In November 1968 the first claim was paid by the Ministry.

The programme of works continued with most of the labour being carried out by members. One job was to lower the floor in Brackenbottom to gain headroom at ground floor level, this meant we had to lift the flags and dig down and remove tons of soil and then prepare the new floor level to install underfloor heating. With the underfloor heating in place concrete was discharged into the building through the front windows from a concrete mixer which somehow had been driven up Brackenbottom Lane. We learned how to use star chisels, the technique of using plug and feathers to split large building stones and many other skills.

In June 1972 the Department of Environment took over the responsibility for Grant Aid and required us to complete the outstanding works which we did over a period of some 8 or 9 months and received the final payment in 1973. Since then, there have been many further improvements to Brackenbottom. All these later projects have been financed by the BPC thanks to the good management of club finances but we should always be thankful for the Grant Aid and the club members who worked so hard to complete the initial building projects.

Michael Hartland

Gaping Gill Memories

One very wet and windy night, both inside and outside of the beer tent (it was the beer tent at night, the equipment tent by day and the only tent at all time) a gust of wind split the tent from side to side. Wind and water rushed in and warmth rushed out so we relocated the tarpaulin from the winch engine, sealed the split and carried on drinking. The engine didn't mind. It chugged away happily the day after.

Calamity struck one very busy day on the Open meet. The cogwheel to the tow rope broke in half (it was cast iron). Paul Turner came to the rescue by transferring the cogwheel from the guide wire drum. The incident led to the changeover from mechanical drive to hydraulic power.

One year the guide wire became too slack. A heaving party was assembled to adjust it, and in their enthusiasm, they lofted the anchor boulder at the bottom and moved it a few inches.

One night some person unknown set off a fumigator in the beer tent. It rapidly filled with a thick stinking smoke, and there was a mad rush to get out. One person exited at the back end by cutting through the canvas. Professional repairs were needed.

With the winch running at maximum capacity and a long queue of visitors in Main Chamber, a fool standing next to me on the Grandstand Rock threw a boulder the size of a cricket ball down the shaft. I demanded to know why, with people down below. He explained that he wanted to count the seconds and work out the depth. I invited him to remain where he was until we found out if he had killed anyone. Fortunately, no-one else below had noticed anything, so he was allowed to go. As a result, more of the shaft lip was roped off.

Another fool rode his bicycle round the edge of the shaft inside the fence! More roping off.

A hiker collapsed with a heart attack on the shoulder of Ingleborough. One of his companions raised the alarm at the winch. While one of us ran down to Ingleborough Cave to alert CRO (no mobile phones in those days), others swiped two scaffold tubes from the gantry (much to the discomfiture of the Planker) and took the stretcher up, collected the casualty and brought him down almost to the winch before handing him over to the CRO team. Happily, he survived and arrived at the winch the year after to thank us.

Dippers nest in the shaft every year, and soon became tame enough to continue their daily routines in our presence. They have been confident enough to ride out on the chair, and one flew between Bob Booth 1's legs. One year a chick, not strong enough to fly out, was rescued from the floor of Main Chamber – twice. Alas, there was no happy ending. It was later found dead on the floor.

Walking back to GG after visiting the Flying Horseshoe. I noticed a light on the "wrong" side of the wall above Trow Gill. On peering over the wall, I was amazed to see dozens of lights bouncing round and switching on and off. Fireflies? Glow worms? I'll never know. It never happened again.

Geoff Smith, a TV gardening programme presenter, arrived back at the surface bubbling with excitement at the plant succession he had seen in the top 50 ft of the shaft as daylight dwindled with increasing depth.

One very wet Prelim only six of us turned up to take the kit up to the hole. When we reached Clapdale High Barn we found that Ray (Farmer) Stoyles had got everything out except the engine and frame, which was stuck in the doorway. However, the winch was up and running by Sunday teatime. At Members' Meet a lot of people arrived at the hole to find their personal kit was still at Brackenbottom.

The wettest I've ever seen GG was at a Bar Pot trip in 1960. The big pitch was remarkable – water gushed out of every shale bed, making the climb very wet. The boulder in South Passage was under water, and Main Chamber was knee deep in water. Five waterfalls were coming down.

The muddiest trip I've done in GG was without a doubt the one in which we extended East Passage through the "Font" – so named by Dick Glover because it's where you get Christened! It was the only time I got stuck: not by tightness but by stickiness. Lying almost totally submerged in cold water in the well-ventilated single skin wetsuit. I got after some time halfway into Straw Gallery, and there I stuck, my suit adhered to the mud bank. Whenever I tried to break free my suit stretched, then returned to its original shape, or else I slid around in it, so well was it lubricated, and yes, it was a single skin one. I eventually broke free by rolling sideways (there wasn't much room to do it) left and right until the suction gradually eased. I had to take a few minutes' rest to warm up before I called the others through. *(Editor's note: For more detail – see the following article!)*

Finally, no account of GG memories would be complete without mention of Martyn Scatliffe standing gazing down on the winch, immaculate in topper and tails. This was an annual appearance, on one occasion assisted by Sandra (Queen Bee) Webb, attired in a ballroom gown.

PS. In the 1970s someone dropped a square of chocolate in a sandy alcove off East Passage, GG. From it grew a white fungus. It grew and grew until it filled the alcove. Someone placed a row of stones to protect it, but it covered them and passed them. After two or three years it grew fruit bodies a few inches high: after that it went into decline and eventually disappeared.

A.T.M.B. (Alan Brittain)

The Only Time I Got Stuck

But It Wasn't What You Might Think

To set the scene: A single skin wetsuit was a rough internal surface which in a dry cave grips the skin tightly and – seemingly – pulls the hairs out. At the same time, the seams soon begin to pull apart. The suit I was wearing on this particular day was old, thin and well ventilated.

This incident happened when we first got through into the Whitsun Series. When Ged returned through the ducks, he reported a two-inch high letterbox opening at the top of a mud slope. I took my turn. Instant transition from warm to cold! I floated through, nose and mouth only above water

level, with water freely entering my suit. Something white was showing through the slot and a strong draught was coming out.

Excited, I clawed at the top of the slope, but made no progress until I remembered Ged's chisel. It stabbed easily into the mud (actually a beautiful varved clay which peeled apart like cheese slices) which scraped away very easily. There was nowhere to put it except underneath me.

I was still mostly underwater, which was pumping through my suit with my digging action. I was cold and getting colder, but the hole in front of me was getting larger. I got my head through and saw a gallery stretching away into the darkness... More digging, get through and out of the water... cold and tiring... success! I got my head and shoulders through. The rest would follow.

But it didn't. I was stuck.

