

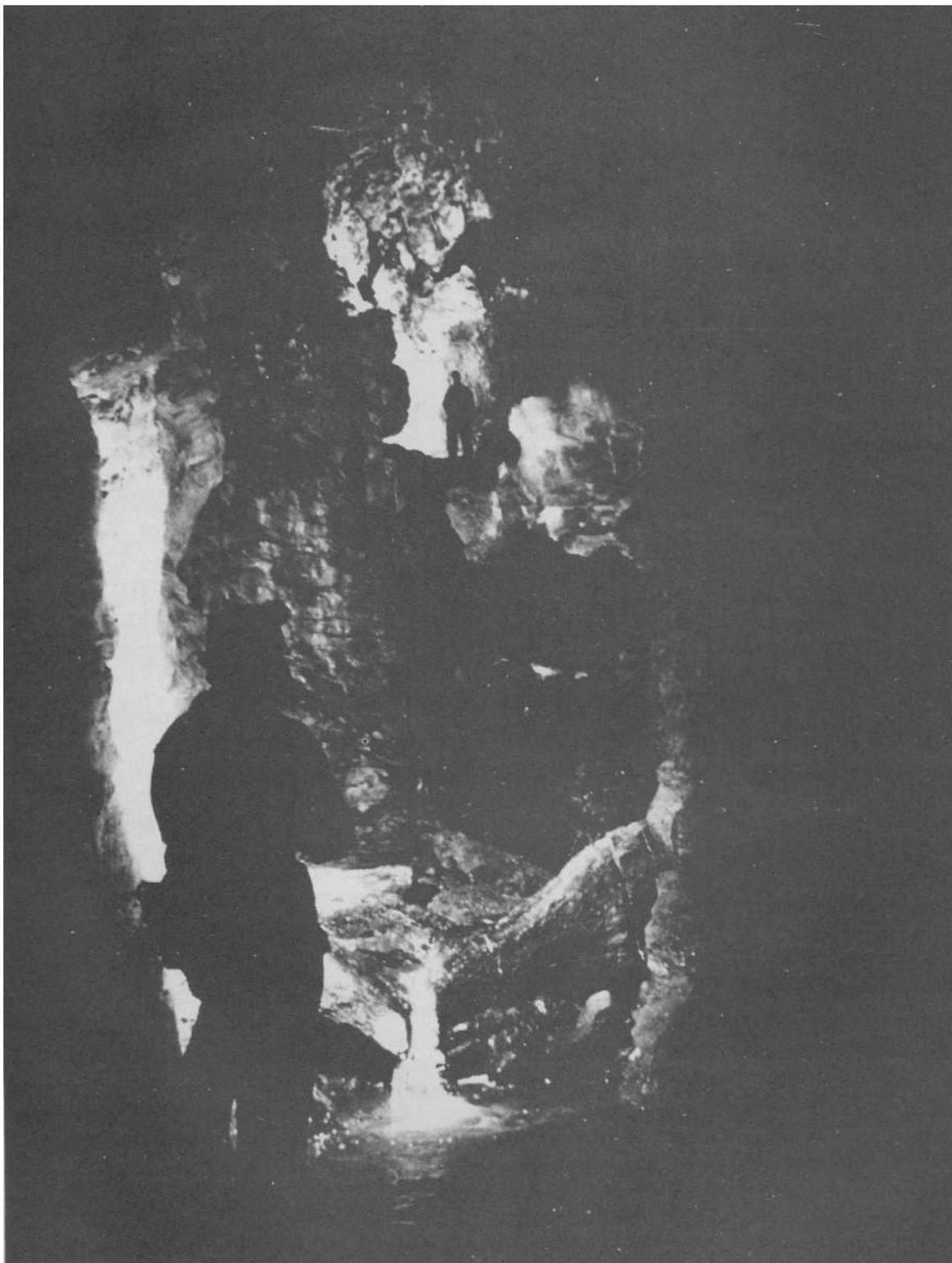
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| | |
|--|---|
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| <u>Headquarters:</u> | Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Nr. Wells, Somerset BA5 3AX |



Photographic Competition First Prize
The Gorge, G.B. Cave
Bob Scammell

EDITORIAL

The Journal is back to the old format, in order that you should get more regular issues. I expect the Journal to be a topic at the next Annual General Meeting.

