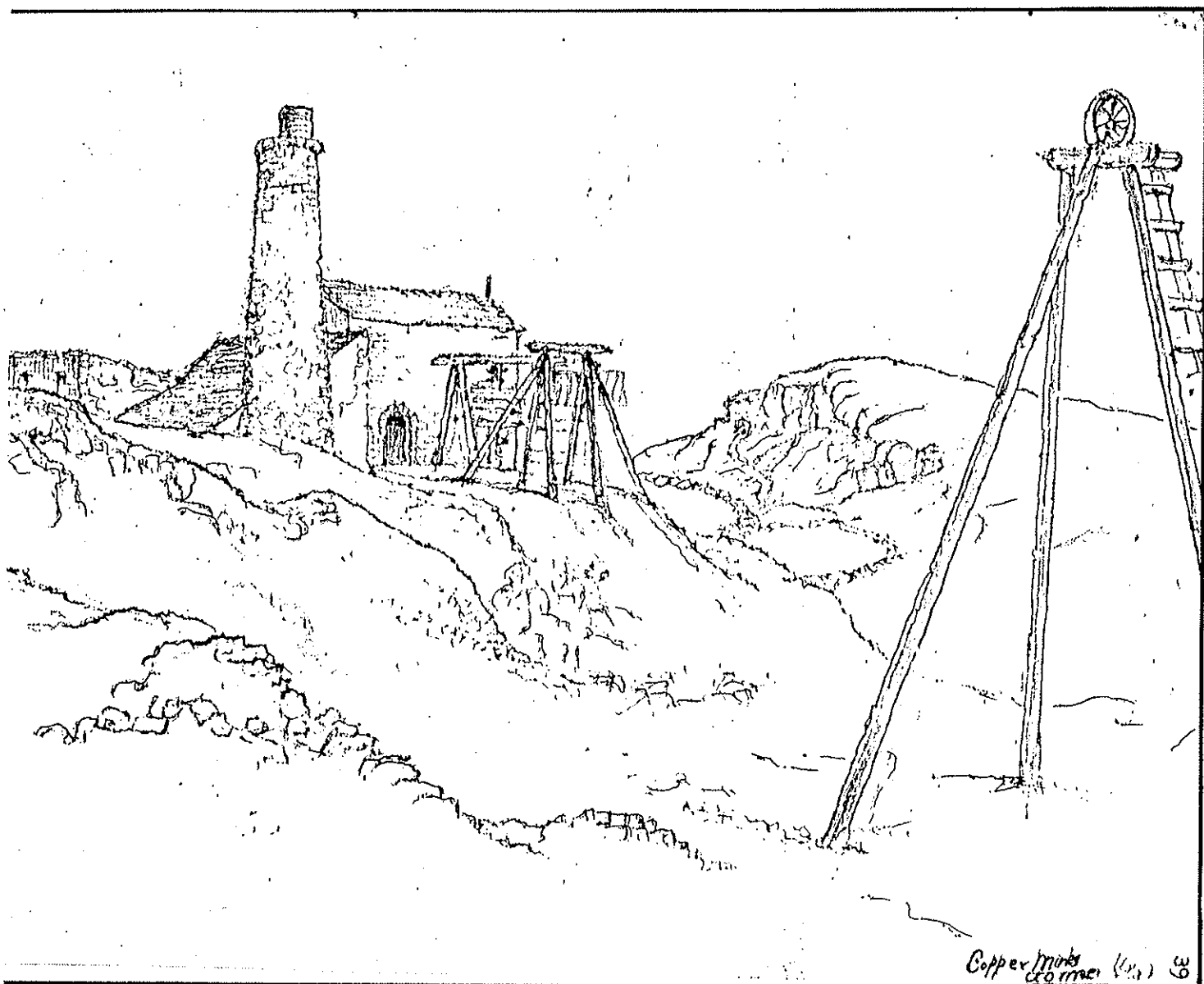


GREAT ORME EXPLORATION SOCIETY

Newsletter



August 1991

Editorial.

1991 has certainly not been a good year for GOES newsletters. In fact this is the first one !

Sadly Kristian is unable to continue as editor as various problems have obliged her to relinquish the post. She did however manage to wheedle enough material from the usual sources to produce this edition. (Isn't there anyone else out there who would like to contribute ?) Thank you Kris, your resignation is deeply regretted and your hard work appreciated.