It wasn't that the hole was too tight. The problem was that my suit was stuck firmly to the mud. I couldn't pull myself up with my arms because there was nothing to get hold of. I couldn't push myself up with my legs because there was nothing to push against. What pressure I could apply merely stretched the neoprene and I actually began to slide around inside it, single skin though it was. When I relaxed it simply returned to its normal size and shape and I slid back into the start position. I was thoroughly stuck.

Salvation came unexpectedly. Lying on the slope, the water in my suit began to drain away. The sticky mud became slippery and my slippery suit began to stick to me. I was able to rock sideways to complete my escape. It wasn't for ages before I worked out what had happened. In the excitement that followed, I forgot all about it.

However, the entertainment wasn't quite over.

I couldn't stand up. I was somewhat shaky (temperature and exertion) and my suit was heavy with water, so I sat for several minutes while I warmed up and it drained away. The water, of course, went down into the duck, making it more slippery.

When I called the others through, Ged appeared, and needed a little assistance to get through the hole and up the slope. When he joined me in the gallery, I saw that apart from a small area around his nose and chin he seemed to have been sprayed with liquid mud. I realised that I must be in much the same condition inside my suit. No wonder I slid around inside it, and no wonder Dick Glover, on the second trip muttered something about "the F***** Font. You get f***** christened in it!"

I'd created the most delightful sludged duck I ever experienced!

A.T.M.B. (Alan Brittain)

Caving with Dalek

Despite the following trips having occurred some 35 years ago I still have vivid memories and can still picture aspects of these trips in my mind.

Nick Pot

So, way back on 5th April 1985 Dalek, a mate of mine, Alan Taylor (WSG) and myself did Nick Pot, via the direct Vulcan Pot route, using two ropes knotted together for the big pitch. Being the 1980's we wore wetsuits. We wore wetsuits for everything in those days!

I remember really struggling in the snug entrance crawl trying to push a large tackle back in front of me containing 300' of rope. The 11' pitch into the small chamber above the main shaft was free-climbed and there Alan and myself sat whilst Dalek squeezed through to the pitch head and manually drilled a bolt hole. He took ages. So long in fact that Alan went to sleep!

Dalek then abseiled down to the ledge 65 feet below and I followed with the 150' rope for the bottom half of the pitch. Arriving at the ledge, Dalek bid me rig the main hang which I did. My abiding memory was that as I swung about over 270' of nothing I asked Dalek, "what are you actually clipped to"? He wasn't! So, Dalek, being Dalek, clipped his cowstails into mine and said those immortal words, "If I'm going, you're coming with me"!

I set off and during my descent saw a rope hanging down the opposite side of the shaft. Strange, I thought. Until I realised it was the rope I was abseiling on which had become caught way above me. I had to prussik 50' back up to free it, abseil back down and then pass the knot swinging about some 150' off the deck.

I recall there was no shelter at the bottom. It was wet and windy and very cold. I used a roller box on my ascent and rope walked up the pitch which took 23 minutes according to Dalek. He frogged up behind me in 15 minutes!

Growling Hole

The next memorable trip was down Growling Hole on 14th November 1987. Present with me were Dalek, Sharon Kelly and a chap call Adrian Greenwood (RRCPC and ULSA). I recall another awkward snarly crawl with a huge tackle bag full of rope. The 250' shaft, "The Fault" in those days was devoid of belays. I remember we wrapped the rope around a thick stal boss and used a rope protector and tackle bag to protect the rope. A descent of 15' brought us to a single spit below which the shaft really bells out. It is enormous. I can still picture Dalek swinging around creating re-belays rigged from a chock-stone and smooth flake, where we had to keep tension on the rope below as it was likely to slip off. Again, it was wild wet and windy at the bottom with no shelter. My logbook records that Sharon kept farting during her ascent! I also have it noted that "*...we continued to Pool Chamber where Adrian set off up the crawl, 'Farting Sharon' followed...*". It took us six and a half hours and we emerged into a clear starry night.

The evening was spent in the Crown. There was a mass gathering of BPC and CPC and “Parrot” and Trevor Kemp were there. Later some drunk had followed us all back to the Dump and tried to force his way in but was temporarily stopped by Pete Faulkner and Dave Haigh. This guy wouldn’t give up and did manage to get into the Dump before he was hurled out into the front garden. I believe fisticuffs ensued and he finally gave up his quest. Ah, happy days.

Brown Hill Pot

Brown Hill Pot on 5th December 1987 still features large in my memory. Dalek demolished a dry-stone wall on the way to Floyds Entrance. Underground was tight and thrutchy again dragging full tackle bags through narrow crawls and traverses.

Dalek rigged Puits Ian Plant. The first half of the pitch rigging was without incident. Arriving a large ledge 95’ down I watched as Dalek continued to descend the last 70’. Muffled comments from below signalled the fact that the rope was too short. We apparently all laughed and expected Dalek to prussik back up. No. He didn’t. Boom was the noise echoing up the shaft. Dalek had undone the knot at the end of the rope and abseiled off the end! The rope was now even shorter now that the stretch had gone out of it.

We had no choice but to take all the slack we could out of the traverse lines and knots and hopefully extend the rope sufficiently so that Dalek could reach it. It was still 3’ short but we succeeded.

We went on to bottom the cave and exited after seven and a half hours. We had a quick pint in the Game Cock on the way back and then hot footed it to the Crown.

Dinner could wait.

Matt Setchfield

The Connection

I can easily remember the date, 28 May, 1983, of the Gaping Gill – Ingleborough Cave connection, as it was my 19th birthday. I was a Sherpa on the GG side and as we made our way through the very unstable looking connection, I was a bit worried it might turn out to be my last birthday. Having seen the divers off, we had a very long trip from the far reaches of GG back to the surface, and we exited some hours after midnight, so I spent the whole of my birthday underground, having entered GG early on the morning of the 28th. After a brief kip, my Mum and Dad came to pick me up from Clapham later that morning on the 29th, so that I could belatedly celebrate my birthday with my family at home in Bradford. They also gave Dalek a lift, a fact I remember as on the way home, he turned to them and asked ‘Mr and Mrs Parrington, do you ever worry about your son’s involvement in dangerous caving activities that might result in his sudden death?’ or words along those lines.

John Parrington

Trip to Norway

The idea to go caving in Norway was first mooted from a guest caving club who stayed at the old Dump at Clapham, around 1957. The BPC committee had agreed to a request from a Cambridge University caving club to use the old Dump. I suppose the committee must have been quite honoured at the request from such an academic source. The facilities were not exactly palatial, but the plus side included a country inn next door.

The group included a young graduate who had already been on a caving expedition to Norway. He told us various stories about the areas he had visited. Evidently, he had discovered a vast area of limestone with many totally unexplored caves. He said to the best of his knowledge there were no caving clubs in Norway. He certainly fired up the imagination of several BPC members who dreamed of walking into caverns measureless to man. Details were hard to come by but several areas were mentioned. We resolved to extract more information from the graduate with a visit to the pub. But before this could take place an unfortunate incident happened.

