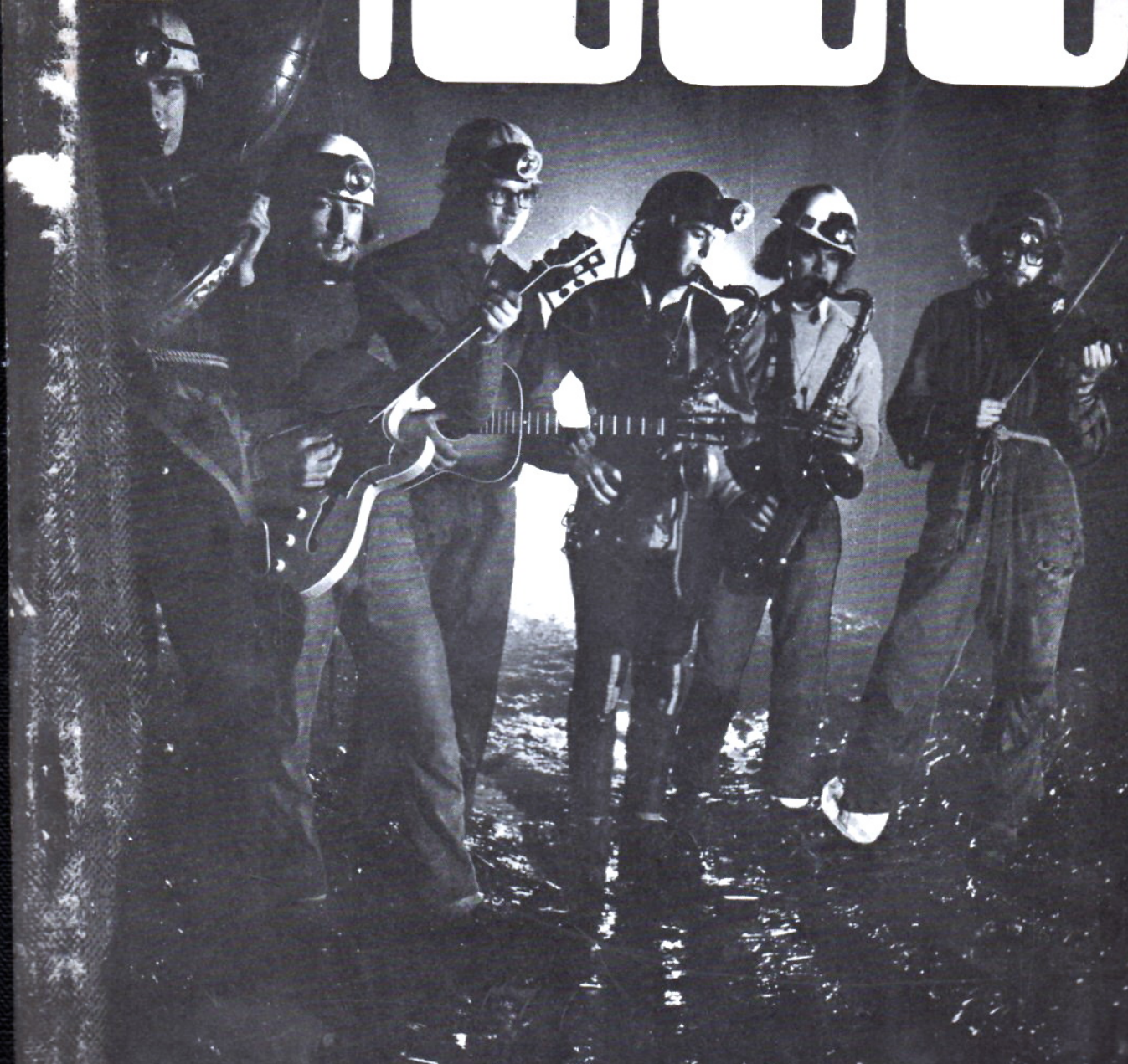


MOSES



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EDITORIAL

A lot of the caves described in this journal have been uncovered by Lank Mills with his instinctive ability for finding the right hole to dig. Lank and Hilly will soon be moving on to foreign parts for a year or so, and the club will be a poorer one without them both. We wish them well.

