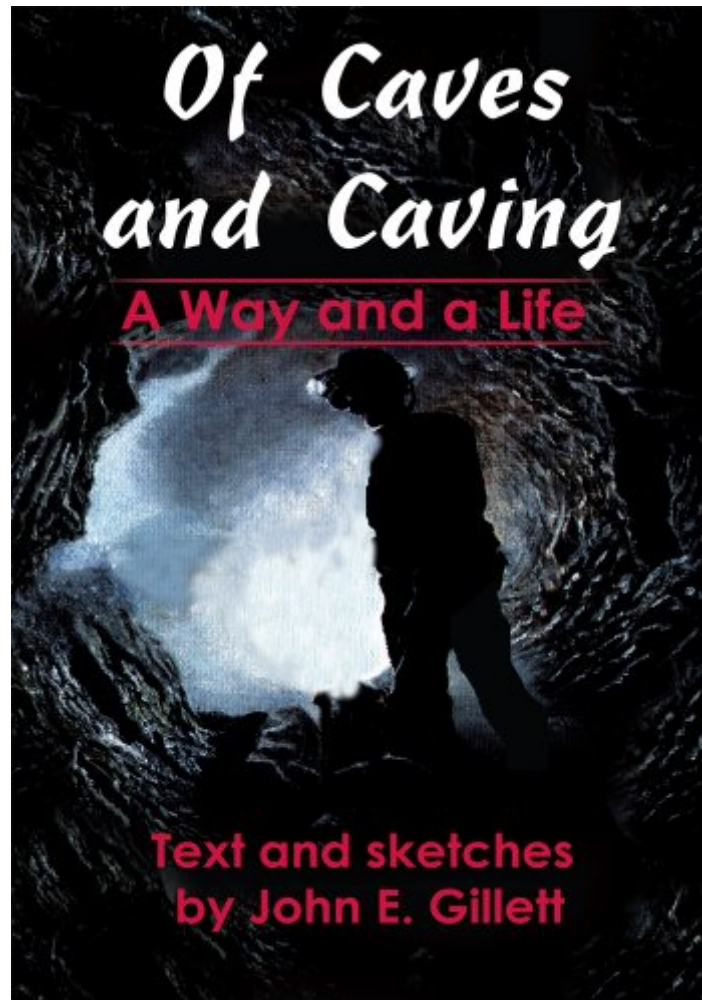




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Of Caves And Caving: A Way And A Life



Synopsis

""What is caving? Caving is fun. Caving is in the darkness. Caving is illuminating. Caving is dangerous. Caving is a minority sport for idiots."" This book comes tantalizingly close to explaining the reasons why apparently sane, rational individuals are driven by some mysterious force to take seemingly senseless risks in the exploration of caves and underground caving systems. The author's exciting journey takes us through a series of adventures beginning at a time when potholers were regarded as rather eccentric, a belief reinforced by the popular press, hungry for news of every mishap or accident. The journey continues as an eloquently written whistle-stop tour spanning four decades and several continents giving an insight into ""what makes cavers tick."" There is something here for everyone-from the experienced hard man to non-caver alike, with tales to suit all tastes, of exploits from the humorous to terrifying, with interesting anecdotes that will maintain the reader's interest throughout. Each step of the journey keeps one wondering what lies around the next corner."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Great book written in the unique European style.

A full odyssey of caving adventures is described in this book by an experienced British caver. Detailed descriptions are given, not only of the caves themselves but also of the people, the settings, the equipment and the anecdotes from detailed diaries recorded over 40 years. The book covers caves and potholes both in the UK, mainland Europe and the USA. Amongst the many exciting trips described is: a descent into the deepest cave in France by a multi-national team, a trip via canoe, a trip via light aircraft, a trip through the longest cave in France in a Weekend, a trip with risk of bears, a family trip, a trip with frogs - the list goes on... This book is appealing to all readers - especially non-cavers. It answers fundamental questions that non-cavers might ask like: What is caving? Why do people do it? It illustrates how can you get full appreciation from an outdoor sport by using all your 5 senses and developing your skills. The book takes a philosophical approach to caving that could be applied to other areas of life. Life is a journey of discovery and each caving trip is eloquently described to illustrate this.

Author John Gillett does a good job of describing the caves he's visited during his long caving career. When I read about his adventures, I felt like I was there right along with him. If there is a fault with this book it's that the cave visits end too quickly. There is a subtle, just-another-day-at-work-in-the-cave tone to the chapters. I know we can't all be Shakespeare, and Gillett does do a better job than most, but I just can't help feeling that this story is missing an element that could've made it a five-star book. On the whole though, it's a good read and I recommend it highly.

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