The Cambridge caving club had been underground most of the day. They stoked up the pot belly stove in the dump until the stove pipe was red hot, then draped all their wet gear around it. Surprise, surprise the dump is on fire. Considerable damage was done to the inside of the building. The committee banished the club for ever and so further information about caving in Norway went up in smoke.

The incident had a profound effect on regular cavers who stayed at the old dump each weekend. The thoughts of finding and exploring new caves played on the minds of the incumbents. Apart from not knowing the precise areas to head for, the problem of transport reared its head. A few of us had motorbikes but no one had a car or van. Approaches were made firstly to the Norwegian tourist board, for sponsorship, then to a shipping company. All to no avail. Finally, two members, Alf Hurworth and Terry Marsden decided to go on a prospecting tour. At a similar time, my own preparations were being formed. I was in negotiation with Frank Croll who was stationed at Aldershot at the time and was just about to complete his National Service term of two years. We



Heavily loaded Triumph T100 Nobby Clarke & Frank Croll

decided to go on a similar trip to Alf Hurworth and see what we could find. The limitation of space, with two people on a motorbike along with camping gear, meant we were limited so ladders and ropes were abandoned.

We embarked from Newcastle on a Bergen Lines ferry to Bergen via Stavanger. Considering it was the height of the holiday season the ferry was not busy. At the time there was a currency restriction of £25 but that did not bother us too much! We

befriended a young passenger from Birmingham who was on a cultural tour of Norway. After much probing by Frank, he confessed to be a jiver. Just what impact the bopping scoucer had on the Vikings we never found out.

We landed in Bergen, which at that time was very much a small fishing town. There was a smell of fish in the air and certainly on the locals who were very friendly. An open market was permanently in place selling all kind of exotic fish and vegetables. A number of American tourists were doing the rounds with a guide. One of the tourists asked Frank what was a particular fruit called, pointing to a huge gooseberry, Frank told her it was a "goosegob" and you could hear the information being passed down the line; goosegob, goosegob.

We set off on our quest of discovery but after less than a mile we hit the first problem. The road surface was not metalled but compacted hard core. This was fine on newly treated surfaces but mostly consisted of deep ruts made by the four-wheel vehicles. Once in a rut it was difficult to extract yourself (that must be a saying).

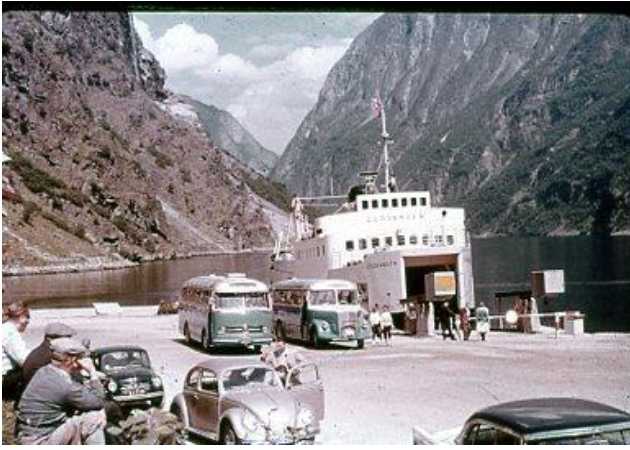
The road climbed upwards for mile after mile. We were heading for the town of Voss which is famous for the highest railway station in Europe. The poor old motorbike struggled; it was not made for these conditions. I had bought this bike because it was claimed to be the fastest twin in current production. It also had a foot clutch. By holding your right foot on the gear lever, it acted as a clutch lever. It was fine when driving on the left-hand side of the road but not on the right, as you needed constantly to put your foot in the gutter.

We left Voss on a downward spiral back to sea level and the ferry at Gudvangen. On the way down we spotted a garment lying in the road. It was a beautiful traditional Norwegian cardigan which must have fallen from the roof of a car. We discussed what to do with it. Storage was very limited on the bike so Frank decided to wear it, in fact we tossed a coin and I lost. Little did I know then but twenty years later Frank was still wearing that same sweater?



Camp site near Voss

We decided to head for the Jotunheimen National Park, an area of high mountains and glaciers. and hopefully underground systems. Already we had probed many stream beds and potential resurgences. Outcrops seemed to occur in narrow bands and many areas are of marble. Above the tree level the scrub was more exposed but exploration was made more difficult by patches of snow. Higher up had heavy snow coverage and deep crevasses had raging streams emerging from them. The potential was there but we were not equipped for serious exploration. We cut our losses and headed for Norway's highest peak, Galdhopiggen at 2470 metres.



Gudvangen ferry terminal



Mountain Hostel



Roy Dixon & Alan Brook with Frank. We met on route



Norway's highest mountain



Vieglund Park Oslo



PS. It was a further ten years or more before we managed to go back to Norway in a four-wheel drive vehicle. By that time many British expeditions had taken place, plus Norwegian cavers had become active. The main region explored was within the area of Rana. But many other areas have now been explored successfully.

Nobby Clarke

Dachstein

Failed marriage and starting a business from scratch in 1970 left little time for caving activities. However, a club expedition in 1971 (I think) to Austria with a view to climbing the Dachstein is one of my most abiding memories. The most hilarious two weeks of my life (so far). It started with a car journey to Hull (or was it hell?) to catch the ferry to Ostend. My companions were Derek Castleden and Carol, we were in Pete Faulkner's splendid Hillman, which gives you some idea of the fun which was likely to follow.

Once on the ferry we met up with more members of the expedition i.e. Snake (Raymond Lee) Margaret Brook, Dave Brook, Ged Benn and Christine Benn and Jekyll and the redoubtable Max Koval, whom I hadn't met previously. Max and I both quickly realised that we were kindred spirits – both completely barmy pisseheads out for a good time:- which started there and then in the bar of the ferry.

We'd all booked bunks for the sea journey, so after the bar had shut, we staggered off to bed. Max was in the bunk above me and commented upon how thin the membrane was between bunks. I sat bolt upright to see what he was on about whereupon my head went straight through up into Max's bunk. After what seemed like half an hour of uncontrolled laughter and giggling and after annoying the other residents in the bunkroom, we fell into drunken happy slumbers.

