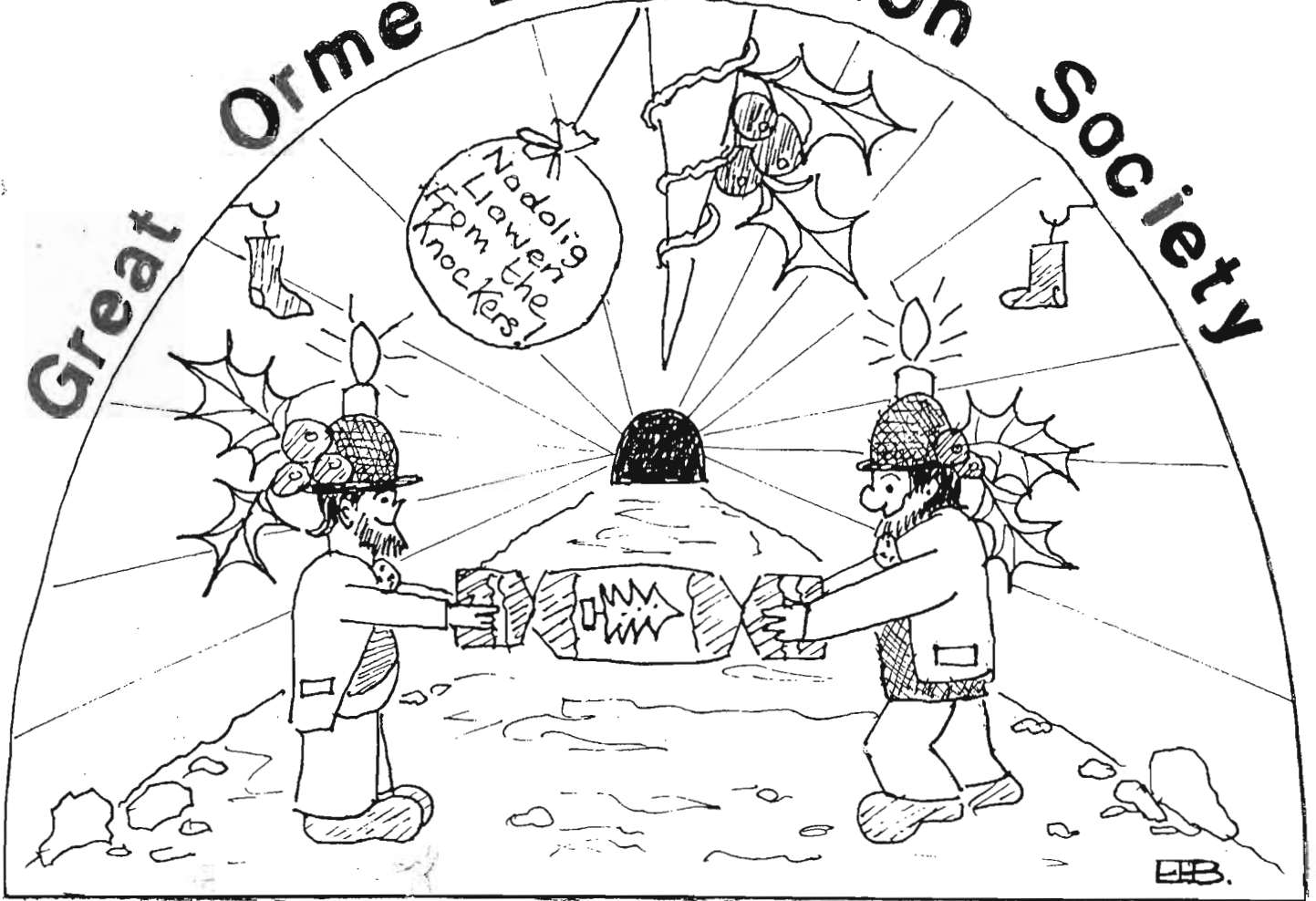


Great Orme Exploration Society

Noddlig
Llawen
ffrom the
Knockers!



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

1990

The Definitive Editorial.

Welcome, one and all, to the very first editorial of the slightly redesigned version of the G.O.E.S. Journal [This of course being only a small newsletter before Xmas just to show willing] May I start by thanking the hundreds of four people who took time out to contribute to this issue and how much I am looking forward to seeing all the other promised articles in time for the March issue. Myself and my unofficial cohorts have decided that as the journal was far more serious than the group something ought to be done to change this. We hope you like the results [If not, you picked the wrong man for the job!] We would welcome any ideas and suggestions you may have on the journal [As long as they're clean and constructive!]. Well, time marches on and some of us have a living to earn so I will end this editorial by wishing all our members, their families and friends a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

1990

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The Three, (not so wise men), of Tan y Goppa.

Another new find, this time away from the Orme. The place Tan y Goppa, the mineral, lead. Situated about half a mile from the entrance to Gwrych Castle, in the hillside behind Abergele, and that's all I'm saying. Tony took me there after a trip down Ogof Dulas with Ian and some of his friends.

We climbed a small fence put there to keep out toddlers and would be cavers. The rift is impressive to look at from the outside and only gets better the further in one goes, reaching heights of up to seventy feet in places, the vein is somewhat on the large side, and intrigues us about its upper reaches. As our necks will only crane so far, further exploration must be via bolting or onwards into the vein.

