



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

September 1996, Volume 35 No. 9

Cascade Grotto Liability Waiver

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I must be out of my mind to climb down into a damp, dark hole when I'm perfectly safe where I am.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Cascade Caver

ISSN 0008-7211

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All material to be published, subscription requests, renewals, address changes, and exchange publications should be sent to the Grotto address.

GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$10.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$10.00 per year.

GROTTO ADDRESS

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 75663; Seattle, WA 98125-0663. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

GROTTO OFFICERS

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|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
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MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the University of

Washington, Room 6, in the basement of Johnson Hall. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

UPCOMING EVENTS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| September 14 | Windy Creek Cave - contact Jerry Thompson (360) 653-7390 |
| September 20 | Grotto Meeting 7:00pm |
| September 28-29 | Cave Gating Project at Trout Lake Assist with the gating of Christmas Tree Cave contact Bill Bennett at (206)255-1466 |
| October 5-6 | Trout Lake Cave Gating Project part II contact Bill Bennett |
| October 18 | Grotto Meeting 7:00pm The program will be about the Geology of the Puget Sound Basin. |
| November 15 | Grotto Meeting 7:00pm Program: Slides of the Regional at Ely NV and of Carlsbad Caverns from Cyril Colbeck |
| October 1997 | 1997 Cave Management Symposium Bellingham - contact Rob Stitt (206) 283-2283 |

COVER

I have no idea where I found the "Liability Waiver" that's on this month's cover. I've had it for several years and was just waiting for someplace to use it.

GROTTO DUES

A dues notice has been included with this Caver to all members. Please return it to the Grotto PO Box, or better yet bring it to the September meeting and hand your money to Bruce in person (saving a whole \$0.32 in the process).

September Grotto Meeting

At this meeting we will vote on changing the meeting day to Thursday so if you have an opinion on the matter please plan on attending.

Visiting Vancouver Island's Caves

By Bob Roel

In 1778, during one of his epic voyages of discovery, Captain James Cook landed at Nootka sound on the west coast of what is today Vancouver Island. As I was growing up, I thrilled to the stories of exploration and discovery by adventurers like Captain Cook, Alexander Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark. I often wondered what it was like to be the first to bring unexplored areas to attention of the rest of humanity while expanding the frontiers of the known world.

Today, Canada's Vancouver Island is still the home to a vast, largely unexplored frontier. This frontier however lies not on the island, but under it. It's an area where a handful of modern day frontiersmen are again going where no person has ever gone before. Again they're pushing and expanding the limits of the known world before them.

Like many other cavers I've talked to, I'm drawn to caving because of the exploration and adventure opportunities it offers. It was that spirit of adventure that brought me to the area on Vancouver Island, where Captain Cook first landed and explored over two centuries ago. Even though my desire was to participate in the exploration of this frontier, my intentions when I left my home in Washington State on Friday, June 21, 1996 were more or less to merely investigate and see for myself whether all the

stories I'd read about untapped caving opportunities really did exist.

After packing the wife and kids into our pickup and hitching up our tent trailer, we headed for the Ferry at Horseshoe bay north of Vancouver City. After crossing over to the island, our first destination was the Horne Lake caves, a B.C. Provincial Park. We camped at the local campground that night. On Saturday morning we got up and went to explore the caves which are about one kilometer away. The caves are situated on the hillside in the trees above the nearby Qualicum river. A short walk up a trail, past a concession stand, leads the visitor to the Horne Lake Main Cave. The narrow crack opening zig-zags a couple of turns into a high main passage that led me and the kids toward the back of the cave where a small waterfall cascaded down off the right side of the room. My two oldest kids and I easily free climbed up the waterfall and came to a split tributary coming in from the left. I later explored this tributary which went several meters and narrowed with the sound of a waterfall coming in from the rear. We continued up the main channel and eventually found ourselves in the bottom of a fifteen foot well with the water cascading down into it. There was a passage leading back farther at the top of the well, but we didn't attempt to climb it. We then returned to the main passage and exited the cave. Being a park, there were many other would be cave explorers there who rented lights and helmets from the concession stand.