CLUB NEWS

At a rather sporty AGM several points were discussed but relatively few decisions reached, and the new committee were elected. This year's committee has a large number of new faces and it is probably the most active, as regards caving, that the club has had in many years. It remains to be seen whether or not this is compatible with a good committee from the point of view of the Wessex as a whole.

Main Points of the A.G.M.

a.) Presidents opening address. Frank Frost spoke with regret of the loss to the club of Digger Harris and Prof. Tratman and then made several comments upon certain points in the agenda.

b.) Matters arising from 1977.

- i. The age rule for WCC membership was discussed and the committee was asked to look into possible means of lowering it, but without much hope.
- ii. The committee was asked to see that the extension was finished.
- iii. An inconclusive discussion on the possibility of having an AOB section at the AGM occupied about quarter of an hour. It was pointed out that in order to include this it would probably need a motion proposed at the 1979 AGM.

c.) Discussion on the Hon. Gear Curator's Report. It was pointed out that the total amount of tackle listed was out of date and that we possessed just over 500ft of ladder.

- i. Tackle loss and ways of preventing it were discussed, (and discussed and discussed) and many ideas were brought forward. In the end it was left up to the new committee to decide on the best system.
- ii. Total amount of ladder came in for discussion but it was felt that now our raw material shortage has been alleviated the total should start to rise.
- iii. A Yorkshire tackle depot was discussed.

d.) Hon. Auditor's Report. The Hon. Auditor, Howard Kenney, reported that he had been able to balance the books for the previous year (i.e 1976/77). He pointed out that there was a lot of confusion between the various Wessex accounts which had made things rather difficult for him.

e.) Discussion of the Hon. Treasurer's and Hon. Auditor's Reports. In the discussion it was agreed that we ought to try to simplify the accounting systems within the Wessex especially with regard to sales, and the committee was told to keep a tighter rein on the accounts during the year to eliminate any confusion at the source. Eventually it was decided to accept the report in lieu of a statement.

f.) Report of the Hon. Trustees. Howard Kenney reported that the trustees were impressed by the standards of tidiness and cleanliness seen by them at Upper Pitts during an inpromptu visit. They had seen one or two small jobs that needed doing and would be in touch with the committee about these.

g.) Motions (as proposed in the 1978 AGM handbook p15).

- i. Alteration to Rule 7. This was thrown out by the AGM on the grounds that as it stood a large proportion of the membership would not be able to propose or second prospective members. Instead it was decided that in order to assist the committee, anyone proposing or seconding prospective members should write a short reference for them on the back of the application form. This reference should include length of time the applicant has been known to them, a resume of their caving skills and experiences as far as possible and any other information that might be relevant.
- ii. Mike York withdrew his alteration to Rule 8 and put in with motion iii.
- iii. After much discussion Rule 8 was altered to allow the club to agree on the annual subscription at an AGM to run October-October.
- iv. Motion iv was passed.
- v. This was discussed at length since there is a feeling among some club members that the committee and club are two distinct and separate entities and that ordinary members should get to know more about the running of the club. The argument against this is that there are very often things discussed in committee that should not for various reasons be made public knowledge. However it was agreed to put a fuller account of committee business into the journal under Club News and for anyone more interested, to post an even more detailed resume on the notice board at Upper Pitts.
- vi. Motion vi was passed.
- vii. Motion vii was changed to elect Tim Reynolds as Hon. Member and passed. The committee was asked to look into the case of old members who no longer felt that they could be members of the club but who still wished to receive the journal.

h.) Election of Officers. There were two applicants at the time of the AGM for the vacant post of ordinary committee member. They were Aubrey Newport, (as it had been decided that he could not stand as joint treasurer) and a late nomination by Pete Moody of Dave Morrison which was seconded by Mike Duck. Eventually it was decided that while it did leave the committee with one extra member both should be elected since they both had a lot to offer the club. Thereupon Ian Jepson resigned from the committee solving the problem of the extra person.

i.) Election of Hon. Auditor. Tim Reynolds was proposed by Mike York and seconded by Rob Harper and appointed by the AGM for 1978/79,

1978 Annual Dinner

As usual the caterers did us fairly well although there were some complaints from members about amounts of food and slow service.

The Guest of Honour this year was Cecil Cullingford, a man whose books on caving have been responsible for many people taking up and maintaining an interest in the science and the sport. He gave a very entertaining speech recalling caving past and present.

