

8/4 Cluj or Kolozsvár

'Here might be the Oxford of the East of Europe, with its students and its traditional buildings' - Walter Starkie in Raggle-Taggle (Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary & Roumania) 1933  
'The Hungarians of Kolozsvár are the most charming people in Europe -' ibid.

Sightseeing began with a visit to the 'Institutul de Speologie "Emil Racoviță"' guided by Emil Silvestru, a fluent English speaking geologist (and Christian). The institute was set up in Cluj in 1920 in a specially built building primarily for research in 'biospeology' led by Emil Racoviță, a Romanian educated in Paris and member of the Belgian expedition to Antarctica in 1897-99 when their ship, Belgica, became stuck in the ice for a year before a channel was hewn out to release it. Emil thought the expedition to be neglected by history and had plans to reenact the voyage in the coming years, but they are unlikely to come to fruition for lack of sponsorship. The institute has a room devoted to Racoviță: youth; socialist interest in Paris; Antarctic expedition photos & gear; marine biology in France; leading to the systematic organisation of SPEOLOGIE (note only one L - the Romanians derive the word from speos = cellar instead of speleon = ?); and the collection of stal & bones plus some footprints preserved in mud and, exceptionally, one in stal\* - presumably hardened mornmilk. We were then proudly shown a decaying library of dusty tomes and ragged papers. To conclude (as Emil's daughter ran in and out and an evangelical policeman from Leeds appeared) we found the the state supports 10 staff in Cluj and 50 in Bucharest whose efforts mainly appear in the journals they produce, plus the odd lecture. However, they appear to be immensely friendly and approachable with good relations to the 'amateurs' while preserving a certain sense of priority. ~~Another~~ An interesting point: In Italy it is illegal to gate caves; in Slovakia all caves are protected by law whether discovered or not; in Romania they are drafting a law which might standardise the current British-like free for some but not for others - but the 'mîine' concept prevails - like 'mañana' but without that vital sense of urgency!

\* From B. Vintop to the S. of the Padis Plateau, N of Giarda de Sus in near Caribz Mass

CIUBOTĂRESCU CHRISTIAN  
 (27) D.M.C. GÂRNA JUDE ALBA  
 COD 3390  
 ROMANIA tel 2. through CÂMPENI  
 x St. MIHAIL MOXA Nr 8 Et 1 Ap 3 sector 1  
 BUCURESTI COD ~~339070109~~ tel 01/6507782.

DIMEN LEVENTE (Levi) - going to contact you  
 to email. (internet).

ALBA IULIA 2500  
 street. M. EMINESCU NR. 13.  
 tel. 058-811168

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 hope  
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9-4-96 onto Girda - back in the country

Chris V & Martin H departed early a.m. - CV to veg in  
 Budapest, MH to pop over to Poland. Katerina drove  
 the last of us - Chris P, Martin L & Louke, back  
 West to the Bihor mountains. Much wattering of gears  
 later (CD + working gear shift mechanism did not  
 mix very well) we vanquished the last pothole  
 to arrive in Girda. We moved into the local  
 hospital courtesy of Dr Christian Ciubotarescu. Fortunately  
 there were no sick people in Girda that day.

10-4-96 Cube Mare & Oilor Cave

Slow trip up increasingly icy & rutted track past scenic farms and men with axes ended at a  
 remote and self-sufficient village. Floundering a hundred metres up through snowy woods led to  
 ascending phreatic tube of P. Oilor (Sheep Cave). Moving sideward over slippery moraine we arrived  
 at more than usual icy water, got wet, took a few photos and decided not to bother pushing  
 on to the end.