Back on the road the journey to the campsite passed quickly, as Cas, Carol and Herr Flick were great company and we laughed away the miles. The campsite was great and the rest of the gang had all arrived. Ged Benn who'd been up the Dachstein before and was our leader, Christine, Dave and Margaret Brook, Jekyll, Max, Snake and John Robbo. So, we pitched and met up in the camp bar. The tables were very soon awash with empty beer bottles as we celebrated the start of the holiday in typical BPC fashion. Max had a guitar (wonder of wonders) and soon had the bar rocking as we decided to have an Elvis appreciation night, interspersed with country and folk from yours truly. It was a real epic fun drinking swinging night, with fellow campers dancing on the tables (and unfortunately crashing bottles off in the process) until they ran out of beer and had to borrow some from a neighbouring bar. The camp commandant running the bar, a huge well built six-foot six guy, dressed in leather lederhosen, was getting a bit uneasy, and tried to quieten things down – but all was well until that is, when leaving camp the following morning. The beast in leather stopped us and told us to back up and leave as we were too noisy. I tried to get it over to him that we were harmless and friendly, and he'd make plenty of dosh in the bar – but he just stared down at me, pointed out the gate and shouted “Aus!!”

Ah well – on to another site and all was OK.

The bar welcomed us and we had a great time walking by day and drinking/singing by night. I think it was in this bar were one of our lot asked me “how do you ask for the local lager that was on tap rather than bottles?” “Leave it to me” says I, knowing a bit of German. The lads were silent as I asked “haben ze beer on tap?” then fell about in heaps laughing – John Robbo said “silly bugger it's beer zon vasse” - good crack though!

We had a trip to see the Salzburg Salt Mines, which turned out to be another hilarious never to be

forgotten experience. You bought a ticket for a guided tour and waited for your ticket number to come up on a large screen as there was always waiting time. Unfortunately, it was two hours before we were due to go, so we took our white mines issue cotton over suits and retired to the bar. Big mistake! After a few drinks we were getting quite pissed so we donned our white over suits in readiness for the trip. Max suggested we looked like a bunch of gymnasts at which we all fell about laughing but prompted us to start doing pyramids. The waiting crowds thought this was wonderful entertainment, and started filming and photographing our antics as we stood on each other's shoulders, fell off and tried again. Our outrageous display just got worse as we performed more and more for the cameras. But then it was time for our trip down the mine, along with lots of other nationalities.

The guide, who could speak several languages, bade us follow him along a large passage until we arrived at the first of many descents to the lower levels, which was by way of sliding down steeply angled polished wooden poles. The guide, who was sat on a leather saddle, waited til we all sat astride the pole behind him (without saddles) then suddenly 'whosh' we all shot off down at breakneck speed screaming and shouting with our arses almost on fire from the friction and walked to the next drop. It was such a blessing when we stopped, but now with the beer and adrenalin mixed the BPC where in high voice/hysterical laughter which caused the guide who was trying to commentate in four different languages to come running up from the front shouting and bawling in German and waving his arms at us in annoyance. That shut us all up – the silence was only broken when Max shouted "I think we've just had a bollocking" which brought more animated scowling from the guide as we were all falling about laughing. There were six more hilarious descents with our arses on fire – it did bloody hurt – before we landed by a lake which we were to cross by boat. More hilarity and more BPC bollockings from the irate guide, as it became let's play pirates time. Max said "no wonder Long John Silver lost a leg it was after his arse set on fire in a salt mine". Which brought another bollocking. Finally, we loaded onto a train to emerge into daylight, after the most fun any of us had had in many a year – what a hoot!

Then it was on to the main event of the holiday – climbing the Dachstein. We had a superb 20 km walk, in lovely weather, up to the Zimini mountain hut where we were to have a meal and stay overnight ready for a 4am ascent of the glacier before the sun melted it. We'd had nowt to eat since breakfast, so were looking forward to our evening meal and a beer. We got the beer OK but our lack of linguistic skills produced no meal after more than an hour had gone by – and we were surrounded by hoards of Germans tucking into platefuls. Chris Benn could speak German quite well, so sorted out the problem – which another hour later produced a two-inch by two-inch piece of Apfel strudel each. Ah well nowt for it but early to bed on an empty stomach ready for a dawn attack on the glacier at the base of the climb. Ged Benn was our leader as he'd done the intended Via Ferrata route before. Most of us had none or very little climbing experience, and although we had the protection of wire cables etc to help us on the exposed (fucking long drop) edges some of us (not Ged) were crapping ourselves.

Some of the team were well kitted out (re Ged and Christine), but most of us had decent boots and a cheap non waterproof cag in case of bad weather which we were sincerely hoping not to encounter (despite being told by our illustrious leader that it was very possible) We all carried ice axes – which made us feel very professional – in order to cut steps up the mile long steep glacier

but after ten minutes I found this very hard work and, that one could make much easier progress without steps. Once at the top, the more vertical brown trouser stuff began and we toiled ever upwards sweating under a blazing sun. Thankfully we reached the summit without mishap and were treated to a most splendid view.

Before starting the descent Ged advised us to apply some thick white sunblock to our faces which he'd thoughtfully brought along to avoid being badly burnt by the reflecting sun off the steep snowfields we had to negotiate on the way down. Now looking like Zulu warriors in war paint we set off down - glissading the steep bits with our ice axes, having had tuition from Ged. Half an hour later the sun disappeared, as a spectacular thunder storm poured torrential rain upon us, washing off the newly applied sunblock as the rain poured and the lightning flashed, we had to get our skates on as those of us with cheap Army and Navy Stores cags were absolutely soaked to the skin and were now freezing. I could see out of the corner of my eye the look of 'I told you so' on Ged's face.

Ged warned us of the dangers of hurrying as there were lots of hidden crevasses under the snowfield. The word was that if you could put in your ice axe up to the hilt it was likely to be a crevasse so then we had to line each other across the suspected danger zone until it was deemed safe. Unfortunately this was taking hours out of our day and I for one was in danger of hypothermia if I didn't keep moving. Throwing caution to the wind I set off for the lower slopes at a rapid rate of knots and trusted to luck that I didn't get swallowed up by a crevasse. The rest of the team followed in what turned out to be my sacrificial lamb footsteps and we finally reached the bottom without mishap, apart that is from Margaret Brook glissading to within a couple of feet from the edge of a monster ravine but that's another story.

We returned to the Zimini hut for a beer and back to civilisation the next day for a good meal and a few beers, before moving on to Munich for a night in the famous Hauffbrau House which sported three levels of beer festival and a brass band.

The atmosphere was electric and it was packed with piss artists from every nation. The beer was served in large pot steins and brought to the table by comely wenches in traditional costume – and the beer was rather strong stuff. We were seated at long benches with a row of Germans, who were already well pissed sat opposite. They challenged us to a competition – what could possibly go wrong – to see who could down the full stein the fastest. They hadn't realised that ours were only half full, so we won easily but it set the scene for drunkenness all round – they were a good fun crowd.