We next turned our attention to the Horne Lake lower cave which is just a little further down the trail from the Main cave. The opening here was a little more impressive and the entry passage was fairly even, though stepping into a pool of water was a potential hazard. We climbed over and through many passages and emerged above the passage where we had entered. I understand this

section of the cave is known as the "Christmas Tree". After spending about an hour here, we returned down the trail and talked to the people at the concession stand. They told us about their tours through Riverbend Cave, which is part of the park. Their longest tour which they're developing would last about six hours and involve some rappelling down a seven story shaft known as the "rain barrel".

We spent one more day camping at Horne lake, but the town of Gold River, with it's reputation as Canada's "Caving Capitol", was really our main objective for that week. On Monday we pulled up stakes and headed north. As we left the island's main north-south highway 19 and headed west I could tell that we were coming into the type of mountainous wilds we had hoped to find. With virtually no permanent human inhabitants, this stretch of the island is marked by craggy, glacier covered peaks at the higher elevations. Even the lower elevations, seemed to resemble something out of Edgar Rice Burroughs "Lost World" with it's rain forest covered vertical landscape which was often shrouded in passing white clouds.

After we arrived in Gold River, we hooked up with Paul Griffith and his wife Karen. Paul is the head of the B.C. Speleological Federation, and has been working and exploring the island's caves for at least twenty-five years. From the front parking lot of their travel business, Paul pointed to a limestone covered mountain known as "White Ridge", which towered away to the south of town. Paul informed me that this mountain contained some of Canada's most famous cave systems, including Q5, Windy Link Pot, Crackpot, and Quatsino caves, all of which are listed in the Atlas of Great Caves of the World. He also told me that there are many unchecked areas of that particular karst feature and the likelihood of more caves is a real possibility. One problem (or blessing) with this area is it's inaccessibility. Generally, access to these caves

is gained by helicopter. Even the lowest and closest cave entrance to town is still a two and a half hour hike from the nearest logging road access (as my nine year old son and I would find out later in the week).

We got situated in a nearby campground and the next day we headed for the Upana Caves which are located about twenty miles northwest of town. The road up there is made up of gravel, but it's the main highway to the town of Tahsis. The caves are located in a Provincial park, and there's a trail, some steps, and even some viewing platforms located there to help visitors view the area. The caves themselves though, still remain in a wild state. There's some waterfalls falling into the area and disappearing into the caves. The caves themselves contain many passages and chambers. It's a great place to cultivate interest in caving among newcomers to this activity. We spent about three hours exploring the interconnecting passages and side caves before we ended up at the resurgence cave at the far end of the park. The water was boiling up out of the depths before it continued on toward Upana Lake.

Since Paul was out of town, we decided the next day to visit nearby Strathcona Provincial park with it's spectacular scenery and many waterfalls. The day after that, I met with Paul again, and we discussed the caving scene on the Island. Paul gave me some maps and filled me in on some of the local caves including Coral Cave near Tahsis, and Quatsino Cave up on the White Ridge. Before I left, Paul told me about caving on north Vancouver Island, and if I got up that way to look for Mike Henwood, one of Paul's caving cohorts up in that area.

Anyway, we decided that day to go visit Coral Cave, which is located near Tahsis. Paul gave me a good description of how to find it, but I forgot his directions. As a consequence I spent a soggy hour and a half looking for a cave that was located right next to the road. I did eventually

find the cave, and the extra time searching for it was productive because I got a good look at what some real water logged karst looks like. Every mound and little ridge seemed to team with cracks in them that could lead to potential caves. Once I located the large entrance to the cave I went back to the truck, put on some dry clothes and returned with my nine year old son, Bobby Jr, AKA "Bubba". A little ways past the entrance passage we came to what looked like a 6 ft. drop off. This was where I encountered a phenomenon I call "invisible water". Water so clear, you can't even tell it's there, unless you touch it or throw a rock in it. We passed around this pool and lowered ourselves down a few more "wells", though none were as deep as the initial one. One time I was going forward, when I heard a splash behind me. It seems Bubba had fallen victim to the invisible water, and now all his pant legs were soaked. We had passed two passages coming in from the left on our way in, but we had bypassed them. After we had been in the cave about a half hour, we exited. Mike Henwood would later show me a survey map of this cave and just how extensive it really is with many unexplored side passages. I've vowed to come back again some day.