A couple of hundred metres up the road ~~is~~ the large entrance to <sup>Cotba</sup> ~~Cotba~~ Mare (Great  
 Nest) is well concealed by trees. Very deep snow led down to the sizzling stream and  
 spectacular ice formations in the entrance chamber. To the left is an extensive labyrinth  
 which Katerina was determined to explore with the assistance of strips of aluminium foil and felt  
 Rags pegged into wood, but Martin & Louke opted for a quick trip down the impressively sized  
 streamway reached via a squeeze over ice into icy water followed by another icy crawl around  
 a log. Ice continued about 70m into the cave but formations after that were mainly moraine,  
 plus assorted logs wedged up to 10m in the roof - not a place to be in a flood. Stopped  
 at wet cascade which can be rigged (allegedly) from two rusty pipes to land in chest deep flood  
 leading to lake & final swamp. Nice cave, but very cold!

2  
 (27) CIUBOTĂRESCU CHX  
 D.M.C. GÂRNA  
 COD 3390  
 ROMANIA  
 x St. MIHAIL MOXA  
 BUCUREȘTI COD

DIȚEN LEVE

ALBA IULIA  
 Street: M. EMILIEȘ  
 tel. 058-81

9-4-96

Chris V & I  
 Budapest M  
 the last of  
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contact you  
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country

- CV to veg in  
 Katinka drive  
 Leave back  
 waiting of gear

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 hospital courtesy of Dr. Christian Ciubotărescu. Fortunately  
 there were no sick people in Gârda that day.

10-4-96 Coiba Mare & Oilor Cave

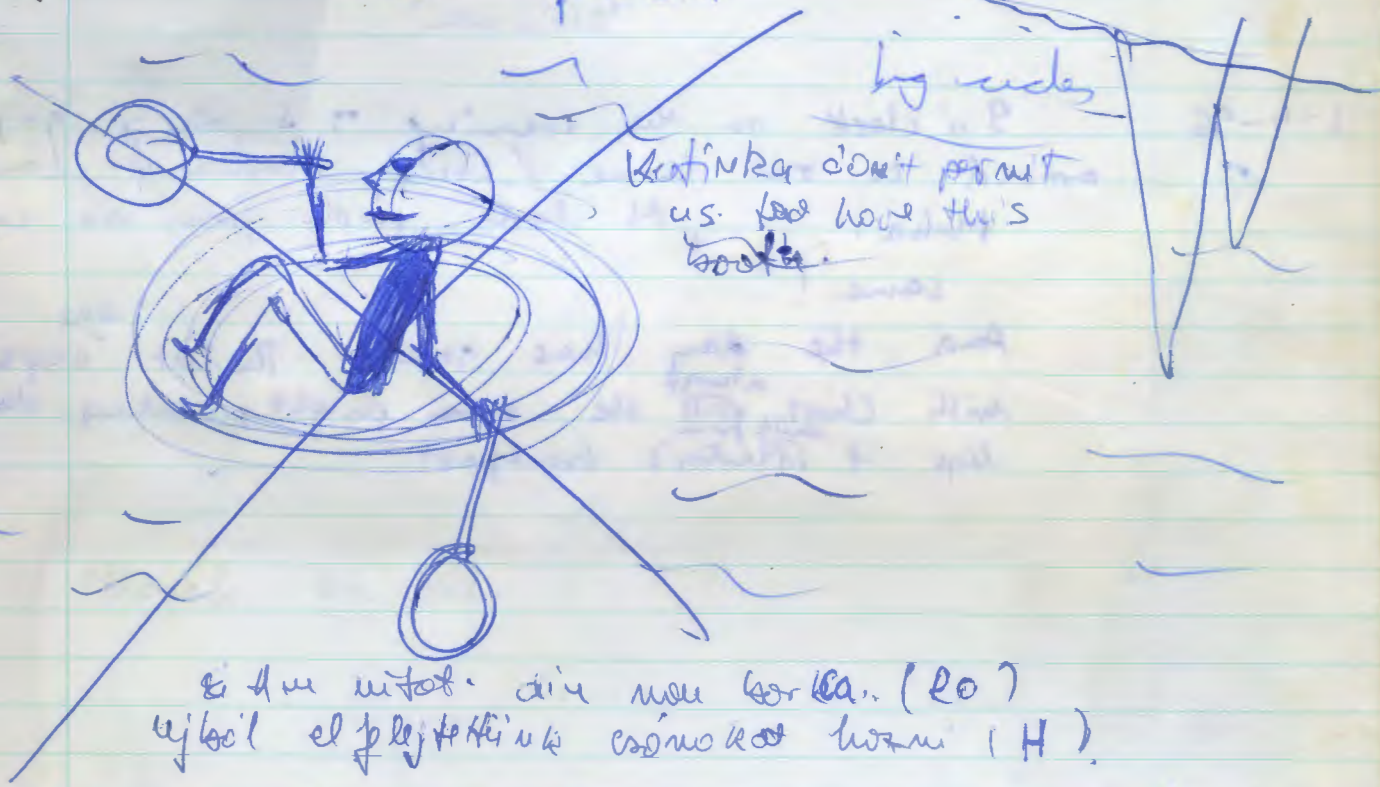
Slow trip up increasingly icy & rutted track past scenic farms and men with axes ended at a  
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A couple of hundred metres up the road is the large entrance to <sup>Coiba</sup> ~~Coiba~~ Mare (Great  
 Nest) is well concealed by trees. Very deep snow led down to the sizzling stream and  
 spectacular ice formations in the entrance chamber. To the left is an extensive labyrinth  
 which Katinka was determined to explore with the assistance of strips of aluminium foil and felt  
 Rugs pegged into wood, but Markin & Hank opted for a quick trip down the impressively sized  
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11-6-96 ZGURASTI CAVE.