At the same time, one hopes that without Lank, the club will continue to find new caves and extend old ones. The more one wanders around the dales, the more one realises just how poorly some areas have been investigated. Major systems have yet to be entered and many smaller caves await discovery. The greatest thrill offered by caving is that of entering the unknown, and the genuine Scott-Stanley sensation is to be savoured, not by the Sunday sight-seers, but by those who are willing to dig. After all, many of the finest parts of Yorkshire's underworld would remain unknown but for the effort of those who put in a few hours with a shovel and crowbar. So lets have more digging, and more caves!

Editor: Juan Corrin

Contributors: John Cope(J.C.), Steve Lenartowitz, Dave Linton, Lank Mills, Jonathan Parkhouse, Keith Plumb, Pete Smith, and Oliver Stathem (K.C.C.) - the Original Snool!

Photographs: Cover - 'The Yordas Shale Band', a great group of MUSSicians. Taken by Juan Corrin.
Snool's Hole taken by Lank Mills.
Turkeyland Quarry Cave taken by Juan Corrin.

Darkroom Technicalities: Jonathan Parkhouse.

On the eve of the 1974 M.U.S.S. Expedition to Northern Spain, and with hopes of a good few kilometres of 'new stuff', J.C. tells of last years finds in the Spanish hills.

NORTHERN SPAIN, SUMMER HOLIDAYS 1973

After sampling Speleo-hospitality French-style, chez P.S.M., culminating in tourist-tripping into Salle Verna, our merry band hit the road to Matienzo and the more congenial climes(descents?) of the Cantabricas. There followed a brief spell of acclimatization while we got used to the booze at bargain prices, and then to business.

Over the hill to the north of Matienzo lies Riano. One kilometre before this village, opposite a watering-hole, a track leads up a broad dry valley ringed with shakeholes. The first of these contains a strongly draughting and apparently un-touched entrance. Lank Mills had spotted the hole in '72. It's promising appearance had kept the spark of hope alive in his breast during long winter days plodding up and down Penygent Gill!

So clad in cell and shreddies, and assuming our best Leck Fell (I'm-just-a-harmless-rambler) approach, we sauntered over to the entrance.

Breezing merrily and full of flood debris, the entrance crawl lead after 50ft to a small streamway, which steadily increased in height until a constriction forced us into the roof. A roomy chamber, entered via a short climb on the left-hand wall, enabled Lank to carry out some emergency surgery on his light. Back to the roof passage and gingerly through a hole in the floor, we regained the stream some 15ft below. Good walking passage brought us to a T-junction where we hit a much larger streamway. Instinctively, we made off downstream.

Real text-book stuff this, straight from the Golden Age of caving. The river rolled onwards, decorated with fine stal. curtains and punctuated with pleasant, just climbable cascades. The third of these necessitated traversing into an inlet passage to the right. A chimney and a short passage

leads back into the main stream.

At the foot of the 4th cascade, the stream doubled back under the fall and immediately sumped. However, Fortune had provided a handy by-pass crawl. This lead into a large inlet which could be followed back to the main stream. Another obstacle overcome, but unfortunately the river turned a couple of corners and plummeted into a deep and final sump.

Thoughts turned to things upstream. In a couple of bounds we were 200ft beyond the entrance inlet. Here the stream passage narrowed and a roof passage seemed to offer least resistance. Having entered a grim chamber reminiscent of a still from an avalanche morie, we were convinced that the streamway was not all that tight! We followed the water upstream to the junction of two equal sized inlets and branched right. This lead to a series of sandy tunnels, which defy all attempts at recollection. Suffice it to say that about ten passages were 'explored' at a brisk trot until it became necessary to bend at the waist.