Paul had described a resurgence from Quatsino cave as coming out from the Karst on White Ridge, and said it was about a two hour hike up to it. This cave is listed in Great Caves Atlas, and is the lowest of several cave systems located on this mountain. On Friday, following Paul's directions we drove over some rough 4wd roads for about an hour until the roadway was no longer navigable. Bubba and I then continued on foot following the old road until we came to a river which Paul had described. We then turned up the riverbed, but as we found out later, a walkable roadway paralleled the riverbed. We eventually got onto that roadway (foot trail) and continued on it until it petered out at a waterfall. We then had to backtrack and thrash our way up through thick brush and timber. At times there was a

semblance of a foot path, but most of the time it was just good old fashion brush busting.

About 2 1/2 hours after we left the vehicle I spotted a limestone wall ahead and above us and could hear the sound of rushing water. After emerging back on the streambed we saw a waterfall below the limestone wall. On getting up to and above the waterfall we finally spotted the cave entrance which was gushing with fast running cold water. We approached the entrance, which appeared about ten feet around. The entrance chamber narrowed as it went in. It was filled with water that appeared to be chest deep. The ceiling to this passage appeared to be about three feet above the water. A waterfall could be heard dumping somewhere into the back of the chamber. Paul said that he had waded this stretch before and made it into the passages beyond to explore the cave. Bubba and I had no intentions of doing that. We were content to shoot some video and retreat back down the mountain. On the way back it started raining hard. We were soaked by the time we reached the truck, but we cured our weariness with a visit to the Gold River Aquatic club at the local Recreation Center. There we warmed up in the heated pools and jacuzzi. Modern pioneering does have its advantages!

On Saturday, we packed up and headed further north into the wilderness. We traveled the gravel road highway through mountain valleys, past more spectacular glacier covered peaks, and along several large lakes and crossing numerous rivers and streams. After two hours, we re-emerged on the main Highway 19 with its smooth pavement. We were headed up to the Nimpkish lake area where Mike Henwood runs his "caving" camp. Mike's camp is actually located on Anutz lake next to another campsite which is run by one of the local forest companies. The camping on this site is free, so we set ourselves up there on the shores of the lake. After doing that, I went over to meet Mike.

Mike told me he'd been caving on the island for twenty-five years, and had worked for the logging companies. Mike, his wife Linda, and their two teenage boys Cory and Troy now run their tourist business out of their camp. When he's not taking tourists out on tours, Mike's first love is exploring new caves. As he told me, his problem is that he usually doesn't have anybody to go caving with. Linda is a caver, but as Mike explained, some bad experiences have left her reluctant to enter new caves.

I hit it off with Mike right away, as he explained about the island caves. It was hard to retain even a fraction of all the information he was disseminating. He showed me detailed maps of the island where karst beds were known to be located. He broke out a thick album book, which contained what looked like hundreds of mapped cave surveys. As he explained, there have been many caves located and mapped, but very few have been explored completely. Many cave entrances have been located, but not explored. He went on to say that many karst areas have been located, but no attempt has been initiated to locate any caves that are probably in those areas. And to top it off, there are many areas of the island that have not even been explored to see whether or not they contain amounts of karst, which they probably do. To sum it up, there's a vast amount of exciting caving opportunities out there for anyone desiring to attempt it!

The next day, Mike's son Cory accompanied us on a trip to the Artlish caves, which are located about an hour's drive from where we camped. After years of work by Paul and Mike, the area has recently been declared "protected" by the government. The trail to the caves begins at the end of a logging road and passes through some Jurassic Park looking rain forests. We followed the trail to the nearby Artlish river, and after about a half hour we reached Artlish cave. The opening was tremendous, being probably about

100 ft. wide and about 60 ft. high. The entrance way passed into a huge dome shaped chamber. In the back of this chamber was a passage that led to a lake, which appeared fairly deep. In the passage behind the lake we could hear a waterfall tumbling into the lake. We stayed for a short while, then we headed out.