Chris, Katerka & Levi, Sorabje? - from local club). Set off from the 'speleohospital' for the cave with the biggest subterranean lake in Romania. No need for a boat because there are plenty there already, Christian told us. Walked out of Gijda on a typically steep slope covered in beech leaves, & reached the impressive looking entrance - a collapsed doline. Starting the edge a green lake could be seen shimmering about 40m down. Ploughed down the snow slope & headed for the tantalising lake. It was wide deep & very green. There were huge icicles on the roof overhead above. But this was not the biggest underground lake in Romania. It was not meant to be there at all. We had a problem.

boat didn't on the we didn't to because the lake should've been there



Yes "we have forgotten the boat. Again" (GR) Ditched rope & set gear, back up the snow slope, down the leaf slope. Looked in at the resurgence - the winter floods had washed some of the wooden steps away. Back at the hospital, Christian said - lake at entrance means 'semia syphon' is 'complete syphon' - i.e. big lake is no-go. Back we go to collect gear. No luck. Katerka drove us up the road to

11-4-96 Haanqa Apei Cave / Patera / Barlang  
(Hancap)

Chris, Katerika + Levi & Soebjo(?)  
On up the track from Girda. Pooey entrance, a locked gate & a couple of locks followed by a muddy passage gave the place a bit of a Welsh feel. But huge quantities of moormilk, great sweeps of calate & strong hieroglyphic rock patterns soon gave the lie to this. We were obviously the first to visit since the cave filled up during the Xmas flood. Lovely little trip to end the trip. Back to the ~~spa~~ speedyspital for rum with beer (good value) & an excellent slide show from Christians. /

A doctor says: 'To get drunk quickly & deeply add fizz to alcohol so as to increase the surface available for absorption'  
'Yes - no problem'

12-4-96

9 o'clock in the evening 3 dirty guys ~~came~~ arrived to our home (Chris, Martin & Lenk).

Moha: "At last, people from the civilizati<sup>o</sup> came!"

And the day has gone... The cat <sup>was</sup> sleeping with Chris <sup>at least</sup> <sup>all</sup> the ~~even~~ night, eating deik's legs <sup>with</sup> <sup>from</sup> Martin's breakfast.