This year's 'throwing' was fairly sociable, marred only by some person(s) throwing pepper, which caused one person to leave and several to complain. It is an interesting thought that even with the age limit for membership set at eighteen we still get this primary-school mentality at the dinner.

Abstracts of the Committee Meeting held 5/11/78

- a) Chairman: Following Ian's resignation there was a vacancy for chairman. Aubrey Newport was proposed by Rob Harper and seconded by Rich Websell. The proposal was passed unanimously.

b) Matters arising from the last committee meetings

i) Tackle

- I) Loss: Following the AGM discussion it was decided to adopt the system of having a small number of ladders easily available which will be numbered and booked out in the normal fashion. If these go missing during the year they will not be replaced. Any member who has tackle needs of over one or possibly two ladders should use the locked-away tackle obtained through a committee member. For this year there will be five ladders put out.
- II) Amount: The committee is looking into how much and what tackle we need and how much we can afford. Firstly the committee is checking just what we have at the moment.
- III) Yorkshire tackle depot: The committee approved of the idea if we ever have enough tackle.

ii) Donation, to Spanish Rescuers: The committee feels that this has gone on long enough. The amount received so far is £11 which the Wessex will make up to £25 and send to the President of the National Speleological Society in Madrid to distribute as he sees best.

iii) Sales: All stocks are selling well with the exception of the maillons rapides. The Sales Officer is to re-order as necessary,

iv) Hut Residence: A letter of complaint has been received and several of the committee have been 'earholed' on this subject.

The committee feel that while it has no objection to anyone, on application, staying at Upper Pitts for a short period during an emergency or while looking for new accommodation, permanent/semi- permanent residence will not be allowed in the future.

The Hon.Sec. is to appraise all those staying at the hut of the situation.

v) AOB:

I) Shatter Cave: We haven't had a reply to our letter asking why the entry fees are set at such a high level.

c) AGM and Dinner: This year's bill is still to be paid as Rich is trying to negotiate a reduction. 1979's Dinner organisation is to get started and Rich has agreed to do it again. Suggestions for Guest of Honour welcome.

d) Matters arising from the 1978 AGM and Dinner:

i) Each committee member holding a post will write a short report to go in next year's AGM handbook, which might remove some of the call for an AOB section at the AGM.

ii) It was felt that there might be a growing demand for some form of associate membership for long standing members. The committee is to look into this nearer to next year's AGM.

iii) The Hon. Sec. is to write up the main points of the AGM for the journal under Club News (only one vote against!).

e) Upper Pitts Progress: The extension is to be put into use as soon as possible. Major problems are now occurring with our cess-pit which is filling up too fast. The committee is looking into it ("Pass the gas mask, Watson"), in particular into the feasibility of constructing a soak away for 'clean' water waste so as to relieve pressure on the main pit.

TIDINESS: CAVING GEAR WILL BE CLEARED OUT OF THE CHANGING ROOM ONCE A MONTH.

Items of value can be redeemed from the Hut Warden for a small fee, the rest will be burnt.

f) Caving Politics: Charterhouse CC. We have received a letter from Oliver Lloyd about vandalism and lock removal in G.B. Cave and complaining about the new sets of bolts that are sprouting on

the climb into the Ladder Dig Extension. The committee is partially in agreement with the letter and the Hon. Sec. has written to OCL. Please remember that the UBSS control all digging in this cave so ask their permission before doing anything out of the ordinary there.

g) Hon. Treasurer's Report:

- i) Receipts: Carol has asked that whenever club money is changing hands a receipt should be obtained.
- ii) Hut Fees: The Hut Warden will be checking that people sign in and pay preferably at the beginning of a weekend rather than the end.
- iii) Library: The Librarians have requested for the library fund. £25 was made available.
- iv) Unpaid Members: List to be published.
- v) Sales: It was decided to put the sales into a totally separate cupboard and to re-organize the paperwork side of it.