As far as it is possible to walk looms a wall of deads and no apparent way on.

"Is that so ?", says Phil, "we'll see about that".

Acting on information received, (from Geoff David) I set off up the rift using Tony's hammer to make hand and foot holds, a cross between rock and ice climbing technique was needed, neither of which I know anything about ! Having reached the top I traversed across the vein stepping precariously over dubious ledges only half the width of my foot, after leaping onto the central pillar and launching myself on top of the wall of deads and thinking to myself,

"What a berk"

It was a productive leap, after a quick inspection I found out that no one had been here previously, we were on to something. There before us lay the first obstacle, a thirty foot shaft narrow and sheer. I realised it was too steep and strenuous to go it alone and without a rope.

On our second visit we climbed the rift in the same way and fixed a bolt in order to make it easier to abseil back out. We descended the shaft after finding a natural thread belay, only to find,

"Oh no !" (or words to that effect).

"What's up?", came the question from above.

"It doesn't go". Then silence.

"Wait a minute, its draughting".

A small hole in the floor got bigger as I dug !

"Yes, it goes".

After pushing a large boulder through the hole !

"Did you hear that ?"

That's deep", came the reply from above.

Then I shot through the hole,

"Wowee ! Wait a minute I'll have a quick look around". Then disappearing into the darkness for at least a hundred yards and realising it went on I went back for Tony and Ian.

"Come down. its wild !"

We eventually travelled as far as we could and found it only ended in falls. we decided to look more closely at the absolute size of this new discovery, it was becoming apparent that we were the first explorers since the area was last mined, a hundred and fifty years ago.

Here the vein reached heights of up to a hundred feet and in places almost certainly proceeds into the hillside. That would be our next project.

So with bolting drill, bolts, and other various gizmos for tackling the unknown (and Ian and Tony) we set off again into the vein, with my mind set on another totally unprotected ascent of the first pitch. With my heart still in my trainers, (which were in Tony's car,) we reached the wall of deads. Up I climbed the higher I went the easier it became (or did it ?) and I perched thankfully on the top before leaping across to the deads, and waited for Tony and Ian to join me. This was a slower trip because of all the extra equipment we hauled with us to tackle the higher areas. Namely my Bosch drill, bolts extra rope, ladders slings, and Tony's Video camera. After reaching the potential bolting site I looked up,

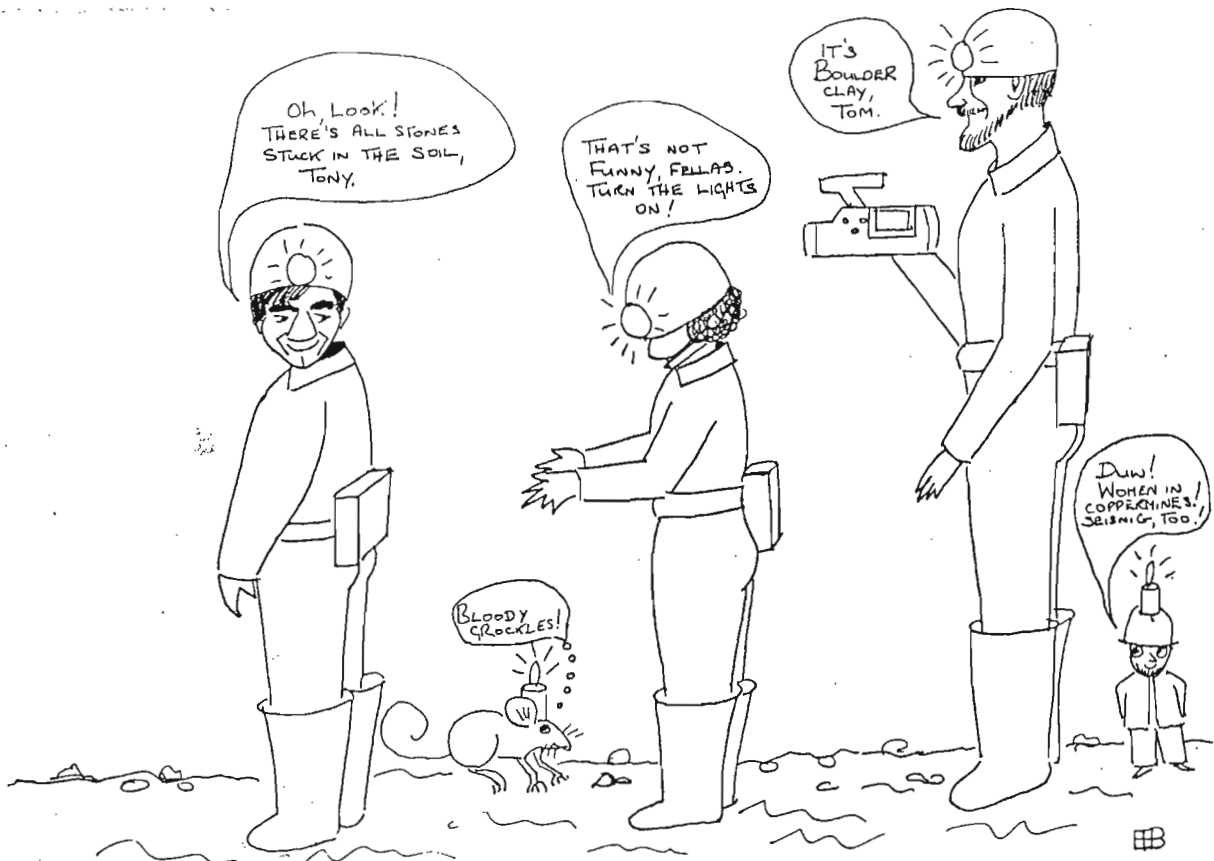
"Oh no !", I'd forgotten how high it was.

