

ABE DAVIS SAFETY AWARD

the CAVE DIVING SECTION of the NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.
is proud to present

with this award in recognition of
a genuine dedication to cave diving safety as evidenced by
the successful completion of his 100th cave dive on _____ at _____



*Awards Committee
NSS Cave Diving Section*

cave diving section

underwater speleology

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UNDERWATER SPELEOLOGY

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The Cave Diving Section of
The National Speleological Society

Membership in the NSS Cave Diving Section is open to any NSS member in good standing that is interested in cave diving and has paid the dues (\$3.00 for 1979). Immediate family of members not wishing to receive a newsletter may also join for \$1.50. Persons not wishing to join may subscribe for \$5.00 per year. Checks should be made payable to "NSS Cave Diving Section" and sent to the treasurer, Stephen Maegerlein.

Deadline is the second Friday of the preceeding month. Send Articles and correspondence to the editor, Gene Melton.

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the NSS Cave Diving Section.

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COVER

The ABE DAVIS SAFETY AWARD article was written by India Young, who also administers the applications. (See page 4) If you qualify for the ABE DAVIS SAFETY AWARD, use the application on page 4 and send it to India at the address listed on the bottom of the application.

EDITORIAL

The cover story is an important one that India Young has covered well. If you qualify please apply, it may be important in the future to be able to show how many divers have accomplished 100 cave dives. The prime concern is that cave diving can be enjoyed by ANYONE, if they are willing to learn it safely!

CALENDAR

Dec 29-30 12th NSS/CDS Workshop contact; G. Troy Young, Rt. 3 Box 119K, Byron, GA 31008

HELP

Martyn Farr, 60 Harford St., Tredegar, Gwent, Great Britain, of the British Cave Diving Group, would like to obtain the address of Alf Latham, an ex-British caver, who may be living in the USA. Can any of our readers help Mr. Farr locate Mr. Latham's address?

FOR SALE

Nemrod Twin-Valve, \$50, Gene Melton.

DEVILS EYE CAVE SYSTEM, GILCHRIST CO., FLORIDA

by Ken Hillier (NSS 17589) and Sheck Exley (NSS 13146)

PART ONE: 1971- Spring, 1972

(see also "Devil's Eye Vitals Discovered" by John Harper)

Prologue

The continuing exploration and survey of the Devils Eye Cave System is probably the most exciting project in the history of cave diving in Florida. This may seem odd in that so many of Florida's underwater caves are bigger, longer, deeper, clearer and prettier. However, considerably more people have been involved in the exploration of this great system than any other, and it is through participation and the sharing of experiences such as Devils Eye that the cave diving community gets its vitality and growth.

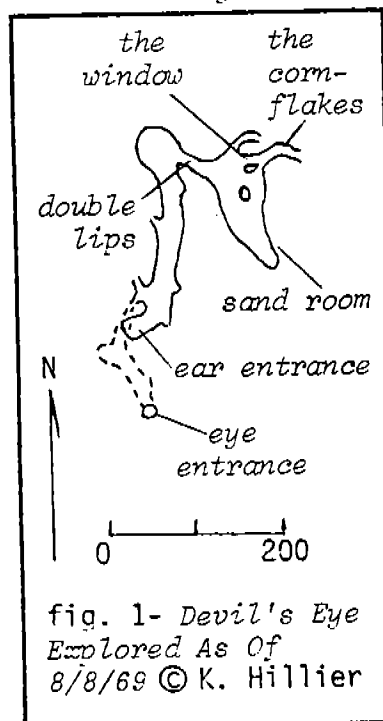
Another curious aspect of the exploration of Devils Eye is that, on no fewer than four different occasions, explorers have surfaced mistakenly thinking that they had "walled out" its main passage - at 350 ft., 2285 ft., 3097 ft. and 3655 ft. - yet that passage is still "going" to this day! Such is the tantalizing nature of this truly unique and fascinating cave system.