Pinkie silvi H... L Yorkie K tye

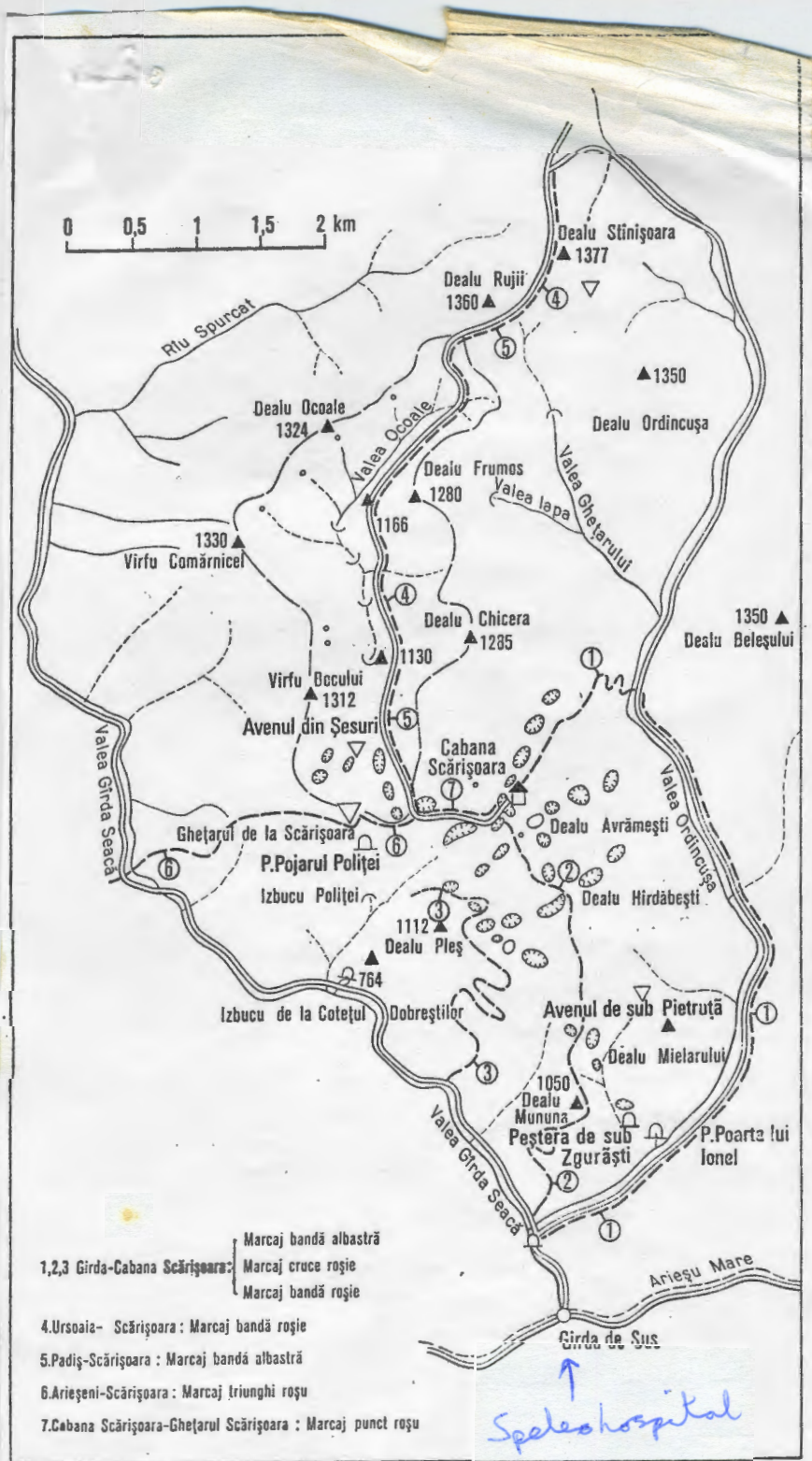


Fig. 49. Schița zonei Ocoale-Ghețar.