Putting all my worst thoughts behind me I set off up the vein. After placing the first bolt into some of the softest rock it has been my misfortune to deal with, and then putting my whole body weight on it and finding it wanting I thought,

"Shall I go on ?. Yea, why not, I can only fall as far as the floor".

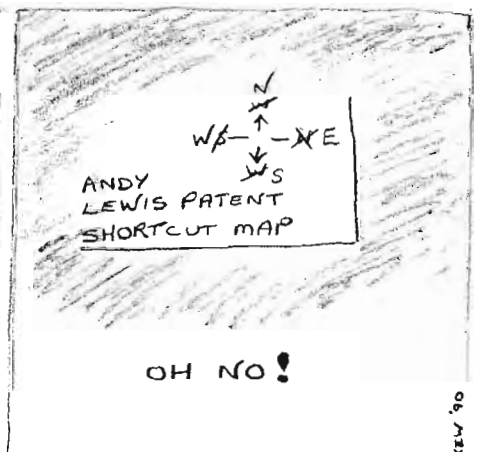
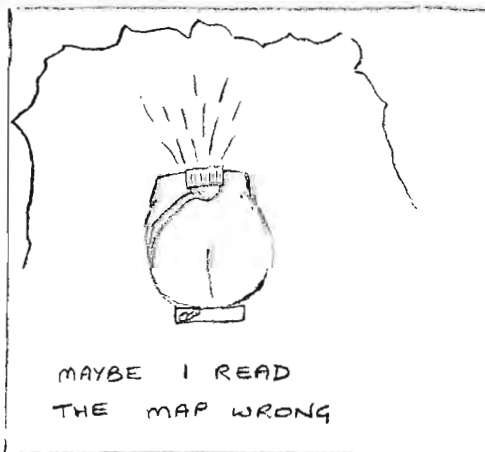
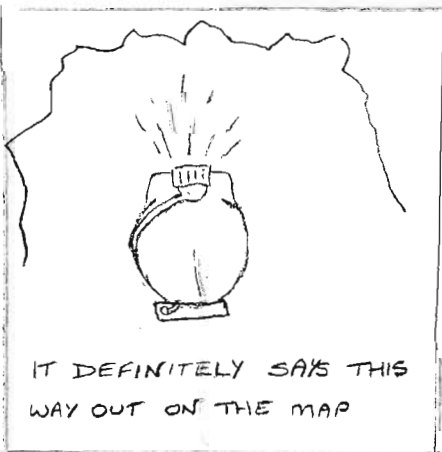
Placing the second bolt in solid rock made me regain a little confidence. Up I shot, shot, it barely took me two hours to reach the top and no apparent way on. Here I placed a belay bolt and the other two joined me. We explored the workings here and found it to be a possible travelling way, (i.e entrance),

blocked by the biggest boulder in the world but definite signs of a way in. The galena here was pleading to be mined at least two inches wide in some places and running in the top of the vein for at least twenty feet. I wished I had my chisel. The rock here is as white as the driven snow, (barytes to you boffins) Here we discovered what might have been a stone hammer, or so the three of us believe, I'll say no more ! After discovering that the passage led nowhere we began our way back to the main level noticing that there could be another route in the next vein, making us want to go back again, but that's another story.



THE TRIP OF THE TY GUYN TRIO.

Roman



THE TV GYM DINNER

Would you like your soup now, Mr. Towell?

You did all enjoy the meal, didn't you?