As things hotted up, Jekyll arrived in a panic. He'd been having a breather outside with Herr Flick and told us Flick was being hassled by half a dozen Germans. Out we went to find a drunken Herr Flick surrounded by Germans poking fun at him and jostling him. He was wearing red braces and climbing boots, so the Gerry's thought he was a Man United supporter/bovver boy. We told them to F off and leave him alone, but they wouldn't and one of them got pushy so I had a go at him and a scuffle broke out. Max arrived and broke it up, which was a good job as about another twenty had suddenly arrived and we were well outnumbered – as well as pissed out of our heads. We finally left the Hauffbrau House in a taxi bound for the camp site, but unfortunately whilst searching our pockets for money on the way back Jekyll shouted "Haben nicht gelt" (I have no money) as which point the cab driver slammed on his brakes and chucked us all out thinking we weren't going to pay

him. It was a long trudge back to the campsite – hey ho!!

Next day we left for home – which was as well before we got into any more trouble – but what a memorable trip.

Dave Haigh (Swampy)

CRO Clapham 10K run

1991 (I think)

During the '80s jogging was a popular means of keeping fit and quite a few BPC members used this form of torture to enhance their caving/climbing/walking interests. Pete Faulkner and I used to jog/walk up Penyghent occasionally, he cycled a lot and I used to jog a couple of miles most mornings but we could never call ourselves runners. But in early 1991 the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO), based in Clapham (as it still is of course), announced that they were going to stage a running event the following June (I think) in order to raise much needed funds. There was to be a marathon around Ingleborough and a 10K local to Clapham for the lesser mortals.

After hearing of the proposed 10K race, there was a fair bit of excited chatter about it both at the dump and of course down the pub! What captured our interest was the inclusion of a caving club team prize for the first three fastest home in that team. As usual the more beer we supped the more likely it was gonna be that if a few of us trained ourselves up we may become 'proper' runners and win that coveted team prize. What's more we'd start the very next day. Of course, we were all so hung over that the next day's training was abandoned, but at least six of us vowed to get out more in the coming weeks – it couldn't be just ale talk surely!

During the next few weeks more and more members became interested in having a bash at the 10k – most of which, although fit, had never run a step in earnest. It was after all to support a charity close to home so just to complete the course was deemed to be a thrill and a challenge worth accepting – with a bit of fun to boot.

Whilst we didn't train together, we all upped our game a bit from home. Di had never run a step in her life but she started coming out jogging with me and we were both really enjoying being part of the fun and working towards taking part in an organised race for the first time. Initially, besides Di and I, it was Pete Faulkner, Dave and Thirza Hyde, Sharon Kelly and Chris Robbo who were up for it but soon Ian (Wilkie) Wilkinson, Jim Abbott, Bob Bialek (Dalek) Derek Castleden (Cas), Gwyn Bryan, Colin Gates and Dave Matthews were all keen to have a go. Dave Matthews was likely to be our star man as he had some very good form in previous road races.

Finally the weekend of the race arrived and some of our team were at the dump on the Friday night. We were all excited like you'd never believe and fairly buzzing. We went down the Lion but all decided to keep the booze to a minimum so as to be fit for the race the next day. Thirza was nodding

off to sleep with the words “go for gold and win the prize” which we all echoed.

We weren't sure what to eat before the race, but I'd read that a bowl of porridge eaten two hours before the start was best and would keep you going, so we plumped for that and set out for Clapham on a nice sunny day.

The atmosphere was electric as 300 plus entrants milled around the CRO depot to collect and pin on our numbers. The buzz was that the famous Olympic runner, Steve Cram, who was the present mile world record holder, was also taking part. Apparently he was on his way to honeymoon in the lakes and had decided to drop off and support



L-R: Dalek, Chris Robbo, Dave Matthews, Raymond Stoyles (Farmer)

the CRO cause. Sure enough – there was the great man cruising up and down the lane to limber up. Wow! We were all astonished at the way he covered the ground, much like a gazelle out for a country stroll.

In all an amazing 21 BPC members turned up and entered the race. The route was from the CRO depot up the long hill to Cold Cotes and on to Goat Gap, then downhill to the road back to Clapham and the finish line. I'd thought the route started at the top of the hill and had told Sharon and Carmel it wasn't a steep run. The starting gun went off and we started on the long, up hill climb. Sharon turned to me and shouted “Haigh, you bastard! You said it wasn't steep! - if I survive this I'm going to f...ing kill you!” Di was so taken up with my bollocking from Sharon (which continued for quite some time and was supported and egged on by Carmel) that it helped her laugh her way up the hill and massively eased the pain. We jogged, burped and nattered our way along – all agreeing that the porridge felt like lead in our bellies and now know with hind sight it was entirely the wrong thing to do – hey ho!

To cut a long story short, all 21 of us finished the race and were chuffed to little bits. Di said her head was filled with the theme tune from Chariots of Fire as she approached Clapham and the finishing line, knowing she was definitely going to finish and not last at that. She said it was the best feeling of her entire life.

Steve Cram won of course, by about ten minutes from his nearest rival. Most of us were well at the back of the field but none of us was last. It was grand to see all our lot finishing – Jim Abbott (Mendip Jim), Andy France (Thug), Carmel Lee and Snake (Raymond) Lee, Di Readman as was, now Di Haigh, and Dave Haigh (Swampy), Derek (Cas) Castleden, Ian (Wilkie) Wilkinson, Gwyn Bryan, Colin Gates,

Dave and Thirza Hyde, Pete Faulkner (Herr Flick), Sharon Kelly, Pete Faulkner's cousin – I don't know his name, Mick Steve Fuck Knows, Steve Hall and I think the following – Ian Greenwood (Beans), Geoff Banham and Mick (Smiley) Riley.

But there were others on our team who excelled themselves. Out of 300 plus runners Dave Matthews came 14th, I think Dalek came 47th and Chris Robbo again I think was 147th – better still these three won us the prize for best caving team. Yee Haw!!

Needless to say we all retired to the New Inn and enjoyed one of the best piss ups I've ever had, which went on very late until we all collapsed, dead drunk, in one of Keith and Barbara's (landlords) spare rooms upstairs. There were some notable characters, like Marian, Ivor and Farmer, star drinkers of this parish, who came to support us (and help us celebrate!) along with lots of club members.

Dave Haigh (Swampy)

The Starting Handle

The pub – in a quite hamlet of the Yorkshire Dales, was quite smart and well patronised by locals – mostly farmers who took their wives and families there for a meal and a Saturday night out. They were also able to enjoy an after hours drink, consequently, us "crag rats" (who spent far more money than the locals) were treated as second class citizens and were confined to a rear tap room with a hatch to the bar through which we were served. This arrangement suited us fine, but on this particular night my old mate and BPC member, George Cheshire, and I decided, upon being refused an after hours drink, that things ought to change as we could see through the hatch that people were being served in the "posh" room at the other side of the bar.