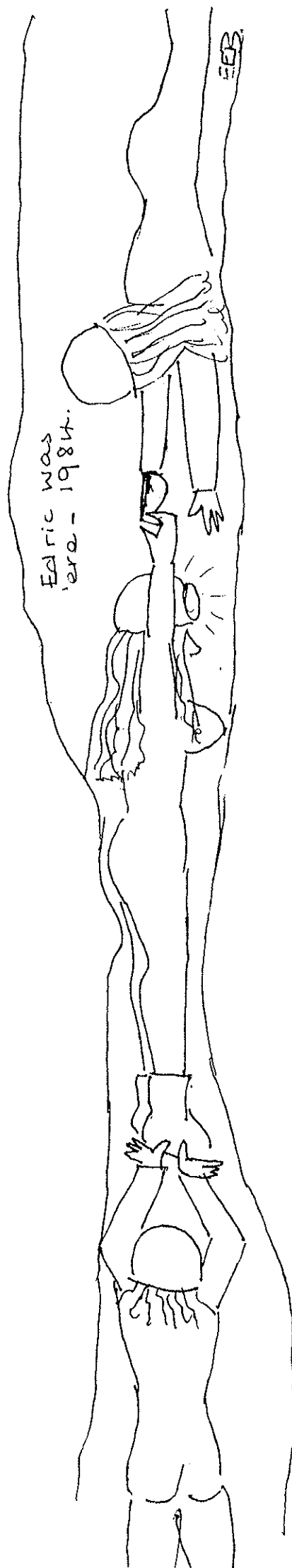
Should anyone feel like tackling the job please contact me.

Until such time as someone does take over the Newsletter I'll do my best to cobble the next edition together. Please forward your flood of articles, letters, comments and any relevant material as soon as possible. Many thanks.

Tom Parry.

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2

" I DEFINITELY GOT IN THIS WAY!"

2

In Praise of Llandudno.

A bit of culture, contributed by John Bowen, who will be delighted to reveal his sources if asked !

Llandudno is the fairest town
That 'ere the sun did shine on
Where on earth is spot more fair
True titbit of creation.
For young, for old, for weak, for strong
Llandudno is perfection
Between two Ormes: Betwixt two bays
Delightful is it's setting
Backed by Eryri's massive peaks
In grandeur heavenward rising
No-where else on God's good earth
Is beauty so entrancing.

John Bowen 1991

And thou, Llandudno, sovereign of the West
Sways thy proud sceptre neath the mountain crest.
Enthroned where nature spreads her gorgeous wealth
Tis thine to shed the blessed balm of health.

Seaside Sonnets.
Greens Guide to Llandudno, 1873.

ROMAN'S AGAIN

(or how not to climb a shaft)

The trip had been a successful one, the Birmingham caving club members had their first taste of our ancient copper mines and had enjoyed every minute of it; Dave Jenkins together with Andy, Phil and myself had discovered a mineral which had not previously been found on the Great Orme - *Erythrite* - a cobalt-nickel mineral whose composition was later confirmed at Bangor University using state of the art electron microscopy. The pale pink mineral lay in a crumbling shale passage along which we had all crawled to see the forest of sparkling crystals of sphalerite. It was a beautiful sight, transparent needles hanging precariously from the roof just inches above our heads the slightest touch causing them to fragment. (A later journey down this same passage met with disappointment the crumbling shale roof had fallen in the region of my Narnia-like forest and only a few crystals remained, rather like a tree which had lost all its leaves.)

The rest of the party had already ascended the shaft by the time we had finished our geological investigations. Tony Davies waited at the top for Phil to climb up, which he did like a shot. Andy went off and did some exploring on his own. Dave and myself struggled to put our SRT gear on (it never seems to get any easier to put it on in the correct way). Dave went first up the shaft and when he was up the others shot off to the pub. My turn next, I had climbed this shaft before and thought that it would be easy enough again but I was soon to be proved wrong. Luckily Andy had returned by the time I started to SRT up the rope.

Something felt odd from the start as I began to ascend the rope. On about the fourth stroke I heard a sudden clink of metal, my helmet flew off my head trailing my lamp down my back so that I could not really see what was wrong. I tried to stand up in my leg loops but could not. I shouted to Andy that I thought I had become detached from the rope. He shouted back not to be foolish of course I was still on the rope. Dave shouted down and asked what was happening. I could not work out what had gone wrong with my rig but on looking down I saw a twisted piece of metal where a small maillon should have been attaching my sit harness to my chest harness. I was by now clinging on to the rope with my arms there was no need to, but my chest harness felt like it was strangling me. I passed the broken link back down to Andy who told me to re-attach my sit harness to the chest harness which was much easier said than done. I could not find the strength to hold onto my hand jammer, remove the chest jammer from the rope and sort out the mess I had got myself in. Eventually Andy decided that if he and Dave were going to get any lunch before the pub closed he would have to 'rescue' me. After a long time of just swinging round the narrow shaft he eventually got everything sorted out with the help of a carabina that Dave sent down the rope and then had to straddle the shaft whilst I made my way upwards.