Do come caving  
with us to Herangang!

Andi & Mola

(also dirty caves)

(36)

# MEANWHILE . . . . .

Back in Draenen, the awkward Sledge crawler running out of Snowball Passage has broken thro to the opposite end of Snowball Passage, passing a fair few worthwhile leads towards unknown territory. Five minutes of pulling boulders yielded a low crawl, beautifully decorated with gypsum swords. A hot-headed crew would have pressed on, shafted the gypsum and found the nicker of chokes round the first corner. We were good and we were cool. We surveyed a few loose ends from the earlier break-thru, gingered back thro the crawl and it was BIG, SO FUCKING BIG YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT. The big stuff, a sort of 1/2 scale version of The BIG COUNTRY took us 100m south-east to a fairly impenetrable break-down, but passed a ton of leads (too numerous to detail), leading north-south-and east (all into virgin ~~new~~ limestone). We'd done enough and moved out. 100m surveyed in the old stuff, 270m in the BIG, SO <sup>FR</sup> etc stuff. Walked away from wide open, I said wide open leads. 12 hours I won't forget.

Tim and J.C were there. 14/4/96

By the way, did I mention it was beautiful, as in broadly awe-inspiring. Whoa!

Also: "Can you dig it"? by Gavin + Steve.

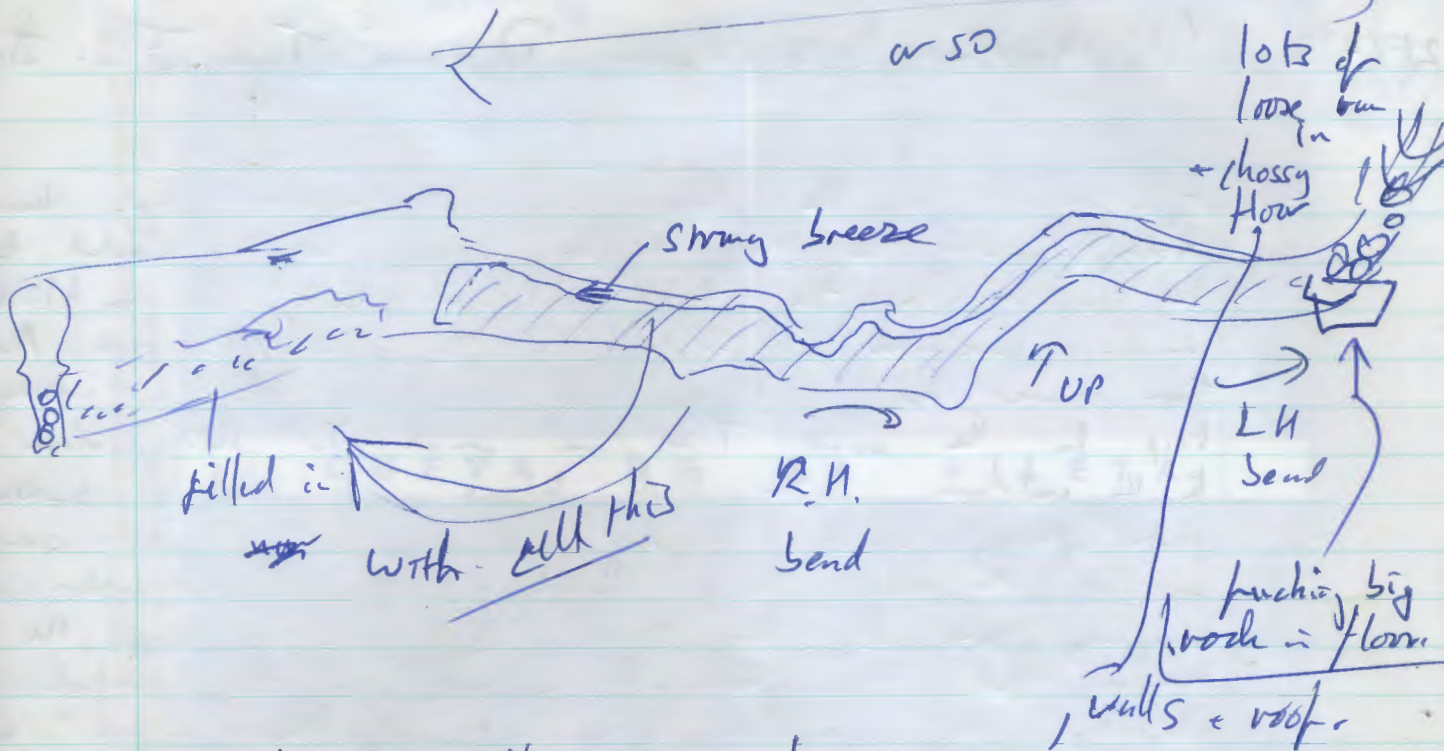
This is a very good dig site. Gavin + I have seen these three times

