

Norsk Grotteblad nr 2, 1977

Råtten luft i Pikhåggrottene

Foul air in Pikhåggrottene

In the deepest parts of the cave, especially in the "midnight series", we recorded foul air. Breathing was difficult, and when we came out, the air had a fresh taste. We managed to measure the O₂ and CO₂ content of the air with Dräger tubes before we returned to surface. The results are shown in the table on the preceding page. It must be precided that our Dräger tubes where old, and the air temperature were lower than that temperature they are standardized for. The "corrected" value is calculated under the conditions of that the deviations are linear.

However, whether the deviations are linear or not, the O₂ values were lower than on the surface, while the CO₂-values were comparable to it. According to James (1975), such a composition of foul air is called "stink damp", because of H₂S. However, no such smell was recorded. It is believed that it is the lack of ventilation from snow chokes both in 1975 and -76, combined with oxidative or respiratory processes in the cave deposits that might have caused the oxygen deficiency.