Everyone else thought it was quite funny, but my knees were still shaking by the time we had got to the pub. The cause of all the

problems had been the size of the maillion I had foolishly tried to link the two parts of my rig together with, it just was not large enough to take my weight or even worse had I failed to do it up properly? The evidence now lies somewhere at the bottom of Roman's shaft. Whatever the cause I shall be taking much more care in future.

I was within six months stuck in a different shaft in a different mine and had to be rescued again this time it was not really my fault, but that is another story...

H.M.J.

Roman.



A Missionary's Story.

by Phil Smith.

Did I ever tell you about my early days in Birmingham ? I served with the Birmingham and District Mountain Rescue Team and part time with the Cannock Chase inshore lifeboat. When I was a simple teenager, in the seventies, I was a junior shorecrewman well er boy.

In my first year we had a few call outs. The one that sticks in my mind was the day our Bullring class inflatable was called out to a bather in distress following a heavy lunch. He was overcome with a severe case of burst lilo far offshore at Cannock Chase. He was severely distressed after we dragged him through the breakers into the boat.

After working my way through the ranks and gaining vast experience I achieved the rank of Coxswain. Although my sealegs were a little iffy I did my best. The crunch came when we attempted a 'man overboard' drill. As leader I went in first and waited for my gallant crew to pick me up. All would have been well had not my water wings failed. As my lungs filled with water I experienced great difficulty in re-inflating my duck shaped buoyancy aid. This was probably due to the fact that my lungs contained ninety percent water and only ten percent air ! I was eventually rescued by an old lady who happened to be windsurfing nearby. I decided it was now time to take early retirement, and decided to try my hand at mountain rescue !

This was a little difficult as Birmingham has a distinct shortage of mountains which need rescuing. Beacon Cliffs however towered to over seventy feet (in parts) and what we needed was some unfortunate climber to make our day. OK, the annual seagull egg thieves would do. Sadly very few seagulls came this far inland to lay their eggs, not even to help a potential rescuer make a name for himself. Life for me in Brum was rapidly declining, where o where could I show off my abseiling skills ?

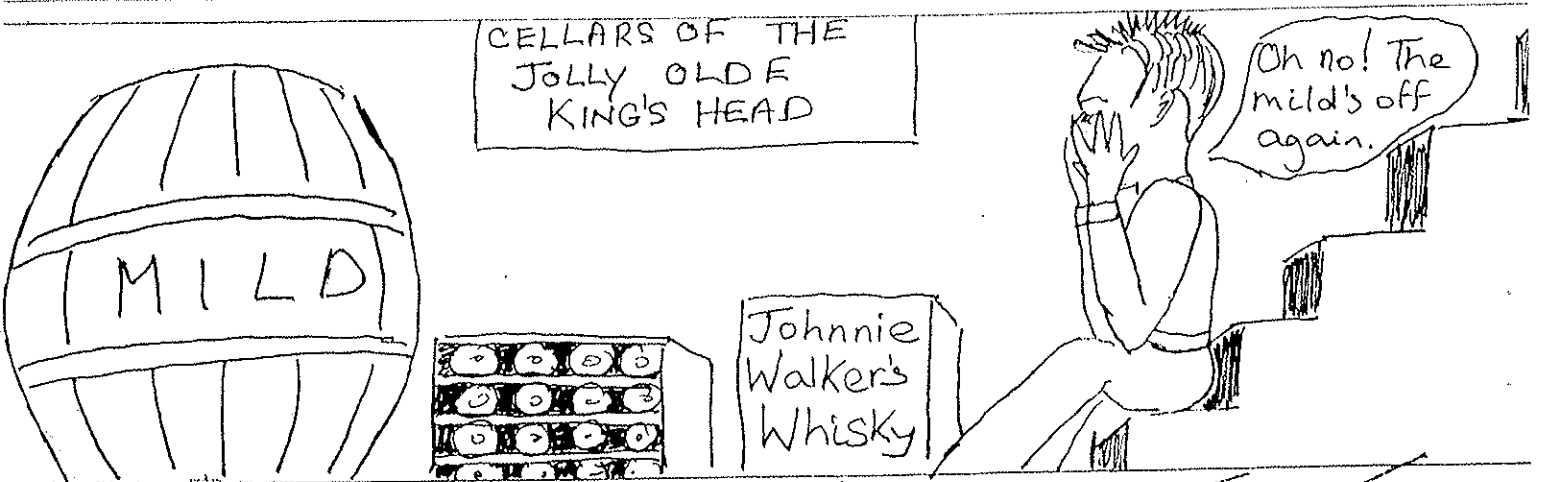
After writing to my uncle Van der Smith in Amsterdam, and finding that he was experiencing similar difficulties with his Mountain Rescue Team he suggested Wales.