I estimate we have shifted 4 tons of rocks & mud - 10m, 60cm x 30cm excavated.

Still a very good draught, but who knows how long it will be before we find passage that will make St Giles look like a hole in the ground?  
- erm, about 5 months, actually . . . .



10 m  
or 50



Its at the end of "Last sandwich" & heading lots of blank space on the map

Steve

Jaimé

para el logbook!

Uso



"The Man Standing Next To You Could Be Wearing a Bra Under His Shirt"

21/4/96

# Yet Another trip down Draenen - Tim, J.C. Jo.

~ Interest in the deep crawler Extron was has been rising. Could be the wide open leads. Could be the position in the hill. Could be Tim's black magic ceremonies. Could be the price of fish. Anyway there were no shortage of volunteers for a return trip. In the week Tim, we and Jo slid down to the entrance with high hopes of pushing, surveying, photographing and trapping. Gavin and pals over-haul us in the White-Arch Pass-age, strangely including with slinging gear. By the time we got to camp, the reason for this became apparent, as the useful crow-bars had mysteriously disappeared. "New mind" was the general consensus. Not. We pressed on to the new drift, and got on with the job. The best of open lead turned out to rejoin the known cave at the 2nd best lead, but yielded a nice 80m of high level rocky passage (Tom called it, close to the distinct aroma of cat piss from Tim). The 2nd aim of the trip was to get some shots of the new bits before they get trashed and this was duly accomplished with minimal hassle. All set for going out, but I caught up to the solid-wall that marked the end of lead in space. To confirm it was going no-where. It was WINDY, so a quick rethink changed us with some frantic digging. Took for a couple of minutes to see if it was walkable. In and on how later we were through. It was pretty nasty looking, but a flat old crawl underneath a shaly roof led to another chamber (About 10m round) and passage off to end in another dig. Superb. In all we've got going on than of new passage since Tim's Pauline broke through and it's still going. We were knackered on the way out, but so hitting the surface at 2pm. for a 16hr trip. Good training for expeditions. Mod. of Jo's back had gone walk-a-boat. which didn't go down to well, but miraculously it had only gone half way down the hill to reside in sea gorse bushes. Good by

SE.