Early History

By the time Sheck Exley (NSS 13146) first visited the cave with Bob Gatling on Dec. 4, 1966, most of the historic section of Devils Eye (see fig. 1) had already been explored by divers like the Florida Speleological Society (the Gainesville-based chapter of the NSS) and John Harper (NSS 8352). According to Dave Desautels (NSS 14184), some divers had already connected both passable entrances (the "Eye" and the "Ear") during the early 1960's. This 500 ft. or so of passage constituted the entire known extent of the cave until John Harper's discovery on 8/9/69. John's fine article "Devils Eye Vitals Discovered" in *Underwater Speleology* describes the flurry of activity that immediately followed.

A New Route - And Fossils

John didn't exactly broadcast his new find, but talk of a discovery "as big as Hornsby" led Dave Desautels to put a "tail" on him when John left a dive shop after getting his tanks filled in Gainesville. The "spy" followed John and Randy Hylton (NSS 13111) to Devils Eye and sat in a tree while they planned their dive, gathering enough clues for Tom Allen and Sheck to locate the "Vitals" on a 50 minute dive on 7/22/71, pioneering the "Window" route in the process. Now that heavy traffic through the cave in that area has enlarged it and removed much of the black coating, it seems hard to believe that it was so difficult to locate the "Vitals". However, Sheck vividly recalls that he never would have believed a human being had gone through the "Cornflakes Restriction" if John's line hadn't been there!



By the end of 1971 Sheck had made a number of dives following John's line through the new area, with Dutch Vande Noord, Frank Martz and Billy Young (NSS 17268). Finally, on 12/7/71, Reggie Batten became the 10th diver to penetrate beyond the "Cornflakes Restriction," when he and Sheck turned right at the "New Dimension Room" and explored a corridor downstream back to the "Vitals" near the "Cornflakes". In a room at this junction (later known as the "Bone Room") they noticed a number of bones strewn along the bottom. Later Bob Friedman (NSS 13215) dubbed this new route "Sheck's Shortcut" and it was used in preference to the "Vitals" on many subsequent penetrations, not because it was shorter (actually it is a little longer) but because it was shallower (75-85 ft. deep compared to 90-100 ft.) and less silty. Bob also retrieved some bones for Carl Clausen of the Florida Archives, who pronounced them as belonging to a Pleistocene alligator and a large unidentified animal similar to a mastodon. Unfortunately, since this time vandals have all but totally destroyed what could have been an important paleontological site by removing virtually all the bones.

"Adding Line..."

When John, Randy, Paul and Jim ended their line some 2085 ft. back in 1971, they had made America's longest penetration to that date, though in those pre-surveying days we actually thought lines in Little River Spring Cave, Blue Springs Cave System (Madison Co.) and near the Orange Grove Sink entrance to the Peacock Springs Cave System were longer. On a dive in Devils Eye with Frank Martz on 8/4/71, Sheck made the first dive ever made in a cave with the new twin 100 cu. ft. @ 2640 psig tanks, thereby ushering in a new era in the exploration of underwater caves. In short order he and others from the old Dixie Cavern Kings Cave Diving Club like Chuck Stevens and Reggie Batten were using these new tanks to extend exploration in virtually every cave in the state... Devils Eye was not to be ignored.

Since Devils Eye was supposed to be shorter, Chuck and Sheck thought adding line in that cave would be as easy as it was in Little River, Blue Springs and Orange Grove. However, not until 4/12/72 did the two finally reach the end of the Harper line, on a dive that they recall as one of the most difficult they had made to that date. They added 200 ft. of line, tying off in the "Mud Dome Room," where the cave appeared to end. For that reason they surfaced with the news that Devils Eye was "walled out" - for the second or four times so far. Accordingly, for the next year all efforts were directed toward exploring side passages.

DON'T MISS PART TWO OF THIS ARTICLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF UNDERWATER SPELEOLOGY - SIDE PASSAGE EXPLORATION, THE "GRAND TOUR", "HILL 400" AND THE CHRISTMAS CAMP OF 1972!

DON'T FORGET THE NSS/CDS WORKSHOP DEC 29-30

Are You Diving somewhere new? Is it mapped and surveyed? How about an article for " I LEARNED ABOUT CAVE DIVING FROM THAT " which an incident in cave diving which happened to you that made you a better cave diver.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PITTSFIELD CONVENTION

Jill Yager (NSS 19089)

Most apparent for the week in Massachusetts was a lack of organization for the Cave Diving Section. There was no one to chair the Section meeting, which immediately caused a disruption of the schedule and set a tone of general disarray. Future conventions hopefully will find a more united Section, showing the general members that we are indeed an active organized group of divers dedicated to the promotion of safe cave diving.