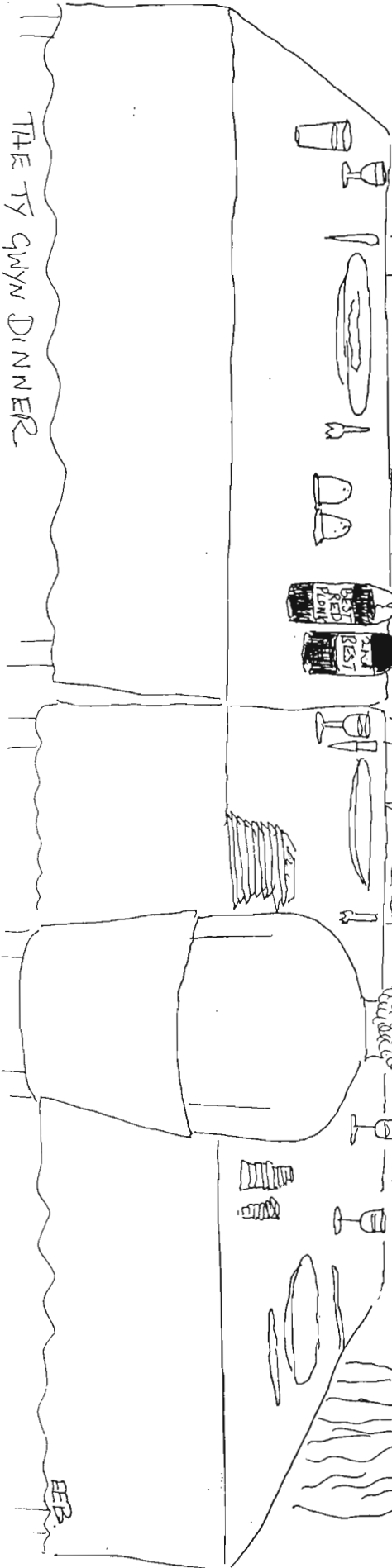
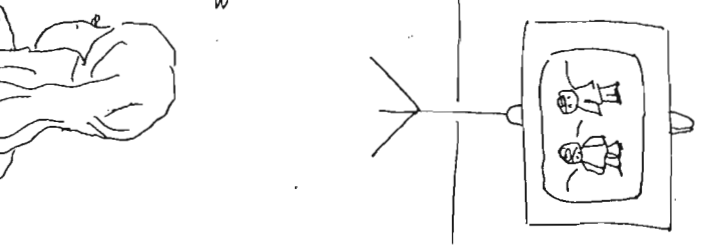
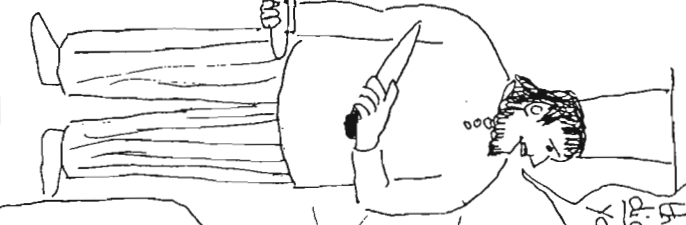
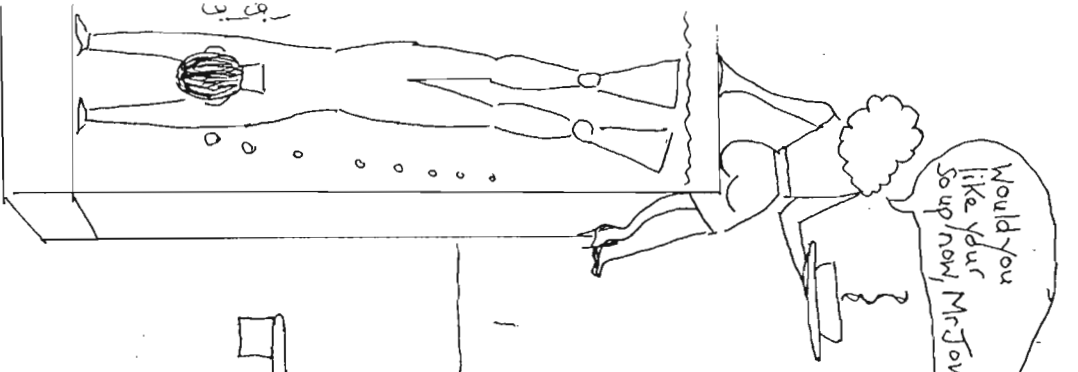
Any chips, Shirley I love?

It's alright, Alma. He hasn't started his most interesting lecture, yet.

If that's the affect it has on Pamy, I'm not touching it.

Yeh! I'll be ok if they all stand on their heads.

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a Kiss



Knockers.

". However this is, I must speak well of these knockers, for they have actually stood my very good friends, whether they are aerial beings called spirits, or whether they are people made of matter, not to be felt by our gross bodies, as air and fire the like. Before the discovery of Esgair y Mwyn mine, these little people (as we call them here) worked hard there day and night, and there are abundance of honest sober people that have heard them; (although there are some amongst us who have no notion of them or of mines either), but after the discovery of the great ore they were heard no more. When I began work at Llwynllwyd they worked so fresh there for a considerable time that they even frightened some young workmen out of the work. This is when we were driving levels and before we had got any ore, but when we came to the ore then they gave over and I heard no more talk of them. Our old miners are no more concerned at hearing them blasting, boring holes, landing leads, than if they were some of their own people, and a single miner will stay in the work in the dead of night without any man near him and never think of any fear or harm that they will do him, for they have a notion the knockers are of their own tribe and profession and are a harmless people who mean well. . . . "

(Lewis Morris, letter to his brother Richard. 14th. October 1754)

Several members have agreed to submit articles dealing with their particular interests and circumstances, for the next magazine. The following articles are eagerly awaited :-

"Falcoury in Old Mine Workings", by Chris Jowett.

Did you know that a trained buzzard fitted with a headlamp can eat its own weight in bats in two hours? Learn of the 'one armed paper hanger' abseiling technique that allows the bird to sit on the falconer's wrist whilst descending shafts.

"Climbing with Building Tools", by Phil Smith.

Following the epic account of the Tan y Goppa brick hammer ascent Phil describes in minute detail his Boxing Day assault on Yellow Wall using a bit and brace and smoothing plane. Don't miss it!