And people say  
Cavers are  
mad

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Tree hummers take a bough

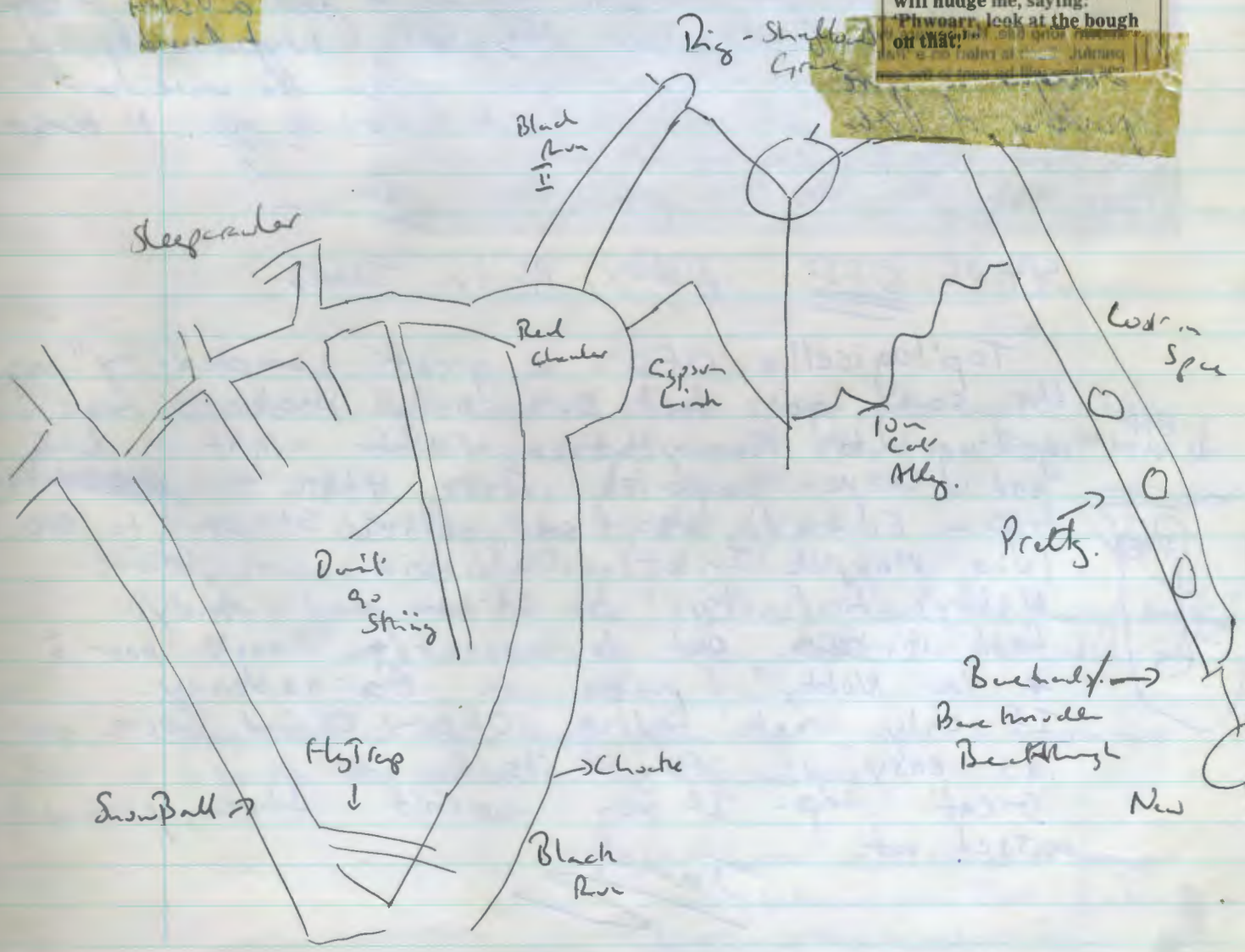
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CUEVA DE LA PILETA



climbing trees takes over  
your life.  
"Wherever we go, Mike  
will nudge me, saying:  
'Phwoar, look at the bough  
on that!'"



And people say  
Cavers are  
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N

### Tree humpers take a bough

39

"WE'VE got six members — and one of them has a false leg. Once it fell off halfway up a tree," said Mike Whyborn, 50, a founder member of the Northampton Recreational Tree Climbing Club.

Losing one's false leg while dangling on a rope and harness 50 feet up a chestnut tree is just one of the joys of the exciting new sport of "tree humping".