"Oh no, I've no sea legs"

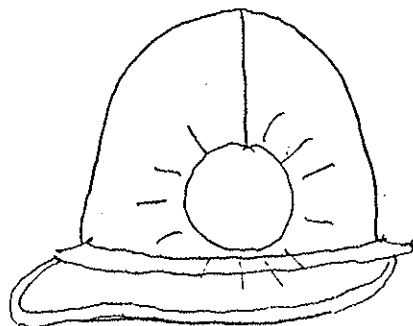
"No not catching them, living there"

"O, 'Iechyd Da' Wales. Have they got mountains ?"

So off I set Wales bound, yes these hills are a little larger. I then very modestly set up my own rescue team on the Orme and taught local would be climbers and cavers to abseil, and I've never really looked back, or should I say down. (Only kidding Tom, you learnt very quickly considering.)



THIS, DEAR READERS,
REPRESENTS 100
FEET!



"THE KNOCKERS"

EARLY SETTLERS ON THE GREAT ORME.

The Great Orme in Neolithic times must have been a form of sanctuary to the people who managed to cross over the marsh that separated it from the mainland. I say marsh because during that period the sea level would have risen to almost the level it is today the narrow neck of land that Llandudno is built on was not drained then as it is now, there would have been large areas of morass making the crossing a hazardous undertaking. Once over though the lucky ones would have found a virtual island of plenty. Several fresh water springs, an abundance of game, and evidence exists that there were plenty of caves and trees to provide shelter and fuel. The rocky beaches would have supplied them with fish and molluscs. From the heights overlooking the marsh to the south they could see anyone trying to approach them and take steps to either welcome or repel them.

There is no evidence of any fortifications on or around any Archaeological site on the Orme before the "Iron Age" The only one known is on the promontory overlooking the town called locally "Pen-Dinas". It consists of numerous round huts, now in very ruinous condition and difficult to locate with the remnants of a protective wall to the north, the south being protected by a high unscalable cliff. Not so much a fortress, more of a refuge in times of stress, there is no water and the occupants would not have been able to withstand a siege for any length of time even without their livestock. It was not until this period in history that the low lying marshy ground started to become more consolidated and firm enough for intruders to attempt the crossing. The early settlers had no fear of attack as their settlement sites show, they are all under the lee of low cliffs and close to fresh water springs of which there are several on the north side of the mountain, life on the high limestone cliffs would have been peaceful and pastoral.

These early settlers may well have first occupied that area of the Orme we now call the "Happy Valley" no evidence exists to support that statement, but that site would have been the most suitable for the first foraging party on their initial visit. Sheltered on three sides, reasonably level, wooded and close to the shore for fishing and collecting shellfish. A spring of fresh water flows from the hillside on the south side, it still does, it can be seen flowing from the wall in front of the pavilion through the stones onto the beach. There is no record of what the "Valley" looked like in the very early days of the towns history other than it being used as pasture by the Tygwyn farm, but vestiges of Prehistoric woodlands still remain on its higher slopes

Ten Stone

(1991)

P E N M O R F A

In early June it was time for another trek into the bowels of the Penmorfa (and another treat for the residents of Abbey Place when we emerged covered in chocolate coloured mud from head to toe). Nine intrepid GOES members gathered at the head of the culvert and waited for half an hour whilst Tony and Billy tried to dig their way through the mud-slide, which had virtually sealed itself up since the time of the last trip. Billy and Tony squirmed their way through the rather small hole, Helen followed with her usual shouts of "don't go away I am stuck". The hole became progressively larger with each successive person so those at the end had the better deal, although they had to wait longer crouched in the mud whilst those in front of them squeezed through a hole which no wise man would try to enter. It was whilst waiting to go through the mud-slide that Frank's knee decided that enough was enough and poor Frank had to turn back without sampling the delights of the Penmorfa.

Once everyone was through there was what seemed like a mile long trek through freezing cold water of varying depths until we reached base camp where we split into two groups. Ian took his group (Erik, Steve and Mike) on a trek one way and Billy took the rest of the group (Tony, Kristian, Helen and Ian) off in another direction however a further splitting of this group soon took place as two members of the party decided that they would go off exploring on their own and agreed to meet the others back at base camp for a 1 pm rendezvous.