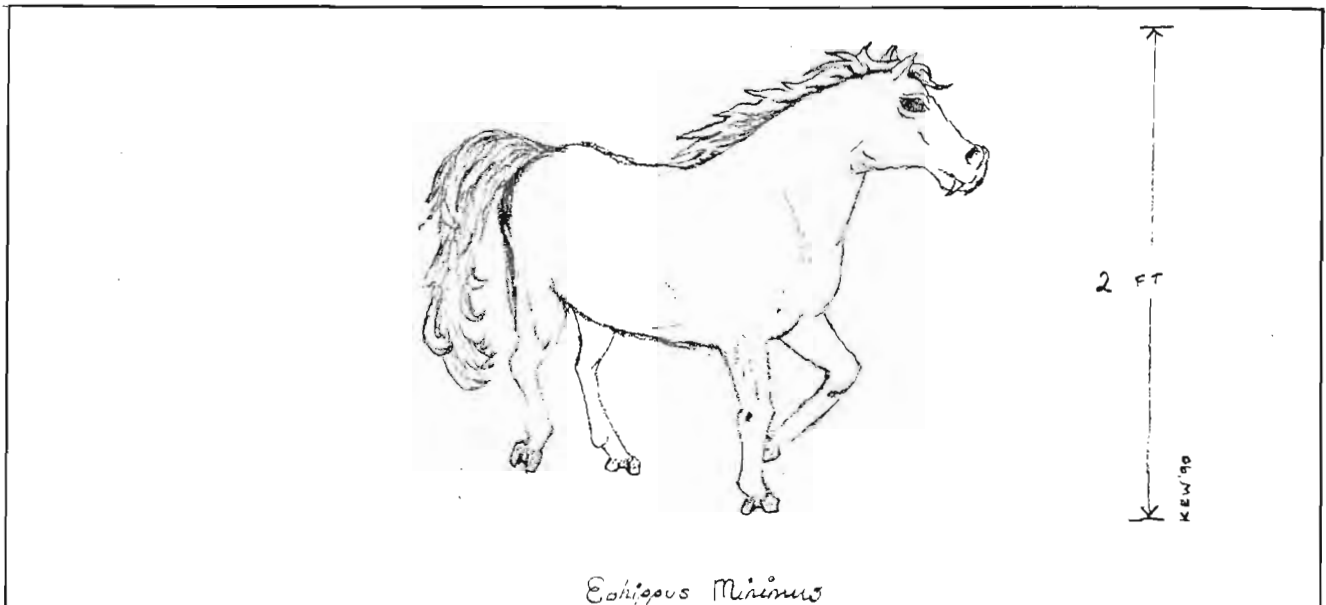
"Living with an en suite Tram", by Kristian Wheal.

It is not generally known that residents of the upper part of Old Road share much of the Summer daylight with the Great Orme Trams. Read the very human story of how tram number four affects their lives.

All this, and much, much, more in your next GOES magazine.

EOHIPPIUS MINIMUS-THE LITTLE WORKERS.

Last year the research efforts of many scientists were brought together and have now been published on the little known Eohippus Minimus. This creature was first discovered about ten years ago in the South African gold mines and was at first thought to be native to that continent. It is a small horse-like creature with astounding night vision which makes it perfect for underground work. It is carnivorous and lives quite happily on a diet of bats, flies and moths which it catches itself. It's cloven feet are webbed so that it can easily move about in the muddy and wet conditions of it's natural habitat, and it's thick woolly coat is reminiscent of that of a wolf or bear rather than that of it's larger relatives. It is thought that these creatures were willing recruits to the mining trade unlike their pressganged relatives in the much later coal mines. These cute, friendly animals were thought to be extinct until Andy Lewis recently claimed to have found a colony of them living quietly in the furthest recesses of Vivians.



IN NEXT WEEKS ISSUE:- In depth interview with miniature pit ponies by A. Lewis.

OLDMAN.

This is Gear that has been stir'd or cut before by somebody, which can never happen but in old Works, or in old Ventures or Trials; and when the old Man is cleared out from a Shaft-foot, Forfield, Stool, or Stope, we say we have bared it, viz. that Shaft, Forefield, Sole, &c. This is very difficult to Sink, or Drive in where it is a great widenefs; sometimes Wholes is found to be very loose much like Oldman, as in Shacks and other soft places; and crusht Wholes sometimes may be mistaken for Oldman, but that is never long before the Truth is Discovered.

"LETTERBOX CAVE" AND "MAMMOTH CAVE", LITTLE ORME

In response to a genteel bit of arm-twisting by our new Editor-ess, here is the second instalment of the series started last January in Journal No.1.

For a change, both the caves described below are on the Little Orme. Their locations are shown - roughly - on the Map enclosed with this article. Both of them have obviously been part of the local folklore for many years, and may therefore be known to local enthusiasts by names other than those given above, - in which case I hope they will accept my apologies.

"Letter Box" was a name which I chose, 'way back in the heady days of 1973 when I first saw it, in company with a fast party of Troggs from St. David's College. We had gone to the Little Orme to hunt for new caves and, after following the footpath Northward from the gate on Colwyn Road, we came out onto the little dip between the two highest points on the headland. And there, artfully concealed at the bottom of a little cliff a few metres East of the Trig. Point, was an inviting little black hole. It was quite well hidden, as it was invisible from above, and also invisible from the footpath below, being at the top of a gentle convex slope. The name "Letter Box" immediately suggested itself to me, as the cave entrance is a thin horizontal slit, just like a letterbox, - in fact, a typical "bedding-plane cave," so I thought.