NO CREDIT AND NO IOU'S.

h) Election of Officers:

Asst. Caving Secretary (Northern caves only).....Keith Sanderson
Sales officer.....Rich Websell
LibrariansPete Moody and Alison Hooper

All proposed and seconded by the committee and elected unanimously. Resignation: Rich Stevenson has had to resign. The committee asked Rich West to fill the vacancy. He has agreed.

i) New Members:

Marcus Greening 141 Nalders Road, Chesham, Bucks
Brian Schofield 42 Donnybrook Road, London SW 16

j) AOB:

- i) Keys: Keys to the understairs cupboard are held only by committee members, librarians and tackle sub-committee members.
- ii) MRO: Hugh Pearsons has resigned as MRO Coordinator. The Hon.Sec. will contact those suggested by Hugh to see if they are willing to take over.
- iii) Theft: Anyone caught stealing from the hut will be prosecuted as a matter of course.
- iv) Quorum: This was set at five committee members at least one of whom should be the Hon. Sec. or the Asst. Sec.

k) Dates of 1979 Committee Meetings:

May 6th
July 1st
Sept 9th
Nov 4th
AGM & DINNER Sat 20th October 1979

Sorry to have taken up so much space with Club News but there seems to have been a sudden overwhelming desire amongst members to be; 'kept informed' which seems to indicate a healthy interest in the welfare of the club and augurs well for future committees.

Finally on a more personal note. Our Yorkshire trips over the last year or so seem to consist of the same few faithfuls. I should just like to point out that anyone in the club of any grade or ability is welcome, Yorkshire is not all grade v's and 10 hour trips, there are many easy but sporting caves that do not need booking, mountains of tackle or crack of dawn starts. The costs are usually less than a similar weekend on Mendip even when petrol is included. Normally there is at least one car load going from the Mendip area and one from the London area. If you are interested give me a ring on Weston-Super-Mare 24441 during the evenings (especially on Thursdays). Rob Harper Hon. Sec.

It is with deep regret that, we record the deaths of John (Jono) and Lindsey Cocker.

They were driving to Jono's parents on the 30th December 1978 when they were involved in a road accident on the A16 near Spilsby. It is doubly tragic that this accident occurred as they had postponed their journey by twelve hours because of appalling weather conditions.

It was the weather too that prevented the many friends and family of Jono and Lindsey attending the funeral which was held on the 4th January at Boston. Their ashes will be scattered on Mendip in the spring as it is felt more appropriate to the freshness of those two than an anonymous city garden of remembrance.

Jono had been a member of the Wessex for only a few years. During this time he was not as active a caver as he would have liked because his job as a fireman took up most weekends and the few that were left were split between Mendip and long distance running, in which he often represented the Avon Fire Brigade.

The way those two spent their last Christmas was typical of their way of life. On Boxing Day when most others were sleeping off hangovers Jono and Lindsey were running for charity. That finished they set off on a long trip to see their friends who are spread all over the country. Alas it was a trip they never finished.

It is a sorry waste of two young lives, sadder still the way it happened. Jono had jumped out of aircraft 2,500ft up, gone down difficult caves, dived sumps (his greatest hate in life was water), on top of this he had a very dangerous job; perhaps in their deaths there is a lesson for all of us that take part in 'hazardous' sports.

For all those who knew Jono and Lindsey I share their sorrow, however I feel sadder for those who did not have the privilege to share the happiness and vitality of two fine people.

RDS.

Photographic Competition This was judged on July 29th 1978 at Upper Pitts by Frank Frost, Don Thomson, and Mr C. West, FRPS. The winners were Bob Scammell (first and third, with slides of the Gorge and Main Chamber, G.B. Cavern) and Mike O'Connor (second), with a slide of a gour in the Grotte de Gournier. The prizes of £10 and £5 were drawn from the entry fees, and boosted by generous donations from the President and Chairman at that time. Prints of these slides have been mounted on the wall at Upper Pitts. Black and white prints will appear in the journal, the winning entry in this number and the second and third winning entries in subsequent journals.

Library The survey drawer is being brought up to date, exchange journals are being sorted and missing copies replaced. Recently received literature is being prominently displayed.

Carbide A limited amount of carbide is on sale at Upper Pitts at 35p/lb.

Members We welcome the following members, elected September 1978:

J. Peter Austin, Townsend House, 40 East Street, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA1 7AG (ex-SSSS).
Colin R. Hoare, 16 Crossway, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2PJ.

Elected earlier:

Steve and Pauline Gough, 17 Lockey Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Correction R.A. Philpot points out that, he is a leader for Dan-yr-Ogof, and not O.F.D.1.

