

Caves & Caving

£1.90 · ISSUE 66 · WINTER '94



THE BULLETIN
OF THE BRITISH
CAVE RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION

Dick Glover

It is sad to record the death of Dick Glover on 6 July 1994. Dick was an established character in UK caving, very active, and well-known to cavers throughout the country. I first met him in the early 1960s through our joint membership of CRG. Later we were also on the CRG committee together. Since I lived in Kids Grove, and he at Newcastle-under-Lyme, both near Stoke-on-Trent, we often met at one another's houses, and since Arthur Butcher also lived at Newcastle-under-Lyme this became quite a caucus. The CRG Newsletter in those days was duplicated and hand-collated, and many were the occasions when we walked round each other's dining tables for a whole evening putting issues together. Dick delighted in caving politics and knew what he wanted to happen; for example, both of us conspired in the 'kitchen cabinet' revolution on CRG Committee which resulted in the Editor of CRG, Marjorie Bailton, being replaced by a young geology don called Trevor Ford.

At that time Dick was an electronics technician at the University of Keele, and it was from his joint capabilities in electronics and caving that his interest in cave radio and radio-location grew. He assisted Bob Mackin in the early testing of the Speleophone, which Bob later developed into the Molephone. He was also the author of the chapter on radio-location techniques in *Surveying Caves*.

He was particularly known for his interest and enthusiasm for the Gaping Gill/Ingleborough Cave System. He was involved in the exploration of the Whitsun Series, and wrote several papers on the cave. Dick delighted in the construction of the M6, roaring and swooping through the Lancashire cotton towns, for

it meant that he could get to Ingleborough in just over two hours from Stoke-on-Trent.

On several occasions I accompanied him on a Friday-night drive from Staffordshire to the Dales, camping by his Land Rover somewhere on the fells. However, this was not near enough for him, and when he moved to a new house at Over Kelleit near Carnforth his first description of it to me was 'it's only half an hour from Clapham'. He took a post as a Technician at the University of Lancaster.

Dick was also much involved in NCA politics, being a prime mover in its foundation, and he was NCA Chairman for four years during its formative years from October 1971 to December 1975, as well as being a Trustee of NCA.

He unfortunately encountered bad luck when part of a cliff fell on him during fieldwork. He was seriously injured, and this really meant the end of his caving.

When the BCRA Cave Radio and Electronics Group was set up in 1988, Dick was a staunch supporter, harking back to his electronic days, and he became the Assistant Editor. He was also Chairman until he had to resign from ill health in 1993. He was also a member of the BCRA Hydrology Special Interest Group, and I well remember a field trip at Crackpot Cave in Swaledale, when he courageously struggled over the fells to a sink. One of the saddest occasions for me was when I read his letter of resignation from BCRA as he no longer wished to be reminded of happier days, and that he was unable to take part any longer. I gather that his last trip was with the waters through his beloved Gaping Gill/Ingleborough Cave System. Farewell, Dick, you will be sorely missed.

John Wilcock

Alan Box

The death occurred of Alan Box this summer while caving with the Matienzo Expedition. Alan had been to Matienzo a number of times and he was a very experienced expedition caver. He was involved in pushing La Hoyuca (Cueva Uzueka), part of the 41km long Four Valleys System.

One of its most impressive features is the Astradome, a 30m diameter aven which rises to over 100m, closing in somewhat at the top. It was during the scaling of this that the accident occurred.

On the night of Wednesday, 17th August 1994, Northern Cave Club member Alan Box, 32, died after falling 100m in Cueva Hoyuca, part of the extensive four valleys system, near Matienzo in northern Spain.

Alan had entered the cave during the afternoon with Mark Wright, to continue the scaling project begun last year at the Astradome, a massive, strongly draughting aven.

Last year's expedition had seen the aven scaled, by bolting, to 100m where a band of poor rock, unsuitable to take rock anchors, was encountered. This year a return was made with a scaling pole to pass the poor band of rock. Alan and Mark successfully overcame the obstacle to a chamber with the way on being, yet again, upwards.

The scaling pole was de-rigged and lifted to the chamber and the pair decided to exit the cave, as their carbide lights were failing and both were using their electric backups.