We next headed up a goat trail and over a ridge into another canyon where we found the cave known as the "Black Hole". This was the back entrance to this particular cave. As I understand it, the other entrance is a huge, spectacular thing, even bigger than the Artlish entrance. We would not see that entrance on this trip, but as we descended into the cave, we came into another huge chamber that was equal in size to the one in Artlish cave, though this one seemed to be a little more elongated. After we'd gone about four hundred meters, the wife and some of the kids decided they didn't want to climb over some house sized breakdown that appeared to bar further entrance. Myself, Cory, Bubba, and my 10 year old daughter Veronica continued on, scrambling over the breakdown and entered a fairly large chamber behind it. I could hear the sound of what seemed to be a large stream running somewhere toward the back of the chamber. I continued in the direction of the sound and found that the noise was emanating from a downward passage that was about 4 feet wide. As I peered down into the bottom of the passage I could see the stream flowing inward toward the back of the cave through more passage. It was all I could do to restrain myself from climbing down to explore that, but I knew it was getting late and we were going to have to exit. Cory informed me that the large chamber in the back of the cave, can only be descended into with the use of a handline. After we exited, we followed a shorter trail back to the truck. When we got there, we found a black bear was watching us from about fifty yards away. He was just one of many we had seen while on the island.

On Monday, I took the wife and kids to visit the nearby Huson Caves. This area is also a provincial park, and has some trails and viewing platforms from which to observe the river flowing and cutting its way through some awe inspiring limestone rocks and caves. The river is some of the prettiest, emerald green water you'll see anywhere. In late summer, visitors swim and paddle through the riffles and rapids inside and through the caves. There are several caves located along and near the river. We explored one small one which had openings at both ends after it passed through a couple of stand up chambers.

On Tuesday, Mike and Linda accompanied us into Port McNeill. We all took care of some business like going to the bank, and buying groceries and gas. In the afternoon we all headed up to the Noomas Valley, which is located in the mountains to the east of Nimpkish lake. Our destination was Resonance cave, which was named that because of the echoes you hear when you speak. We drove over a maze of logging roads, all of which headed in one direction-up. We finally topped out and backed onto a short spur road that over-looked the Nimpkish Valley. The day was a wet rainy one, but it didn't matter as we donned our rainproof caving suits. We then headed down a short trail to the cave entrance. It appeared to be a round tube about 7 or 8 feet in circumference. The passage was a fairly consistent, round phreatic tube, which sometimes gave us some room to stand up, but was usually only high enough for us to walk at a stoop. I did notice that the passage sloped ever downward, sometimes at a fairly steep angle.

After about twenty minutes we came to a series of drop offs where we were required to use handlines to continue. The girls all decided to stay behind, but Mike, Bubba, and I continued on. We had rigged Bubba up with a figure eight descender, and he used it to descend the drop offs. Most of these drops weren't drops in the

pure sense, but were angled downward and sometimes even had steps. Only one of the drops was shear, and it was only about fifteen feet, yet it was a thrill for Bubba as this was his first time on rope. The last drop came after we hunched down under a low, but wide passage. On the other side, we found ourselves standing on a ledge or balcony overlooking a large room which our passage had intersected. We dropped down into the floor area of the room and continued down another passage, near the bottom of which were some 7000 year old mtn. goat bones. There was also the 4000 year old skull of a cougar located there. At this point, Mike said we had descended about 100 meters in depth from what we had entered. As we ascended our way out, Mike pointed to some other passages which led to some large chambers, but again, they would have to await further exploration for another time.