A guesstimate of the extent of Cueva Riano is 3km in length and 60 - 70m deep. Several passages were noted and neglected, several must have gone un-noticed, and only the main downstream passage has been followed to any sort of conclusion. Cueva Riano is capable of considerable extension and further surface connection, particularly upstream. It is also a very pleasant place and certainly worth another visit.

Juan Carlos Fernandez Guitierrez is the author of the speleological survey of the Matienzo depression(1). Primarily a geologist, he is extremely keen for cavers to investigate the area further. So, having tactfully declined his invitation that we toil up an arid mountain and plumb a few hundred metre shafts, we agreed to look at Cubio de la Renada which could be reached on wheels. Three kilometres up the Sel de Suto track opposite a small church, the main Matienzo river, Rio Clarion, resurges. The resurgence, Cueva Comediante can be followed for short distance to a sump. Parallel to the

active cave runs a very large deserted phreatic tunnel. These two unite in a deep sump, which is the furthest upstream that this goodly, 10ft by 1ft river has been followed. Two or three hundred yards west of Cueva Comediante, round the base of the hill, is situated Cubio de la Renada. The entrance is twenty feet or so above a stream-side track and in thick growth. Nonetheless its presence is advertised by a tell tale cool breeze, which can be felt on the track below.

The 250yds of surveyed passage (1) consists of a series of phreatic tubes at the end of which is a small mud-choked streamway. A prominent cross-rift leads to a pool above which is written an authoritative FIN. Unimpressed, we waded on only to see daylight streaming in from an upper entrance. We peered out 50yds up valley and ten yards higher than the original entrance. Turning back into the gloom, we found that the boulder slope on which we stood, branched into two passages. We had arrived via the left hand branch, and so we set off down the other. In a muddy chamber the rumble of a distant river greeted our ears. In high spirits, we set to groping around the floor.

Fooled again! A blast of air bursting through a small triangular arch at floor level was responsible for the noise. Ten minutes digging in calcite fudge and we were walking in a large mud-coated rift, hitherto untrod.

Rapid progress through even larger passages brought us to the edge of a 25ft pitch. Below, the rift appeared to continue, undoubtedly towards the underground Rio Clarion. However, without ladder, the only way open to us was a traverse over the hole. A steep stal. slope dropped into a small streamway with little more than a trickle of water escaping from an uninviting canal and disappearing towards the pitch. Upstream looked promising, if damp. The water came within inches of the roof but was being whipped up by the strong air currents from greater things beyond. After some soul-searching, we spluttered through, having first deposited some of our dry gear for the return. Eight feet of canal and we

were back on dry land following the same old trickle into a roomy chamber. The source of the water was a series of cracks in the calcite floor, and we forced to seek an alternative route. A quick boulder wiggle high up on the left of the chamber led to a further large rift. There was still a good draught in our faces.

After a short walk, the cave started to get out of hand. Lofty passages leapt out from nowhere to form some of the most spectacular caving anyone is likely to come across. Floors were, for the most part, of black calcite nodules. Under high avens, these had been eroded to expose extensive false flooring. In one large chamber we were temporarily marooned on a large stal. flow as the floor collapsed on moving in any direction. Many of the stal. formations were red or orange. Roof pendants and curtains lurked against the black limestone walls like malevolent octopi about to pounce. At one point we dropped into a section of cleaned washed canyon passage descending in a series of rock pools to a boulder choke. The black limestone of the pools had become lined with masses of orange-red calcite crystals, which had deposited in the still water.

In five hours we covered an estimated 4-5km of passage - all big stuff. The main river was not reached. The inlet series, which contains most of the new passage has not been pushed to anything like a conclusion - remember the draught!

The potential is there, and it is a photographers paradise. With about twenty people travelling out to this area this summer, surveying, digging, photographing and pushing, there should be a lot of new cave to report when we return.

Hasta la Pisartista!

John Cope (J.C.)

Reference

(1) Cuadernos de Espeleologica No.2.

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