In a more pleasant light, Tom Iliffe (from Bermuda) presented an interesting slide show on Bermuda caves. It seems that Tom with Paul Meng's assistance will soon be exploring Bermuda's depths in an attempt to find and record the volcanic layer of rock underneath the limestone cap. I certainly wish him good luck and look forward to hearing about Bermuda caves in future editions of UNDERWATER SPELEOLOGY.

Also present at the convention was Dennis Williams who gave his presentation on the Blue Holes of the Bahamas. He talked to the Section group and to a larger audience at a general session. His beautiful slides were well received.

Ed- Thanks Jill for the report. (Jill attended the Texas Conference last year also.) Thanks to Tom Iliffe and Dennis Williams for the excellent presentations.

* * * * *

TRAINING CHAIRMAN
Forrest Wilson
2832 Concord Drive
Decatur, GA 30033

The NSS Cave Diving Section is going to publish a source list of cave diving equipment and manufacturers. If you want to be included on the list, please complete the following information and send to the above address. The list will be updated and republished periodically.

NAME _____

COMPANY _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HISTORY

KELD HEAD

In Keld Head/North England, about 7 km north of Ingleton, is the underwater connection to Kingsdale Cave to be found. In February 1978 Jochen Hasenmayer, Pforzheim/Germany dived through the tight spot to 1005 m. In April, Geoff Yeadon, Sutton/England dived to 1097 m. Three hours later Yeadon found the end of the line from the Kingsdale siphon end, that he had laid a month before, a few meters further on. On the next day Hasenmayer dived to 1143 m. Within the limit there, he had at a depth of 20 m, two hours in which to find a probable way on.

The shortest total dive through the new siphon system is 1828 m. Thereby Keld Head is the longest underwater through cave in the world. With the shortest distance between two surfaces at 960 m in Keld Head is the longest siphon in Europe. (Before it was Rinquelle, Waalensee at 950 m.) The passages of the siphon system add to a total of about 3353 m the biggest underwater cave in Europe. (Before it was Fraiss Puits, Vesoul, 2285 m.)

Remarks: In France there was a simple siphon passage dived to 1325 m by Leger, In USA to 1380 m,
(From the 1/78 Cave Diving Newsletter, Union International de Speleologie)

* * * * *

CHANGES IN CDS MEMBERSHIP LISTINGS

Dale Blalock, (NSS 19746), 1317 1/2 Briarcliff Circle, Macon, GA 31211
William B. Burton, (NSS 20360), Rt 4, Box 459 Rolling Acres, Talbott, TN 37877
Brantley Carter, (NSS 20443), 202 Downs Dr., Timmonsville, SC 29161
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Sammy L. DiPerna, (NSS 20458), 6241 Lenczyk Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32211
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Bill Gavin, (NSS 19750), Rt. 3, Box 48, Inverness, FL 32650
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Buddy Sanders, (NSS 19607), 1007 N. Patterson St., Valdosta, GA 31601
Linda G. Varney, NSS # ? 3257 Harvest Way, Marietta, GA 30062
Carol Vilece, (NSS 20193), 1125 NW 36th Rd., Gainesville, FL 32601

JACOBS WELL, TEXAS

Karen E. Wark, Virginia Beach, Virginia, writes I am enclosing the following information we picked up returning cross country from San Francisco to Norfolk, Virginia in late September of this year. We had hoped to dive Jacobs Well. However, when he hit San Antonio in the first week in October, we learned a PADI assistant instructor and a freshly certified basic student (neither with any cave diver training) had entered the cave and been lost. Through ignorance the joint property owners called in a construction company to find the bodies. They blasted the cave and surrounding area resulting in the collapse of Jacobs Well and the instability of the region surrounding the cave. No bodies were found, but other "bodies" almost compounded the tragedy (see the following notice). The judge has issued an injunction with no diving for 2 years or longer at Jacobs Well.