Its situation makes it an ideal bad-weather shelter for sheep, - a fact which makes it slightly uninviting for human explorers with delicate stomachs. However, sweep the sheep droppings away with a nonchalant gesture of the (gloved) left hand, then get right down on your belly and propel yourself into the cave with your well-tryed caterpillar movement of toes and elbows. After about 3 metres you are past the worst and can stand up, in the bottom of a little "aven". You can scramble up this, a distance of about 2 or 3 metres, but sadly no further: from this height there is a very tiny horizontal passage leading off Northwards, but this is far too small for even the shrillest Trog to follow, whatever the inducements, - and it would probably only come out on the surface anyway, as the top of the aven must be within a metre of the surface.

But back at the bottom of the aven, things are more promising. The passage slopes gently downwards for a metre or so, and as it does this the walls get further apart, the ceiling rises, and you find yourself in a cosy little chamber. To your right (i.e: North) there is a possibility that the chamber continues, as the ceiling - though barely 20 cms. above the floor on that side - is decorated with little stalactites. Indeed, there is a strong possibility that digging would be worthwhile here, as the floor is soft earth, and I suspect it has been dug before, as we found several bits of wooden planking just below the surface - could this have been the remains of a wooden revetment round the top of a shaft?

Further into the cave the passage gets narrower and narrower, and after about 3 metres becomes too narrow for further progress. It is also blocked by biggish boulders calcited together, But, tantalisingly, the passage certainly continues in a general Westerly direction, and it is possible that a really determined attack with crowbars might prove profitable (see my comments on "Mammoth Cave" later in this article).

In the Summer of 1978 a group of us, including a youthful Richard Burton, did a little exploratory dig in the entrance passage and found some bones, 3 of which were identified as human by Mel Davies (at that time living at Dwygyfylchi). These bones comprised :-

"LETTERBOX CAVE" AND "MAMMOTH CAVE", LITTLE ORME

1 Thoracic Vertebra (i.e: from the middle part of the spine)
 1 Metacarpal (i.e: from the palm of the hand below the thumb)
 Part of 1 Mandible (i.e: jaw bone) with one Molar tooth still in position.
 Judging by the amount of wear on the molar, Mel estimated that the owner was aged between 17 and 25 at time of death.

The animal bones included :-
 1 Antler fragment (probably Red Deer)
 Part of the jawbone of a large animal possibly as big as an Ox.
 1 Tooth (premolar) of an Ox.
 plus a collection of Sheep, Rabbit, and Fox bones.

To my great shame I cannot now remember what happened to these bones. I believe that Rich still has the human jaw bone: possibly Mel took away the rest.

After this success, Richard did a small dig on his own just outside the entrance, and found a nice little flint "core", with flake scars showing the shapes of the thin slivers of flint detached to form little knives. (At least, I think that is a fair description - but I am relying entirely on my memory which is very erratic nowadays. Perhaps Richard would put me right, please?). Anyway, all these little bits of evidence do suggest quite strongly that there was a prehistoric burial in this cave - my guess is Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. Richard understandably has designs on this cave, so I must not steal his thunder.

"Mammoth Cave", by contrast, is on the West side of the Little Orme about halfway up the little cliff which overlooks Craigside Manor. I was led to it one day in the mid-1970's by a friend of a friend - I cannot remember his name but I think he was the son of the farmer at Pentre Isaf Farm. Anyway, he had known about it for years and led us to it by way of a slightly exposed ledge gained by scrambling up the steep slope just North West of the gate from Colwyn Road.

The entrance to "Mammoth" is imposing, and easily visible from the front of Craigside Manor. It must be over 3 metres high, and about 1 metre wide. Once inside, the passage takes a sharp bend to the right, then an even sharper bend to the left, then in about 2 metres a sharp bend to the right again. Meanwhile the ceiling slopes down towards the floor (which has been sloping up from the entrance) forcing you onto hands and knees. Another 2 metres or so brings you to another sharp right-angled bend - to the left this time - and when we first looked at this cave the whole of the passage beyond was plugged with soil to within 20 cms. of the ceiling. But we could see the passage going on, tantalisingly, so some time later I came back, armed with entrenching tools and a fine young man who positively enjoyed wallowing in deep mud, and got digging. Over a period of about three half-holidays we dug away 2 to 3 metres of earthy infill, revealing a fine stream passage which gradually got smaller and smaller, bending slowly round to the right and then to the left, at which point I found it too tight to go any further. I think it could be dug a bit more - as I remember it the floor seems to be composed of earth rather than solid rock - and I would have thought that the large size of the entrance betokens a fairly hefty underground stream.

But how far it goes is anybody's guess. I did hear - via another friend - that one of the old farmers in that area said that he had explored it when he was a youngster and found that it went "a long, long way"; also when he got to the far end he could clearly hear the sound of waves breaking on the cliffs somewhere nearby. So perhaps it connects with one of the caves near the so-called "Wall of Caves" - a V.S. rock climb about halfway along the North face of the Little Orme. Alternatively, could it connect with the Letterbox Cave? Or is the whole story just another old man's imaginings?