We made our way round to the "posh" room and politely joined the queue of customers being served. When my turn came the landlord served us but half way through pulling the pint, he stopped – stared hard at me, and said, "I've just told you "crag rats" we're closed." "No, you're not," says I. "You've just served three blokes in front of us." "Well I'm not serving you so you can fuck off," he said, flashing a cocky smirk to some of the grinning locals standing at the bar. "Surely our money is as good as theirs," I said, whereupon he leaned over the bar and punched me! As a natural reaction, I threw one back at him and somehow ended up with his glasses in my hand. He hurled himself over the bar and threatened me with more violence so I said, "If you don't back off it's goodbye glasses!" He came at me so I stamped on them! This really seemed to piss him off so he and a few of the locals threw me out into the gravel of the car park and someone kicked me in the side of the head.

In those days I drove an ex-RAF van which was as big as a camper van. George was already sitting in the back of it being sick when I arrived back. "You OK?" said George, "Can't believe he attacked us like that." "Me neither – yeah, I'm surprisingly unscathed – just a kick in the ear." I laughed. "That's not right," says George. "Why don't you take the starting handle (which was 6 feet long) and go and sort 'em out." "Good idea," says I – and marched back into the pub with it over my shoulder.

There were about 20 blokes in the bar.

As soon as they saw me arrive the whole roomful dived for cover with an audible groan under the tables. "OK," says I "who kicked me in the head?" One or two got brave and came at me as I realised there was no way I could actually hit anyone with it, and once again they threw me out into the car park, bending the starting handle in the process, and saying, "If you come here again, we'll kill you."

Back at the van, George was still not well but was recovering. "How did you get on?" he says. "Bent the bugger round my neck," says I, "but I couldn't hit anyone with it – could have killed someone. Anyway, they said they'd kill me if I went back." "They're bluffing," says George. "Wouldn't have that," says George. "Why don't you go back in and find out who bent it."

Off I went again – marched in with the bent starting handle over my shoulder. Again a loud groan and a collective "Oh, no," as they all dived for cover. "OK," says I, "who bent it?" This time they didn't muck about. Half a dozen of them immediately pounced on me and flung me across the car park for the third time, threatening to rally more locals from the bar and beat me to a pulp.

Once more I was back with George and as we were both sobering up, decided to get out fast whilst we were still alive. After a few country miles we parked up and slept overnight in the van. Boy did we have bad heads the next day – but we realised we were lucky to have heads at all.

After 40 years, I can look back on this episode in my life with a modicum of amusement but absolute horror at my behaviour – it was so out of character but I guess at the time I was getting a lot of things out of my system – we were both lucky to survive it.

It was twenty years before I dared return to the pub! I've had my moments through the years but I've never been involved with anything like that from that day to this.

Dave Haigh (Swampy)

Mossdale: A Personal Recollection

It was Saturday 24th June 1967 and along with a number of BPC members I had left what is now Settle Working Men's Club, where we had attended the AGM of a caving associated organisation, to have a meal when there was a terrific cloudburst and the roads became flooded. The comment was made that it was to be hoped that anyone caving was now out. I set off home to Otley and drove through the floodwaters rushing off the fields onto the roads. A short time after arriving home later that night the UWFRA call out system was activated and as a member I started to get organised to respond to an incident at Mossdale where 6 cavers were reported overdue. The fire crew at Otley were turned out to attend the incident as part of the attendance and I received a call from West Riding Fire Service Control to put me from an off duty firefighter to on duty and to attend the incident and help with liaison with UWFRA and Fire Service and that an officer was on his way to get me and my gear up to Conistone. The officer was Derek Gill who also lived at Otley and had attended

a number of cave rescue incidents in the past including a fatality at Dow Cave and was familiar with the relevant operational procedures.

After a difficult journey and then up the fell to Mossdale I at last arrived at the cave. The multi agency operation was well underway with the Local Authority providing sandbags to dam across the scar to divert Mossdale Beck, the Fire Service had mobilised personnel and equipment which included a Bikini Unit which carried Coventry Climax portable pumps which were lined up at the dam and working hard to prevent overflow into the cave. I remember intense discussions between the various agencies onsite as to whether it was safe to risk rescue teams in such circumstances and as much support as possible was given by all concerned to Len Huff of UWFRA who was carrying tremendous responsibility in deciding when to commit teams underground.

A number of teams had carried out searches and located fatalities before I went underground with a team to search a specific area. I was behind a fellow BPC member as we lined up to slide down the entrance, unfortunately a rock fall injured his hand and he had to leave for medical treatment. When I lowered myself into the entrance I was looking across the lip of the dam to my colleagues operating the pumps and did a quick calculation of the number of pumps x 350 gpm versus the gpm flowrate of the raging Mossdale Beck, it was borderline. We went down the entrance series into the system and had a briefing from Des Birch who was manning a field telephone in touch with the surface to monitor the rainfall and dam level. Flood debris was up to the top of every passage and aven and the pressure of water down the system must have been beyond imagination. Our search area proved negative.

Len Huff held a lengthy discussion as to the risk involved in carrying out a further search and the decision was made to go ahead to try and locate the final casualty. Everyone involved was very subdued when the message was received that a body had been found at the top of one of the avens.

The dam was still holding and now a digger was on site so a bypass was dug to divert the water away from the cave which made the entrance much safer to enter however the weather was still appalling. Discussions took place with regard to the retrieval of the fatalities. These discussions were at a high level and involved the rescue teams but also the Coroner, Home Office and the Police who had overall command. All this put tremendous pressure on Len Huff and everyone involved did their utmost to support him. The decision was made that in the circumstances no further underground searches would be carried out.

After 4 or 5 days working above and below ground with very little sleep I was no longer contributing much to the onsite operations so I liaised with my Fire Service colleagues and arranged to return home. The fatalities are remembered at Mossdale and Conistone and those of us at BPC who caved with them will always remember Bill Frakes, Colin Vickers and Michael Ryan.

Michael Hartland

John Birkbeck (1817–1890) and John Birkbeck (1842–1892), mountaineers

The Birkbeck family have contributed much to local and national developments in trade, banking and education. The name of John Birkbeck is to be found in the mountaineering museum in Zermatt, a village sitting under the shadow of the magnificent Matterhorn. It is recorded there that he along with companions was the first to set foot on the highest summit of Monte Rosa in Switzerland in 1855.

John Birkbeck (senior) was born in Settle in 1817 and died there in 1890. He was the eldest of five children whose family set up the Craven Bank with others in 1791. John was educated at Giggleswick School then went to Trinity College, Cambridge. But as a Quaker he was not eligible to take a degree. (He joined the Church of England in 1841). While at Cambridge he made friends with John Ball who became the first President of the Alpine Club. John entered the bank after leaving Cambridge and became a partner in 1844 when his father died. In 1880 he was a senior partner and later chairman until he died in 1890.