When we got back to the trucks, Mike pointed to several nearby dolines which contained different cave entrances. Some of these caves, like Arch and Glory Ole are listed in the Atlas of Great Caves of the world. He also showed me a nearby valley where they've discovered more karst, but as of yet have not explored it for caves. As we drove down the mountain, we stopped along the road and walked a short distance down a trail to "Treasure" cave. We went inside and saw where some early old-timer had apparently tried to dig up some of the sand and pan it for gold, hence the name of the cave. Mike also showed me a passage from which a steady stream of cold air was pouring. We retreated back to the trucks and went home.

The next day, the kids and I spent practicing rope work. Mike set up a cable across some trees about fifty feet up and we all got in some practice with ascenders, descenders, and doing changeovers. I got to try out some different methods like using a frog system instead of the Texas, which I had been using. I also got some good knot and tie off training from Mike. This

was all prepping me up for our last day of caving, which we had intended to be the climax of this trip's caving adventure.

On Thursday, Mike and I decided that it was time to go do a little more challenging stuff than what we had been doing. For this we chose Minigill Cave which is located in the Benson Valley up toward Port McNeill. We got a late start not leaving until about one in the afternoon. We were further delayed when about 10 miles out, I got a flat tire and had to change it during a rain storm. We returned to camp, picked up Mike's truck and determined to make it through to the west Tashis valley, west of Nimpkish Lake. This area was not a direct route to the area of the cave we were going to, but Mike wanted to show me some of the cave entrances and karst features along the way.

We passed through areas where there was some outstanding limestone ridges, as well as dry riverbeds that ran dry because the water today runs underneath into the ground. He said there's an underground river located there that's six times the size of the nearby large Nimpkish river. We also went to the cave entrances of some outstanding cave systems like Raven cave, Paradise Lost/ Paradise Found caves, and the Vanishing River, where a free flowing stream just pours straight into the ground. The opening to this is excitingly neat, as you peer down a relatively narrow slit about sixty feet into a gravel bottomed stream bed below with a pretty little river flowing through it and vast cave passage beyond.

We continued on through the Benson Valley toward our objective, Minigill Cave, which is also listed in the Great Caves atlas. We finally got there and Mike stopped his truck along side the road. We then busted a few feet through the bushes and before I knew it, I was peering down a narrow deep shaft that seemed to drop away from nowhere beneath our feet. I could hear a stream

and see a gravel bed way down at the bottom. We anxiously put on our suits and gear. After carefully tying off, Mike made the first descent down. A little while later I found myself welling with trepidation as I back over the edge and started down the initial rock face. As I peered down I could see Mike, looking like a miniature doll standing way below me. The descent went way smoother than I would have dared think, and before I knew it, I was on the floor of the cave, standing next to Mike looking up to where I had just come from. I realized I had just dropped through the ceiling of a large room which extended both upstream and downstream. The stream itself was about fifteen feet wide and usually about knee deep.

We went upstream, around some deep, standing water and Mike showed me some sumps with some passages where cave divers are going to explore later on. We passed through walking passage and into some fairly extensive chambers and side passages. Mike pointed out many side passages which, to his knowledge have never been explored. We went to one room that had some formations that would have been objects of pride in even the world's best show caves. We then returned toward the entrance shaft and continued down stream. About a hundred yards down, the stream cascaded over a waterfall. There were several side passage here, some of which lead to other cave systems. There's also a passage that leads around the waterfalls. Beyond the falls there's much more passage, but as far Mike knows, it's virgin, unexplored territory, waiting for the right group of adventurers to come and bring it into the realm of the known world. We then returned to the entrance and Mike made his way up the rope first. After he was out, I secured my gear and started inch worming my way up the rope. About twenty minutes (a long time to go only 135 feet) I emerged up topside where Mike was awaiting me. Like Mike said, on that day, we were probably the only ones exploring that whole region of unexplored caves!

We made it back to camp at about dark, but the next day was quitting time for this trip. It had been a memorable experience, these last two weeks, and I wondered just how many other people are as lucky as I am to get to come to a place like this and do these kinds of things. Not very many I guess, but it does help to have friends like Paul Griffith and Mike Henwood. I don't know if great places make great people or if great people make great places, but I can tell you this, Captain Cook would be proud if he could look and see the kind of people that are still here, carrying on the mission he started two centuries ago. You can bet that I'll do everything I can to participate and carry on that mission. The caves of Vancouver Island deserve no less. Thanks!