As *Woman's Realm* reported from the front line, "tree humping" is all the rage in America, where whole families might hump

together for an entire weekend.

In Britain the sport is not just restricted to crusty bypass protesters. It first took hold in Northampton three years ago when Mike, a former lorry driver, was caught by his girlfriend, Viki Gibson, a 27-year-old French teacher, trying to climb up his own conservatory. "I thought he'd cracked," she said. "Then he took me to a wood and made me follow him up an oak."

From such small beginnings, mighty adventures have grown. "When they are feeling particularly adventurous," said *Woman's Realm*, "they spend a whole night up trees, strapped to the trunks in hammocks." Not surprisingly, it's not all plain sailing.

"The only trouble," said Viki, who carries the sandwiches, "is that climbing trees takes over your life.

"Wherever we go, Mike will nudge me, saying: 'Phew, look at the bough on that.'"

Big-Shoulder  
Grace

Black

Nº 761.- BENAJOAN ( Málaga )  
CUEVA DE LA PILETA ( Monumento Nacional )  
Vista del pueblo y entrada a la cueva  
" El Pez "  
Interior.

Dear everyone

The first day  
it rained so we  
went looking at  
Neolithic graffiti  
Since then it has  
been sun, rock, beer  
and generally letting  
the good times roll!  
lots of love Chr.

Simpson

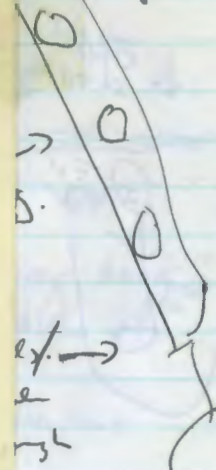
DELTA

OUCC c/o John  
Piglus  
The Queen's College  
Oxford

INGLATERRA

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Lead in  
Spa



New

Black.  
Rue

(40)

# Wales Weekend 4-5 May '96

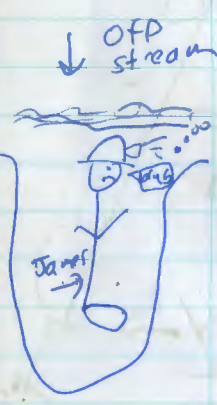
Present are: Nobby, Andy James, Tim, Chris, Paul  
(+ Martin L. and John W. at Daenen Conference).

Arrivals in Daenen: + Steve & Sander who wait in Sunday at

Sunday morning was a typical carpark start for Daenen. Despite a late night in the L+F after the Blaenavon Conference at Daenen, we managed to leave start. Dave Barrett from the <sup>Wrexham!</sup> ~~Shepton~~ joined us for banknotes just drop into the new Steepcrawlers jackets that by all rights should have been at least half hers. Nobby just whipped down the entrance ropes, wearing coat, neoprene glove, bandages, all wrapped in a plastic bag. 3 hours, and we were at the new stuff, marvelling at the pristine glittering mandrill = "Love & Grace". We mugged about 80 metres just down weens bag, then completely exhausted ourselves trying to find a way through the terraced SE lower chock. Hurray! Unfortunately, no chance to give us a hint, but after the intricate paths of the passage it just has to go. It has a one arm, and furniture looked so more tired than the rest of us. Try.

5/4/96 OFD Nobby, Andy, James.

"Topologically, OFD's a great complexity" as the song goes but our only problem was in getting to Penwyllt. --- (after night in L+F and Daenen carpark). Once there --- ~~fun~~ trip - Edward's shortcut, Main Stream to OFD's (via Maypok Inlet). Out via Sulubrious. Nobby's first trip to stream and Andy's first in OFD. Out to sunset / "draught beer à la Nobby" / pizza in Abergavenny. If only route finding OFD → Oxford were as easy as OFD itself. --- Great trip - If you weren't there, you missed out.



James