Alan descended first to the top of last year's bolt route. The rigging of the bolt route, and of the scaling pole, had been complicated and, on reaching the main belay, Alan came across two ropes, one the main pitch rope and the other a 20ft tail of rope. In this exposed spot and with poor light, Alan mistakenly started to descend the tail of rope and abseiled off the end to his death.

Mark descended to the foot of the Astradome and found Alan's body face down in a shallow pool. After removing Alan from the pool and checking for signs of life, Mark exited the cave to raise the alarm in the early hours of the following morning.

At 10am on Thursday, 18th, a team from the Potes mountain rescue group and cavers from Ramales, Santander and Tortosa along with members of the British expedition, entered the cave to the Astradome, 4.5km into the cave, to extricate Alan's body. A grim task completed at 9.30pm that night.

Alan's cremation took place on 3rd September in his native Co Durham.

A veteran of many caving expeditions to Mexico, Spain, Austria, France and Vietnam, Alan was also a regular participant in club activities in the Dales.

Weekend after weekend he could be found at such infamous long-term digs as Scales Moor Mine, Broken Finger Pot, Gavel Rigg, Glass Moss Pot, Rift Pot etc. as well as shepherding for the club divers, assisting in such projects as the King Pot - Keld Head dives and the Gavel - Pippikin connection.

Operating on a shoestring budget synonymous with living in a high unemployment area of the north east never dampened Alan's enthusiasm for caving, to which he also contributed through his membership of the Upper Teesdale and Weardale Fell Rescue Team.

But his greatest contributions were those of his affable nature, his sense of humour and his ability to make people feel at ease in his company.

Alan was a fine caver and friend, a unique character who will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are of all the good times we had together.

*Tim Allen, Mark Wright, Jane Draisey,
John Palmer and the NCC*

trips this year to Arctic Russia and Brazil concluded the programme and the evening degenerated into serious debate.

Sunday morning started with the Speleological Union of Ireland AGM followed by the Open Forum which allows contentious issues which have arisen throughout the year to be discussed. The afternoon followed with more caving and an SRT race held on the viaduct over the River Blackwater — an ideal spot for a long prussik and won by Barry Keenan.

Pete Bolt launched the evening with two slide shows (once again value for money ensured). In the first he described the exploration of Daren Cilau and in the second the exploration of Swildons and his on-going work there. Pete had a great collection of pictures and provided plenty of inspiration for finding something similar in Ireland.

Sunday evening is Table Quiz night and Richard Watson had compiled eight rounds of excruciatingly difficult questions and not one of the answers was Daniel O'Donnell. There were megabuck prizes for the three top tables but all winners were coerced into donating their prize money back to ICRO.

Late though it was, a visiting French caver, Nicholas Hollan, presented some slides taken during a previous visit to Ireland.

This was an opportunity for 'guess that cave' with lots of audience participation. The symposium ended with the photographic competition judged by Chris Howes and Judith Calford (it was now one o'clock in the morning and they were still working). Paul Butler won the print section and Tim Fogg the slide section with Conor Burns second.

Throughout the weekend Dragon Caving Roadshow had set out their wares and were doing a steady trade. Their presence was much appreciated as it gave a focus for the gathering and saved people from themselves by giving them something else to spend their money on as well as Guinness, Murphys or Beamish.

Thanks go to the Cork cavers for organising the weekend, especially Billy Cremin and Eddie Hyland, the guests Chris Howes, Judith Calford and Pete Bolt and other visiting English folks, Declan Harrison for the raffle and finally the Grand Hotel for needing only half an hour between serving the last drinks of the night and serving breakfast. Thanks go too, to all those too numerous to mention who kindly donated raffle prizes. Thanks also to Bryan Ellis who came over from Somerset and brought a BCRA stand for us to see.

As 1995 is the 100th anniversary of Martel's exploration in Fermanagh, next year's symposium will head north to the other end of the country to the Tir Navar Centre in Derrygonnelly, County Fermanagh.

Jenny Elliot is taking bookings now on 03656 41673. This will be the first time a creche is provided so you have a year to plan ahead and make full use of the facilities.