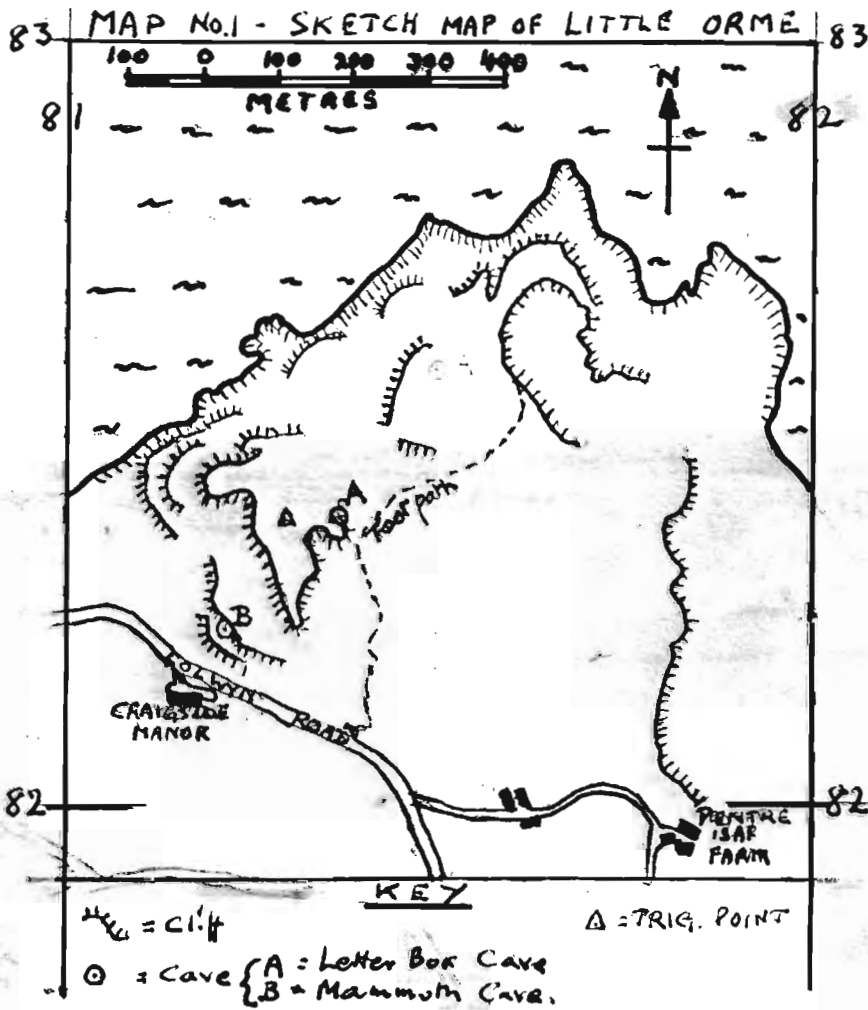
I also heard - I think from Mel Davies - that it was called "Mammoth"

"LETTERBOX CAVE" AND "MAMMOTH CAVE", LITTLE ORME

Cave because some humourist drew a picture of a Mammoth somewhere inside it, possibly hoping to gain fame as the first discoverer of an Upper Palaeolithic cave painting in the British Isles. But if so, there was no sign of it by the time that I got there (and it was not my handiwork - honest! I never could draw Mammoths, anyway).

Further comments by interested members would be welcome.

Geoff David
9/12/90.



A GOOD FOOD GUIDE TO CORNISH MINING

Early one Monday morning just as light was peering over Nant y Gamar that familiar sound of a diesel engine could be heard in Jubilee Street. The neighbours must have thought,

"Oh he's working to-day, and an early start".

Picking up my partner in eating at his house in Craig y Don we set off. Motorway bound, Christy Moor belting from the stereo, two exited gourmets complete with road atlas and telephone numbers of 'very important people' the most important being a certain Derek James. The Wheal Jane mine captain !

Two hours later, breakfast time, now where to stop.

"I know", says Edric.

"He's been here before", says I, "this will do".

"The first one was a Road Chef, let's start off on the right track",

"I'm with you, you've got the money"

Two bacon and egg butties and two coffees later we were back on the road, with Edric planning our next stop.

"Is that elevenses or lunch ?", I say, "Never mind we'll take every stop as it comes."

Birmingham here we come, and thinking to much about which service to stop at next was our first mistake.

"Yes we were supposed to go down that little road there called the M5, don't panic you're in my country now. I think I can get us back to the next service... er I mean back on the right road!" For a moment I thought we were going to miss dinner.

"Don't stop here, stop at the next one", was my navigator's suggestion. Some navigator he turned out to be ! Silence as we rolled up to the front door of, you've guessed it, yet another Road Chef. Not knowing what to expect we strolled in, looks alright I thought, say no more, back to the van after eating dinner, or what we thought was dinner. My glass of fizzy orange was more like what I can only explain as someone dropping orange peel into soda water, and rapidly removing it before anybody noticed. Edric had the first glass of orange he must have left me the bubbles !

Back in the van and a quick check to see if Edric had all his receipts, and back on the road. At least we were going the right way this time.

High tea next ! "That's alright you planning our next stop, but the van needs a drink to. How convenient, a diesel stop, how more convenient, a Little Chef, (whoopee lollypops).