John Birkbeck's climbing activity was typical of a man of means at the time with the money and leisure to indulge in exploration of the Swiss Alps, along with clergy and academics. In his youth he covered 60 miles a day in Scotland on several occasions so his stamina was typical of the climbing pioneers whose exploits can still amaze us. John explored local potholes and in 1848 a party of guests was lowered in a basket into 'Hellen' (Alum) pot. The Alpine Golden Age was ushered in with Alfred Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1854. The Alpine Club was formed and John was one of the founder members. The following year John, with friends Charles Hudson, Grenville and Christopher Smythe, E. Stevenson and guides Lauener and the two zum Taugwald brothers, reached the highest peak of Monte Rosa, the Dufourspitze (Grenzgipfel) 15,150 ft (4618 m). Monte Rosa is a massive mountain with several summits at the head of the Görner glacier, a short distance away from the Matterhorn. His English companions were all Reverend gentlemen and maybe like the Rev. John Robinson of Settle later in the century they did not have 'the cure of souls' by having a benefice and had independent means. The Rev. Charles Hudson is one of the authors of the book 'The Ascent of Mont Blanc by a new route and without Guides and two ascents of Monte Rosa' in one of which ascents John Birkbeck Esq., of Ingfield, formed one of the party. Hudson gave a talk in 1858 in Settle at the Mechanics' Institute entitled 'Alps and Glaciers of Switzerland and Savoy' (Brown, 1896).

John Birkbeck's son John also enjoyed alpine adventures, detailed



Monte Rosa and Görner glacier

by Lyall (1997). John, senior, had persuaded Charles Hudson to introduce his son to the mysteries of mountaineering in 1861. A large very experienced party comprising Hudson, Leslie Stephen, Tuckett, Mather and guides Anderegg, Bennen and Perren were on the Col de Miage on Mont Blanc and sat down to eat. John took off the rope and retired a short distance; after a while the guides followed his tracks in the snow, only to find that John had slipped and fallen a near vertical distance of 1800 ft down a snow slope. He eventually recovered. Hudson recounts the story in detail in *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* (1926).

John Birkbeck junior nearly found fame as one of the first ill-fated party to reach the top of the Matterhorn some years later, in 1865. John had engaged the much sought-after guide Michel Croz for the 1865 climbing season. Charles Hudson, a pioneer of guideless climbing, had proposed to John that they with Thomas Kennedy have 'a shot at the Matterhorn', 14,690 ft (4478m), a prize being sought by several parties. However, John fell ill in Geneva (or Chamonix) and returned home. The guides Croz and Perren continued with Hudson and they went off to Zermatt. Meanwhile Edward Whymper who had considered the Matterhorn to be 'his' mountain since 1861 was also in Zermatt looking desperately for support climbers because he suspected that Italian climbers with J-A. Carrel as guide were about to attempt the Italian ridge from Breuil. Whymper was surprised to see Croz outside the Hotel Monte Rosa in Zermatt but was delighted when Hudson with Croz agreed to join forces with him on the Hörnli ridge of the Matterhorn. Lord Francis Douglas (aged 18) and Douglas Hadow (aged 19, a former pupil of Hudson's) were then rather casually recruited as further members of the expedition, together with the zum Taugwalders, father and son, as additional guides, and they all set off shortly afterwards.

On the return from the Matterhorn summit the ill-shod Hadow slipped on the upper steep slopes and knocked Croz over while the guide 'Old Peter' Taugwalder was securing a rope and four of the party fell to their deaths. To judge from the museum exhibits none of them was well-shod by today's standards and the ropes used were weak.

Mrs Birkbeck later told that 'when we walked up our small hill Penyghent on one side there is a small piece of rock which has to be descended with care, but most of our party could walk down it with ease. Poor Mr Hadow found it very difficult and had to be helped down. Later we were not surprised to hear he had slipped on the Matterhorn'.

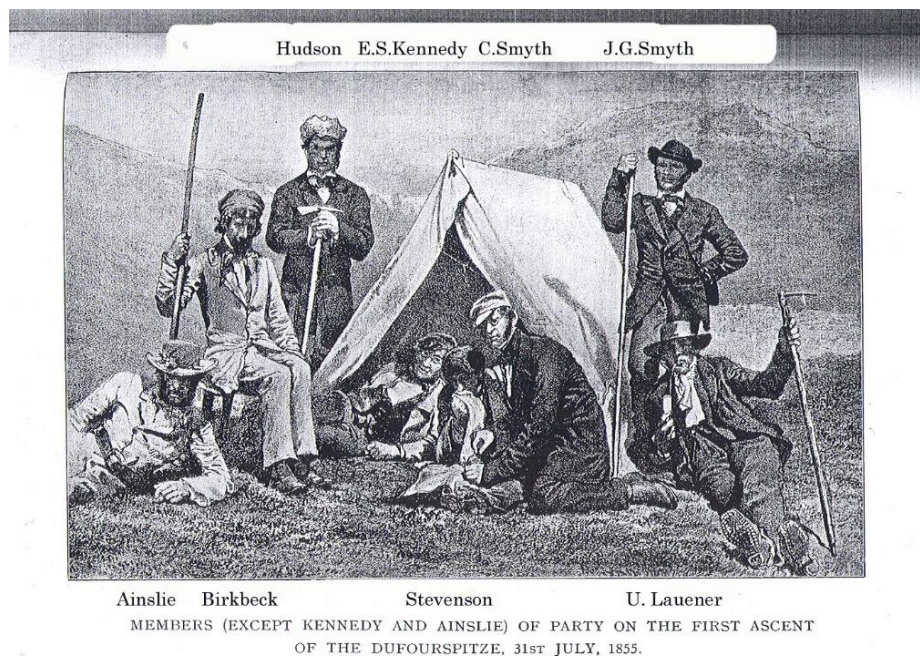
In 1866 John attempted the Hörnli route on the Matterhorn with seven guides but turned back at the shoulder. He wrote: 'The next morning when we started I noticed that the guides crossed themselves. This did not look to me a very healthy sign....' In 1874 John succeeded in climbing the Matterhorn from Breuil then descended the Hörnli ridge and walked back to Breuil over the Petit Col Cervin (Théodule Pass) - about 20 miles, all in 19 hours.



The Hörnli ridge

Leslie Stephen of this climbing fraternity was variously tutor of Trinity Hall, clergyman, mathematician, journalist, alpinist and became father of Virginia (Woolf) and Vanessa (Bell) of the Bloomsbury Group of literati. He visited the Birkbecks in Settle and 'once attended a committee meeting of which John senior was a principal member, constituted to investigate one of the strange caves in the neighbourhood where prehistoric savages apparently lunched upon hyaena bones'.

John (junior) became the second chairman of the Craven Bank Ltd.