Speleocamp Report

by Lane Holdcroft

The Speleocamp during Memorial day weekend was a lot of fun! There were around 70 attendees from all over including members of the Gem State Grotto, Oregon Grotto, the Bremerton Grotto and a few others. Some of us Cascade Grotto members felt a little inadequate because we didn't have a grotto flag! There were also several well stocked Grotto Stores. The weather was excellent too. We had an excellent community dinner Saturday night and even had some leftovers for Sunday night as well. It was also a nice area to hike in. Hats off to the Puget Sound Grotto for organizing it.

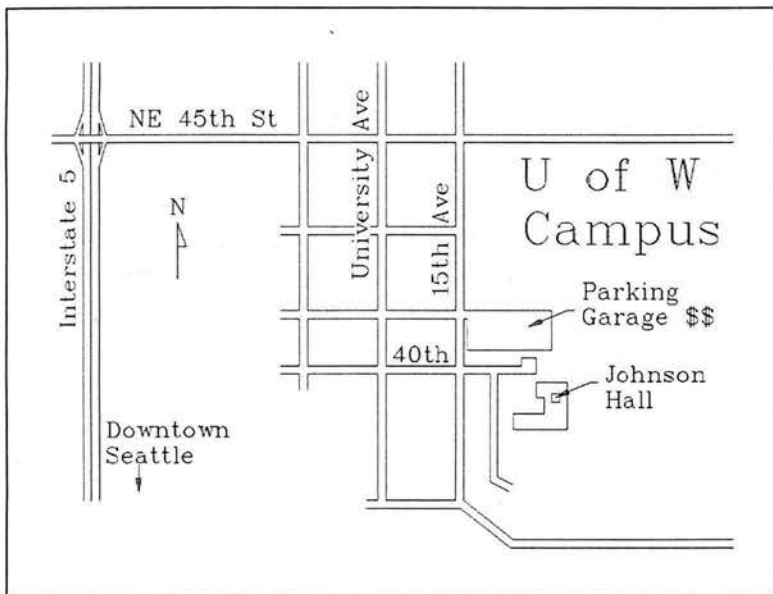
There was also a good seminar on Cave Rescue that about 15 or 20 people participated in. It was an all day class and we practiced at Dynamited. The instructor roped off the large passageways to simulate narrow passageways. There were several brave "victims" none of whom sustained further injuries! The instructor made the point that it would take a long time to get a rescue party

together so it would be much better for the victim if more people were trained in cave rescue so that they could start a rescue much sooner.

We had a humorous experience at Resurrection. Before entering Resurrection I asked Paul Ostby (who was sitting by the entrance when we arrived) if it was a tight cave because we had to get back to camp soon for another trip later in the day. He assured us that it was not and pointed to his clean coveralls. They were so clean that I imagined that it would be like a walk through the park. When our group (none of whom had been in the cave before) came to the end, we had to wiggle through some very tight openings and we were totally covered with mud. When we got out, we went back to where we entered to question Paul about his clean coveralls, then he admitted that he hadn't even been in the cave. Later that day I was looking at a map of the cave and I found that we had not exited through the far end, but through what's marked on the map as "visible daylight" which was only part way into the cave!

We also visited Dead Horse which was a really interesting cave. I wasn't sure if I could fit through "The Rathole", but with some assistance I made it. I followed John Wade out of the lower entrance which was sumped with about 3 feet of water so we got quite wet while the rest of the party exited through the upper entrance.

I also had a sobering talk with Jim Neiland (the Cave Conservation Specialist who spoke at a recent grotto meeting) about the ecological damage in several of the caves. Generally speaking as more cave locations are divulged, the word gets out to non-cavers and the increase in traffic can be destructive to the biological life in some of the more fragile caves. He said the damage is usually worse when there are more than about 7 people in a party because then people tend not to follow in each other's footsteps.



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month in room 006 in the basement of Johnson Hall on the University of Washington campus.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings

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