* * * * *

JACOBS WELL, again

Don Dibble is a PADI instructor, and owner of The Dive Shop in San Marcos. In addition to running his shop and heading the scuba/teaching activities at Southwest Texas State University, he is often called on by local and state authorities to lead search and recovery teams in his area. Such was the case on the morning of September 9, when Dibble was asked to assist in the attempted recovery of two Houston divers lost in the caverns of Jacobs Well.

In making his first inspection of the entry to the final cavern, which is located at a depth of 90 feet, Dibble was trapped in the narrow chamber entrance by falling gravel, rocks and debris. In the ensuing low visibility, his diving buddy did not realize that Dibble was entrapped. As Dibble tried to free himself, his air supply was quickly depleted. He struggled free and was then rescued by his buddy. After nearly drowning, Dibble apparently swallowed a considerable amount of air, which expanded on ascent, causing his stomach to rupture. He required emergency surgery and a lengthy hospital stay.

* * * * *

VORTEX, FLORIDA

Karen and David Whall also visited Vortex for a cave dive in October. She says that the cave appears to have changed since the May, 1976 mapping. The owner still has the airlift in the spring and we believe he has enlarged the entrance and part of the first room. There is also some line someone laid very poorly about 100 - 150 feet inside the cave which should be relaid or removed. The owner was notified about the line.

* * * * *

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science

cave diving section

The Abe Davis Cave Diving Safety Award

Abe Davis is America's first known cave diver. Like countless cave divers who would come later, Davis was fascinated with Little River Springs in Florida. However, living previous to the War for Southern Independence, Davis did not have the use of face mask, scuba or powerful lights which would later make extensive exploration of underwater caves a reality. He had to be content to swim into the flooded entrance while holding his breath. His efforts are the earliest known instances of a person entering an underwater cave in the Western Hemisphere and are duly recorded in the Live Oak, Fla., *Independent Post*.

In late 1977, the executive committee of the Cave Diving Section of the National Speleological Society, Inc., decided to create the Abe Davis Cave Diving Safety Award in honor of America's first known cave diver. This award is to be presented to any American cave diver (or foreign cave diver if a member of the Section) who has demonstrated a genuine dedication to cave diving safety as evidenced by the successful completion of at least 100 cave dives while using scuba.

The first of these awards will be presented at the start of the Section meeting (open to the public) during the 10th NSS Cave Diving Safety Workshop, Saturday, December 30, 1978 at 8:30 p.m. It is perhaps fitting that the inception of this award will be in the year that cave diving is celebrating its 100th anniversary. It was March 27, 1878 that Ottonelli made the first cave dive without having to hold his breath, entering a cave in Vacluse, France.

By making the award available to all American cave divers, not just Section members, it is hoped that the award will have an unifying influence on the American cave diving community. The award will also provide novices with more positive motivation to plan and execute their dives as safely as possible while they are in the relatively high-risk area of their experience—the first 100 cave dives. Further, by encouraging the novice to keep records of his diving activity to apply for the award, he will also be indirectly motivated to be more methodical in his dive planning and analytical toward his dive performance, thereby making his cave diving safer.

Finally, when presented with proper ceremony at Section functions, the positive public relations aspect of the award is considerable. Heretofore, there have been no records as to the number of cave divers or the number of their annual dives, which gives rise to uninformed detractors who claim that cave diving is highly dangerous, not being aware of the enormous amount of cave diving activity in Florida. The Abe Davis Cave Diving Safety Award will substantiate that the highly publicized accidents in cave diving are the exception, rather than the rule. It will give the cave diving community another positive statistic . . . the number of cave divers who have made more than 100 cave dives.

National Speleological Society

Cave Diving Section

Application For The
ABE DAVIS SAFE CAVE DIVING AWARD

Having completed and logged 100 safe cave dives, I, _____
_____ do hereby apply for the ABE DAVIS SAFE CAVE
DIVING AWARD, presented by the National Speleological Society's
Cave Diving Section. I agree to have my name added to the list of other
Award recipients.

My 100th cave dive was at _____ (name of cave,
location), with _____ (partner/s) on
_____ (date).

Signed: (name and address)

*Being familiar with the applicant, I, _____, confirm
that _____ has made and logged 100 safe cave
dives.*

Signed: (name and address)