"Shall we, say no more. Just a scone and a cup of tea"

They might be a little on the expensive side but when on a mission of such magnitude, you've got to take every chance at sight seeing, sight seeing my foot. More receipts and full tummies later its, yes you've guessed, next stop. No just kidding folks, let's face it you can only eat so much on the way to Cornwall, there is always the drive home to think of.

Cambourne the town, pubs with menus!

"No let's find out where we pick up the drills first"

"Drills", I replied, "what drills. Oh yes those drills, how silly of me to forget".

We also found the place where we were supposed to pick up the antique furniture, nobody home ! We looked for our objective, the drill place, and you thought we were joy riding ! No we actually picked up the drills.

"Here are your drills".

They could have been posted, thought Edric and I. But you can't taste food through the post.

Next stop, no not food, bed. Now Cambourne can't be the busiest town in Cornwall in November, but could we find anywhere to sleep ? We felt like Mary and Joseph, a month early. Eventually after roaming the streets wondering why we couldn't find accommodation it dawned on me. They couldn't understand the Welsh accent, or was it the pidgin Welsh Brummie ? Anyway some one took us in, bed and breakfast (no bar) we took it, time was running out. Time was running out the pubs close early down there ! After sampling the local brew, (Smith Bitter, Roberts Mild). and putting the world to rights, Edric panicked, no receipts are issued for beer !

"We'll put it down to sundries".

As the last decent meal we'd had was tea time I had to indulge in fish and chips, and I had to pay for them. (Damn). By now it was time for bed, for to-morrow was Wheal Jane day. So back to the hotel for a well deserved kip.

After breakfast it was time to find Derek and Wheal Jane. This didn't take long as we didn't want to miss a thing. The Wheal Jane is an impressive sight. You should go there some time ! I won't go into detail, lest I spoil it for you.

Back on the road home, and more food stops to come.

"Diesel stop. Oh look, the same Little Chef", (whoopee more lollies) It is twelve o'clock.

"Let's try something else, and pudding too".

The road home was really boring, the van laden with antique furniture (at least it had woodworm) Oh and the rock drills ! Not forgetting that the way back to Wales is all up hill. Nevertheless we made good eating time. Hitting it right at Brum this time we made the M 6 without hassle apart from a half hour holdup which enabled us to read the road signs. By the way I let Edric drive from Cornwall and even after a snack break and the Birmingham turn off he wouldn't let me have my van back. To get it back I had to insist on another stop. Not that we fell out over this, why spoil the habit of two days. The stress was now showing we could only manage a coffee (probably because it was a Road Chef).

Then my turn back in the cockpit. Counting down to closing time in the King's Head we knew we would make it, but only if we kept going.

The pain, "Oh no another Little Chef ? No the King's Head is more important".

We did go wrong once again, on the M56 turn off this time. The reason being Edric thought he was still driving, and that I was navigating, but it only cost us one pint. After several Road Chefs, Little Chefs, Motorway service stations and other eating houses en route we arrived in sunny old Llandudno (even though it was nine o' clock on a November evening). A quick wash nad straight to the King's Head, mainly to wash down two day's food.

When I recall our two day excursion, our destinations, our constant chomping stops, I smile. We have been down the Wheal Jane, and I've got Wheal tin ore to prove it.

Phil Smith. November 1990.

GOLD IN MOSTYN STREET.

Years ago, before the majority of GOES members had even crawled on the surface, Llandudno had a gold strike. It was in the early fifties, so long ago that the exact year eludes me. At the time in Upper Mostyn Street, on the present site of Cavern Records stood the garage of Kelly Bros. Messrs. Kelly, had decided to instal a hydraulic ramp in order to improve the facilities of their rapidly increasing car repair business. In those distant, pre JCB days, most excavating was done by hand and two workmen, John and Charlie, arrived early one Tuesday morning to start the job. They worked steadily and speedily and by midday had broken through the concrete floor of the workshop and were digging in the rather soft clay about three feet below the surface.

No one is quite sure who noticed the yellow flecks in the clay. Some say it was John, others Charlie. It is even suggested that it was a 'nosy customer' awaiting a repair to his car who indulged in the pastime of watching men working.

Gold Fever is a strange phenomom. All work in the garage ceased and Mr. Langley the jeweller was hurriedly sent for. He arrived and submitted the yellow flakes to the acid test. They passed with flying colours. It was gold.

In the Conservative Club next door hard headed business men agreed that Llandudno," would never be the same again". The Estate Office hurriedly sought advice on the legality and enforcement of the mineral rights clauses in the leases. Old inhabitants recounted how their ancestors had worked as miners and discussed the possibility of their grandchildren reverting to the old trade. All was excitement and speculation.

Learned geologists were sought who painstakingly explained that the gold was an alluvial deposit carried down from the Great Orme by underground water courses. Speculators worried and pondered on the size and location of the parent lode.

The press had a field day. The Daily Mirror spoke of workmen,"Toiling late at night, in search of Gold". This was a slight exaggeration but the boyish looking reporter who covered the story was so excited that the lads in the garage, 'helped him out' ! Why let facts ruin a good story ?

Then almost as soon as it began it ended. By the weekend the excavation had been concreted and the Tecalemet ramp installed. There was to be no Llandudno Gold Rush.

Nevertheless should you go to Cavern Records, you could be standing on a gold mine !

Tom Parry. December 1990.