

## Norsk Grotteblad nr 30, August 1995

### Plura 1988

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Cave diving is an extremely demanding form of diving, quite unlike sports diving. Finally, after all the equipment has been tested, checked and packed, Plura awaited. The previous year we had undertaken a dive of 100 meters, to a depth of 31 meters.

The preparations for a dive are important. Especially when the bottles you are going to have on your back weigh 80 kg. Training is important, also surface training. We had decided to make an air filled device which the divers could surface inside to communicate - a so-called wet bell - and some other equipment. After thorough deliberation we decided to buy an Aqua-Zepp underwater scooter (steel fish). We wanted, after all, to get as far in as possible; The preparations continued according to plan. I undertook long swimming trips with four 10 litre bottles on my back. Nothing could be left to chance. If I was going to explore Norway's longest underwater cave to date, I had to be prepared for anything. Doubts about how the others were preparing themselves bothered me. The consequences could be tragic. But I tried to calm myself with the thought that each must judge him or herself and his or her capabilities.

The first reconnaissance dive in the cave revealed how bad visibility was. The previous year visibility had been 40 to 50 meters, now it was only five. The next day I was 250 meters' inside the cave in a dive lasting 2 hours and 38 minutes. The following day it was Bjørn Olav's turn. He was going to use the steel fish for the first 250 meters and thereafter swim to the end of his line. He reported that he had been 350 meters in, and that the passage continued.

Emergency air depots were placed at 100 meters and 250 meters. On the fifth day Bjørn Olav noticed a side passage 400 meters in, and he could hear water trickling. But the passage was tight and he had to turn. After several attempts Hilmar was going to try the side passage. Thorough preparations were undertaken, both technical and psychological. After forcing the side passage he experienced the diving experience of his life. He surfaced in an enormous cavern, probably 50 meters long and 15 meters wide.

The next day it was my tum. The bottles scraped against the roof as I passed a boulder choke. The passage widened and became quite roomy. Up the passage I reached dry land. There was total silence and darkness. I broke the silence with a "hallo". After exploring the possibility of going further I found it was time to tum. Adventure is the motivation.