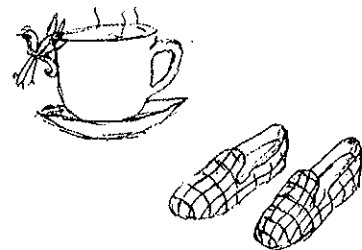
These two members after some exploration eventually found themselves by the rubble at the bottom of Vivians and wandered off to the left down another flooded tunnel. The water was clear and the bottom of the tunnel looked close enough to touch even though it was some 3 feet below the surface. Lurking in the depths below lay a huge Leviathan - Moby Dick - a rotting piece of metal with a tail of blue rust trailing behind the monster. They carefully negotiated this ferocious beast leaving his resting place undisturbed. The next creature to be encountered was a huge mine cucumber - a distant relative of the better known sea cucumber, in reality a swollen piece of wood lying on the passage floor. Here and there bubbles rose ominously to the surface - and something scurried away in the mud, a mine rat no doubt. As they rounded a bend a huge rotted wooden sleeper was seen gently refracting in the crystal water. They wondered if it was painful so one of the pair tried it with their leg but could not keep it up for long as this process causes cramp and can become a long term condition. It was shortly after this that the water shallowed to black oily-looking pools fed by black streams oozing from the walls which themselves eventually gave way to a damp and rocky dead end where the identity of the authors of this piece can be discovered by other brave explorers.

Id and Tid (the knockers).

P.S. as some of you may have already heard, an important (secret) discovery was made on this trip. ALL WILL BE REVEALED SOON

Neatsfoot Oil- The breaking of a myth

For many years now people have been softening and conditioning leather with a wonderful product called Neatsfoot Oil without ever giving a thought to its origins. Now, at last, all can be revealed. Recently, I received a very strange message to be at Elephants Cave at an unearthly hour of the morning to learn something to my advantage. Well, being of a curious nature (Bloody nosey, actually!) I arrived at the appointed hour and waited. After a short while, I was signalled from inside the cave. Nervously, I stood at the entrance and, as my eyes became used to the dim moonlight spilling inside I beheld a small creature about three feet tall and covered all over with rough wiry hair. I was quite startled when the creature spoke to me in his quiet husky voice "Shall I tell you about Neatsfoot Oil?" he said, "Come in, sit down and have some te gwyddfid." I thanked him, sat down and took out my notebook. It is easier to tell you in his own words without my interruptions, so this was his story; "Many ceturies ago, Neats (for this is what I am) were very unhappy creatures. They were fat and indolent, living mainly in small caves near to rock-bee nests for food (for we eat mostly honey, you know) but always too close to human dwellings to be really comfortable and too far from honeysuckle bushes to be really happy. The reason for our unhappiness was an unkind twist of nature that although our bodies are perfectly adapted to a mountainous outdoor home, along the soles of our feet and between our toes are glands which excrete a sticky oil that softens our leathery soles and makes walking extremely painful, at times impossible. Our species was dying out, it was as if this insurmountable problem had made them lose the will to live. Then, one day, one of our number was caught by a human. He had ventured out in search of honeysuckle and could not crawl fast enough to hide. Fortunately, this human turned out to be a kindly soul who could see that the poor creature was afraid and in pain and so set about a solution to our centuries old problem. He could see that the oil had special properties, so a deal was struck that we would supply him with the oil if he could solve our problem. Of course that was many years ago now and our numbers have greatly increased, there are in excess of two thousand of us living on the remotest parts of the Orme now, although we are too shy to mix generally with humans we thought it was time you knew a little about us. Well, I must be off now as the sun is nearly up and I have to get back home while it's still quiet" As he got up and walked silently out of the cave, I looked at his feet for the first time, and on them were a pair of Marks and Spencers brown and green checked carpet slippers!



B.I.G. Foot.

July 91.

LITTLE HOLES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE - PART 3.

PRIMIDA, THE ELEPHANT, AND OTHER AFFAIRS.

In response to more genteel arm-twisting by our ever-efficient Kristian, here is the third instalment of the series started in January last year.

This time, all the caves described are on the Great Orme, just to the South-West of the Happy Valley, along the foot of the cliff which overlooks the Empire Hotel and Arthur's Orme. All of them have obviously been known to local enthusiasts for many years, and I apologise in advance for any false information which I may give.

Starting at the Eastern end of this cliff, about 100 metres South of the road which now takes cars up to the Bri Slope, we come to the imposing cliff which encloses the "Elephant's Cave" - obviously not a cave so much as a quarry - (for limestone) with a large square opening on the South side. Scramble down the steep ruddy slope into the interior, and straight ahead of you, in the nearest corner, there is a muddy fan of debris with a little hole at the top of it. Insert yourself into this hole, and it turns out to be a charming little water-worn passage, going gently downhill to the North, then after 2 or 3 metres turning sharp right and emerging a few metres later low down on the East side of the cliff.

When I first started caving with the Troggs from St. David's, this exit on the East side did not exist, so we all trooped into the little hole inside the quarry, and for several happy Friday afternoons we dug away in the mud which at that time filled the whole passage beyond the sharp bend. Little did we know that we were not alone in this labour, for Billy Davies and his mates were also digging there every weekend, unaware of our efforts, so whenever each party returned to the scene, its members were astonished at the progress that they had seemingly made last time. However, at long last both parties actually met, at the cave entrance, quite by accident, and the mystery was solved. Shortly after that (I think), Billy's party made the final triumphant breakthrough into the open air on the East side of the cliff, exposing on their way a very small tributary passage - also plugged with clay - which comes in from the North. This tributary passage we later dug out, as far as we could reach, but it was so tight that even the smallest Trog could not be persuaded to squirm into it more than about 2 metres. But I feel sure it could be dug further, given the right equipment and/or the right physique.