Sources:

- *Alpine Journal*, vol. 15, 1891. p277.
- *Alpine Journal*, vol. 30, 1916. p. 291.
- *Alpine Journal*, vol. 32, 1918/19. p. 20.
- Blakeney, E.H., (ed.), *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*, publ. J.M.Dent, 1926.
- Braham, T., Forbes, J.D., *When the Alps cast their spell*, publ. N. Wilson Publishing., 2004.
- Brown, G.H., *On foot round Settle*, vol. IV p307, publ. Lambert, Settle, 1896 (Copy with inserts in the Brayshaw Library, Giggleswick School, with acknowledgements to Mrs Gent)
- Clark, R.W., *The Alps*, publ. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1973.
- Engel, C.E., *A history of mountaineering in the Alps*, publ. Unwin, 1950.
- Lyall, A., *The first descent of the Matterhorn*, publ. Gomer, 1997.
- McCarthy, D., *Memories*, publ. MacGibbon and Kee, 1953.
- Speight, H., *The Craven and North West Yorkshire Highlands*, publ. Elliot Stock, London, 1892.
- Whymper, E., *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, publ. John Murray, 1900.
- Whymper, E., *The valley of Zermatt and the Matterhorn*, publ. John Murray, 1908.

Reproduced with permission from the North Craven Heritage Trust Journal (2009). Available at <http://www.northcravenheritage.org.uk/NCHTJto2009/Journals/2009/Birkbecks/JohnBirkbeck.html>

Michael Slater

Obituary – Chris Dufton

1935 – 2022

Chris was born in Tyersal, Bradford in 1935 to Horace and Elsie Dufton. He had two younger sisters, Marjorie and Janet. He had a happy childhood, only marred by the lack of sweets due to rationing. He attended Waterloo School. Pudsey and then Pudsey Grammar School.



From an early age, Chris was interested in outdoor pursuits, and he joined a local kid's cycling club. In his early teens, he cycled from Tyersal to Kettlewell on his own to visit his grandparents and enjoyed exploring the Yorkshire Dales on his bicycle, mountain biking on the lanes and hills long before mountain bikes were invented.

Exploring the Yorkshire Dales enabled him to pursue another lifelong hobby, photography, taking photos of the hills and villages and developing his own prints in his father's shed.

Chris left school and took up an engineering apprenticeship at English Electric in Thornbury. In his early twenties, as an alternative to National Service, he joined the Merchant Navy as an Officer, where he became a Third Engineer, travelling to Madeira and West Africa. He enjoyed working in the Merchant Navy and had fond memories of his time there. However, he missed the Yorkshire Dales and so returned to the UK to English Electric, where he worked on the Concord project.

It was at English Electric in 1961 that Chris met his wife, Marjorie, when they were both working in the drawing office, Chris as a Draughtsman and Marjorie as a Tracer copying his drawings. They were married in 1965.

Chris's interest in caving and his introduction to the Bradford Pothole Club began when he was working at English Electric as it was there that he met Geoff Silson, Pete Blakeley and Bob Jarman. They introduced Chris to the Bradford Pothole Club, where he went on to serve as club secretary, treasurer and president. He had many happy memories of the Bradford Pothole Club, especially of leading at Gaping Ghyll and wild camping there for the duration of the meet. His photography skills were also expanded as he took up cave photography.

In the late 60's. he became interested in sailing and joined Yeadon Sailing Club, where he won an impressive collection of trophies, including the Northern championships. He was always willing to help with running things and served on the committee as club Bosun. In the 1980's, he explored the Scottish Islands, English Channel and Irish Sea, sailing cruising yachts with a group of friends and, later on, with his family, always passing on his knowledge as he did so.

In 1970, Chris became a father, with the arrival of his son, Anthony, and daughter, Carol, followed a couple of years later. At around this time, though, the axe began to fall on the engineering industry and Chris was made redundant, so in 1972, he took the opportunity to open a DIY shop in Yeadon with his brother-in-law, David; it was called David's Timber. Chris's approach to shopkeeping was

portrayed by Ronnie Barker in Open All Hours; we were sure that Ronnie Barker must have been visiting David's Timber for his research. The shop ran for over 30 years, never once having a sale! Whilst working at the shop, Chris took up cycling again and cycled to work and back via Otley Chevin on most days and in all weathers.

On retirement, he was able to fulfil a few ambitions that he had always cherished, spending more time on his hobbies of cycling, sailing, walking and birdwatching. His most impressive achievements were cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats at the age of 70, to raise money for Cancer Backup, and sailing to St Kilda in his early 70's, both adventures undertaken with his friends.

Throughout his life he maintained a calm and steady approach to most things. A keen DIY man, he would tackle almost any repair project, usually with good results but, just occasionally, a disaster.

Sadly, the last few years of his life were marred by ill health, but he took it all in his stride and all the carers he had commented on what a pleasure it was to look after him. He spent the last five months of his life in a care home and on one occasion when we visited, being tired of the questions, "What have you done today?" or "What did you have for lunch?" he replied in a moment of clarity, "I don't know what I shall be doing tomorrow, but whatever it is I'm going to enjoy it." Which nicely sums up his approach to life and the way he lived.

Marjorie Dufton

Obituary – Roy Tempest (Troy)

January 1947 – November 2022

Roy was known to his friends as “Troy” and joined the BPC in May 1997 as a probationary member, then gained his full membership in May 1999. He was looking forward to his 30th year with the BPC.

Throughout his membership, Troy was a regular attender at Gaping Gill and had not missed the event for several years. He always worked hard to support the event, by signing up for the earlier shifts on the job sheet and willingly filled in gaps on the job sheets for later in the day.

Sadly, Troy was unable to attend our 2022 Winch Meet and make his usual contribution to the success of the event. He was fighting cancer and recovering from the effects of therapy. He was making steady progress and looking forward to coming to GG 2023.

Despite taking all possible precautions to avoid any infection, Troy recently caught a chest infection and was unable to recover from it. Troy passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family.

Brian Simister (Ragnar)

Obituary – James Brown (Jim the Scot)

February 1957 – December 2022

Jim was known to his friends as “Jim the Scot” and joined the BPC in May 1999 as a probationary member, later to gain his full membership. He was introduced to the club by Troy.

Jim was an accomplished climber in his earlier years, being familiar with the more challenging mountains in Scotland and once led a climb up the Old Man of Hoy.

Jim was a regular attender at Gaping Gill where he always made a valued contribution to the success of the event. He will be remembered for his willingness to marshal whatever the weather and often doing double shifts. Jim was looking forward to attending Gaping Gill again in 2022 but was unable to do so as he was recovering from a heart attack.

More recently he suffered a stroke which severely restricted his mobility. He had been admitted to hospital with diabetic complications. Jim passed away peacefully in hospital.

Brian Simister (Ragnar)