

## Review

**Ghar Parau**, by David Judson. Cassell and Company Ltd. London. 1973. 216pp. 52 plates, 25 in colour. £3.75 nett.

This book provides, at long last, a means by which the ambitions, problems and achievements of the caving fraternity can be made known to and shared by the general public. Although the book is primarily concerned with the story of the discovery and exploration of one cave it contains a great deal of additional information. Judson begins by giving a simple account of the morphology of caves and the problems involved in their exploration. He explains how the idea of an expedition to the Middle East and particularly Persia gradually became the reality of an attempt to find the world's deepest cave and, whilst doing so, he introduces the reader to the individual members of the team. He continues by summarising the present situation as regards the search for the world depth record and describes the areas in which suitable caves are most likely to be found.

Judson tells of the journey to Iran and the search of the Kuh-e-Paru massif, which search ended in the discovery of the cave, Ghar Paru. The story of the descent makes good reading and of the disappointment felt by the team when lack of tackle compelled them to stop at the top of the 26th pitch. They had to return up 25 pitches and survey on the way. The trip took 25 hours. The latter part of the book is taken up with the account of the 1973 expedition, which returned to Ghar Paru with the intention of exploring the cave to the end beyond the 26th pitch. The programme was linked to a scientific study of the cave and the surrounding area. It was indeed an anti-climax to find how little further it was possible to go. A depth of 751 m. was reached.

David Judson has written this book in an amusing and very readable style and it is illustrated with superb photographs, many of them in colour. His criticisms of the planning of the expeditions and his comments on some of the problems, (both organisational and interpersonal), which arose during the expedition should provide food for thought for anyone planning a similar venture. The book is completed by a series of appendices which provide a lot of factual information.

As a whole this book is both instructive and entertaining and would be an invaluable addition to any caving library or personal collection.

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