Just outside this "Eastern entrance", in the corner of the rock face, there is what looks like an "aven" going up into the overhanging roof. We tried several times to explore this, but my climbing technique on vertical holdless slabs well-plastered with mud was not much cop even in those days, and I never got far enough up to see if it led to anything interesting. However, I think Denny Dutton did - but reported that it went "blind". Can Denny comment on that, please? Denny knows the area well, because on a later occasion, while trying to inspect an inviting hole a few metres higher up the cliff, while suspended on a rope, his belay gave way and he fell, closely followed by the rock to which he had belayed himself, and this most unkindly fell on his leg and broke it. Then followed an interesting afternoon, with Patron hot-footing it down from St. David's, and the ambulance crew arriving breathlessly shortly after. However, all went well in the end, and Denny's leg recovered in time for the end-of-term exams.

At the other - i.e. Western - end of the "Elephant Quarry" there is a small hole in the wall which turns out to be another underground stream passage very like the one at the Eastern end. In fact I suspect that both were part of the same passage before the quarry-men removed the part in the middle. This "Western passage" goes in perhaps 2 or 3 metres and then becomes too tight for further human progress - although the passage certainly continues Westward.

Leaving the "Elephant" we now walk Westward along the path till we come

to a very large detached boulder resting on the ground. A faint muddy track goes up to this, and by its North East corner there are several interesting little holes. The best of these is in the corner of a little depression beneath the corner of the boulder. Insert yourself feet first into this hole, then lower your bottom gently to the same level as your feet. Now swing your legs smartly to the left (i.e. West) and propel yourself on your back until you can swing your legs right again into a spacious hole at the top of a 45° slope of rubble. This is the entrance to a cave which seems to have no name but which the Frogs knew as "The Slit". Actually it is more likely to be collapsed quarry than a cave, but for all that it can provide a lot of amusement, particularly if your party includes covers of generous girth.

Scramble down the rubble slope to the bottom, and then bear right to the entrance to a little rocky passage which disappears uphill. Propel yourself up this, sliding comfortably along a surface which soon becomes a mud slope, then down again on the far side, once more sliding luxuriously over smooth mud. Various little holes appear in the floor and sides of this inner chamber, but unfortunately none go more than about 5 metres. After you have exhausted all the possibilities here you can add interest to your return journey by going back a slightly different way. Near the bottom of the "inner mud slide", on the left, there is a little low slit of an entrance, leading to a fairly tight flat-out crawl, not more than 10 metres long, with an awkward right hand bend in it just when you think you are past the worst, and an even more awkward exit over a large boulder onto the foot of the rubble slope just inside the entrance.

When I first found this cave I met another of Billy Davies's mates outside, and he told me that he thought it might contain another entrance to "the long-lost Ty Gwyn Mine". But although I searched carefully I never found any sign of that inside. However, Bill Oliver told me some time ago that he remembered, as a small boy, seeing the top of a large shaft - then open - in the ground very close to the "detached boulder" described above, and this might well be the missing entrance to the Ty Gwyn. Unfortunately (for us) the shaft was apparently filled in - some time in the 1930's? - and now there is no sign of it.

Finally, proceeding Westward again, we come to another little quarry, just this side of the boundary fence, and inside this quarry is what is perhaps the prize gravel of the whole area - the famous "Brenda's". Brenda, so Billy Davies, tells me, was a little girl who fell in love with him, many, many years ago, and was persuaded by him to prove her devotion by crawling through the ultra-tight little passage that now bears her name. It can be done in either direction, but probably the easiest is from West to East. Scramble to the other side of the boundary fence, then over the little wall and turn right, to a corner in the cliff. The Western end of "Brenda's" is now visible above you - an inviting little hole about 3 metres up the cliff. Scramble slightly awkwardly up to this, insert yourself inside, then propel yourself forward with faith and judicious movements of your toes and stomach muscles. About 3 metres in, you come to a sharp bend to the right, and on the only occasion that I really tried it I found at this point that my hips were obviously too large to allow further progress. So I cravenly retreated, with some lame excuse about a pile of exercise books that I really had to mark that evening, and I have never plucked up courage to try again.

But it does go on, with a further sharp bend, this time to the left, and eventually comes out into the back of the little quarry, where the grateful victim can subside onto the rubble, covered with sweat and dust but with a feeling of triumph in his (or her) heart. Covers of well-nourished build are warned, however, that "Brenda's" is very tight, and if they had the misfortune to get stuck in either of the two sharp bends they might need treatment with blasting gelatine to extricate them.

As always, further comments from our members would be welcome.

The Editor,
Journal 'GOES',
Tyn y Coed Road
Llandudno

British University for Lenient Licensure
12 Waffling Way
London
SH 1T

Reference:

COPROLITES

1 January 1991

Dear Madam,

I have to report that, in their enthusiasm to unravel the mysteries of the Bronze Age on the Great Orme, the archaeologists among us have, once again, got their wires crossed. A vast hoard of 'mauls' has been gathered up, almost religiously, by all associated with the project. They proudly describe their geology, physical attributes, numbers and conclude they were probably carried from or near the Penmeanmawr beach. I fear it is they who have been carried away.

The revelation I shall make I know will cause uproar, if not outrage, but I know too that the Society is broad-minded enough to recognise the truth when it examines the facts in the cold light of day. My recent researches indicate the 'mauls' are in fact of local origin and are none other than dragon droppings. More precisely, though it is bending the definition slightly, they are coprolites formed by the passage of limestone through the dragon where it is metamorphosed, by means as yet completely unknown to modern science, into the smoothed dolerite formations with which we are so familiar.

Some among you will ask, why are there no modified mauls found in or on the Great Orme? The answer is simple, can you imagine how painful that would be for the dragon. Smooth and round at both ends is one thing, but holes and angles don't bear thinking about!

This, of course, does not mean that the miners of yesteryear did not use these rocks to work the mine. They are the appropriate size and shape, are suitably durable to be used as tools, and better than the Penmeanmawr rocks, they were/are to be found in any number required, on site.

Those of you wishing to know the finer points of coprolitology referable to Dragocem Gogarathiens will want to know how to age the specimen, and this, I must confess, is difficult much of the time. The first and most important clue is temperature; after metamorphosis the specimen is very hot and glows in the dark for many hours, but apart from a hint of ozone it is completely odourless. You can imagine how useful they would have been to the early inhabitants of the Great Orme as potboilers and for lighting and heating their huts. As the specimen ages dating becomes more complex requiring radiological methods not immediately available to the field worker; the methodology has been well documented¹ elsewhere.

Recently, at the Dragonology United National Gorsedd, I presented a detailed account of research performed at the Great Orme in collaboration with my learned colleague, Dr Tom Rot PhD. The transactions of this meeting will appear in press very shortly².

Huw G Lyre BS
Professor

1 Conventions on Radioelements in Archaeology and Palaeontology, George A. Selwyn-Harris OBE, Macmillan, London, 1st Ed. 1977.

2 Coprolite morphology, dragon population density and demographics in an isolated Cambrian limestone promontory. Huw G. Lyre and Thomas Rot Archives of Dragonology 1991;23(1):97-99.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual meeting was soon to take place,
The agenda was drawn up and planned,
For committee and members to meet face to face,
All arrangements were firmly in hand.

When tankards were brimming and all in good cheer,
ORDER! was called by our Les,
The minutes, last-year, you now all must hear,
From Ed, let's hear what he says.

Secretary, Ed, rose to his feet,
To address those gathered to hear,
The minutes last meeting to read from his sheet,
While members just supped on their beer.

Andy's report could not be found,
If you've been to a meeting you'll know,
To audit the books is all very sound,
But the balance is all he will show.

The Tygwyn 500, someone then asked,
Hasn't been mentioned at all,
Has it been spent, or otherwise tasked,
And will there be more from 'Town Hall.

On through the business we steadily move,
And Les takes the floor with a cheer,
Elections come next, now candidates prove,
Their goals to achieve for next year.

Election's complete, it's time to reward,
With trophies and gongs you see here,
The **Silver Rock Bolt and Tygwyn Award**,
For merit and mirth in the year.

Minuted business now seems complete,
Let's hear some ideas from the floor,
We spoke of Tygwyn, the tunnelling feat,
Then Don spoke up from near 'dor,.....**LABRADOR!**

The Eisteddfod this year was quite a success,
But perhaps we should move the RV,
The 'Bronze Opencast' would suit us the best,
On top we could pitch a Marquee.

The agenda's complete, the close I must call,
I propose that we close with a toast,
So charge all your glasses and stand one and all.....
" **The best caving group on the Coast**".

Don Smith, November 1990, London, Ontario.

L L A N S A N N A N

High in the hills above Abergele lies the sleepy village of Llansannan. To this tranquil spot three brave GORS members ventured in April last, to explore an old lead mine. This mine is now home to creatures of the deep namely EELS which live in its flooded passages and protect the mine from unwelcome visitors. In order to reach this site one has to cross a field frequented by a heard of bulls, so let other explorers beware of this hazard; (or am I just saying that to keep Andy Lewis away?). Jestings aside eels really do live in the mine and the first precaution Tony, Phil and myself took was to tuck our trousers tightly into our socks - it is, I am told, rather unpleasant to have an eel crawling up ones leg !

We waded through muddy knee deep water along an adit with a high roof, until we reached a shaft which Phil had previously free-climbed. Today the aim was to bolt the shaft and explore the higher levels. Phil being an excellent climber scrambled up the narrow shaft trailing a rope behind him rather like a monkey's tail. In due course a drill and bolts followed and within no time the rope was in position and ready for Tony and myself to ascend. I set off cautiously and rather slowly (like a snail according to Tony who was left waiting in very cold knee deep water). Eventually I reached the first bolt and problems at once arose. How on earth did Phil expect me to change over from one rope to another - (remember the episode in Romans?). Eventually after about half an hour of coaxing from Phil and moaning from poor Tony who was rapidly turning blue with the cold, I transferred my harness from the lower to the upper rope and found myself sitting on a pile of very loose, very dangerous-looking spoil. Every now and then when I attempted to move upwards I sent a shower of small rocks down the shaft and Tony had to stand well clear for fear of being hit. Phil was somewhere above me and occasionally stones clattered down in my direction. I was already wondering just why I had agreed to come on this trip, what if I broke my arm or leg (I had my final exams in four weeks time).

Then Phil shouted down that he thought the next pitch was too difficult for me, since it involved detachment from the rope. I decided to go back down, but of course this was easier said than done and I could not manage to transfer my harness back to the lower rope. Tony had to come to the rescue. I sat motionless on the rubble which was supported by two rotten stemples, whilst Tony ascended to where I was stuck. There then followed a complex sequence of detaching and reattaching various pieces of equipment to two different ropes so that at all times both of us had two attachments to the rope. Eventually I was in a position to abseil down the shaft which I had climbed almost an hour earlier. I left the two experts to the job of exploring and retreated in disgrace out into the sunshine. Phil and Tony appeared an hour later having explored the passages which led off from the shaft at a higher level.

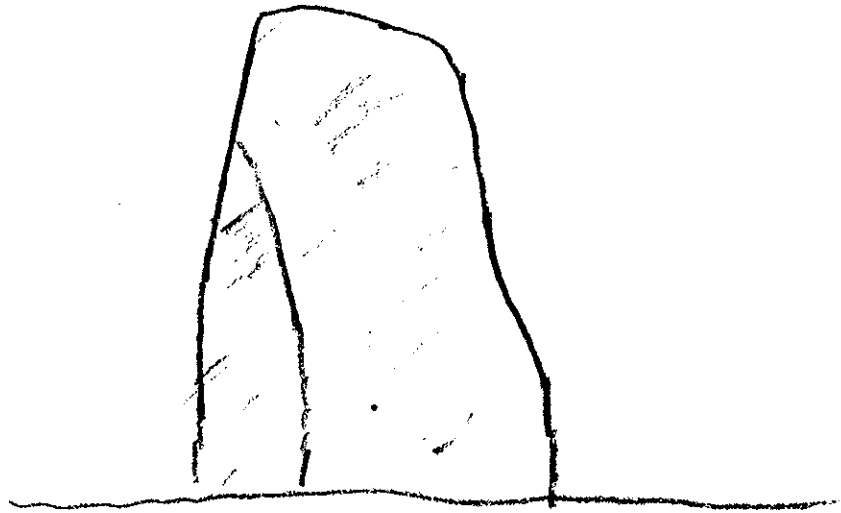
The mine is described as being a disused lead mine on maps published in 1930, but today little evidence of lead ore can be found. There is another shaft yet to be explored; but I think that I for one shall leave this mine to the EELS - which I never saw - perhaps someone is pulling my leg this time.

H. M. J.

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT ORME.

Number One

MAEN Y MWYNWYR. (THE MINERS' STONE).



On the lower side of the Summit road a short distance east of the Pyllau junction is the ancient standing stone, "Maen y Mwynwyr", (The Miners' Stone).

Local legend claims that the stone once stood over twenty feet in height but that at the beginning of the last century it 'sank' to its present height of six feet.

It was considered to mark the dead centre of the copper deposits on Llandudno Mountain and those prospectors seeking new mining areas would make a point of touching the stone before venturing to excavate new ground. Failure to do so invariably resulted in totally fruitless labours.

Currently a large international paint company is negotiating for permission to treat the megalith with a revolutionary new coating which would render it translucent in daylight and cause it to glow with a pale blue aura during the hours of darkness. In this way it would no longer obscure the daytime view and the danger of people bumping into it at night would be minimised.

D.U. Lux. May 1991.