Phil Hendy

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed.,

Richard Kenney's letter in Journal 174 concerning, coal mine visits prompted me to write a brief account of a working coal mine 'open day' visit I made a couple of years ago and, as far as I know, is still done once a year for anyone who's interested.

I visited Cwm Colliery, Beddau, Pontypridd together with Bob Drake and Mike Taylor (who had obtained tickets in advance by writing to the colliery manager). The mine was not actually in production on the day (Saturday) but the staff were instead acting as guides and demonstrators as well as generally answering questions.

There were many static displays including past, and present, mining techniques, a mock coal face and all the cutting and jacking equipment, mine surveying (equipment a bit more sophisticated than a Suunto compass!), rescue techniques and equipment including the latest, liquid oxygen breathing kit and medical services.

Most, of the surface buildings were freely accessible including the winding house and compressor room, maintenance shops and medical centre.

A trip was made down the mine proper via the 2,250 feet deep shaft (ear clearing on the way in the rapidly descending cage). Underground tours were then made of various workings and equipment including a cut away coal seam display, although the working face was not accessible on the day. Cap lamps and self rescuers were issued but unfortunately had to be returned on the surface.

There were no photographic restrictions except during underground trips where any electrical equipment was included in the 'contraband' list.

The visit was well worthwhile and the staff found to be very forthcoming in answering any questions.

Brian Milton

P.S Good dinner this year but a bit too much pepper!

FRIDAY NIGHT TRIPS FOR 1979

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mar 30th Singing River Mine | Aug 17th Hunter's Hole |
| Apr 13th Good Friday - No Trip | Aug 31st Bath Mines |
| Apr 27th Bath Mines | Sept 14th Eastwater Cavern |
| May 12th Wales | Sept 28th Cow Hole |
| May 25th St Cuthbert's Swallet | Oct 12th Sludge Pit and Nine Barrows |
| June 8th G.B. or Tynning's | Oct 26th Swildon's Hole |
| June 22nd Goatchurch (Candles only) | Nov 9th Pinetree Pot |
| July 6th Mangle Hole | Nov 24th Wales |
| July 20th Swildon's Hole | Dec 7th St Cuthbert's Swallet |
| Aug 3rd Longwood Swallet | Dec 21st No trip |

Details from RR Kenney, 'Yennek', St. Mary's Rd., Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9SS Tel Meare Heath 296.

All trips except Wales meet at 19.30.

YORKSHIRE TRIPS FOR 1979

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Apr 18th Pippikin Pot | Sept 29th Notts Pot |
| May 19th Birks Fell Cave | Sept 30th Rumbling Hole |

July 7th Penyghent Pot
Aug 11th Lost John's System

Oct 27th Gavel Pot
Oct 28th Deaths Head. Pot and Big Meanie

Details from the Hon. Sec. or the Caving Secretary (addresses inside front cover).

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

The North

Alum Pot. There are now no bolts at the head of the Greasy Slab pitch. Use a 12ft belay to a boulder at the head of the pitch.

Thackthwaite Beck Cave Closed pending further delicate negotiations.

Alderly Edge Mines In view of the current situation there, cavers are advised to stay away.

Gingling Hole The farmer (Mr Coates) regards 30 as a maximum number of permits he would like to see issued per year. Permit applications must be made by February 1st for the coming season; the fell will be open from Easter to November.

All clubs must see Mr Coates at Redcar Farm before descending - failure to do so could result in closure. The farmer reserves the right to refuse access if he thinks there is a danger of flooding - though an alternative date can be arranged.

Hammer Pot There is no access at present, and the entrance is blocked. The farmer may allow access if the entrance can be denied to suicidal sheep.

Penyghent Fell Access the year round is being negotiated. The landowners are sympathetic, but finalisation will not be during this year.

Birks Fell Cave. Buckden Access is still restricted to six months per year, but CNCC may try to extend this. There is NO access to another nearby hole.

Mongo Gill Hole. Greenhow George Gill, the manager of Stump Cross Caverns has died but his widow is continuing to manage the caverns. Permits for Mongo Gill may still be obtained from her. The owner, Mayor Yorke, seems fairly content with the present situation but may change his mind if the pirating increases.

Leek Fell This is closed during April, May and June, with the exception of Pippikin Pot, which may be approached from Bull Pot Farm.

Bookings Applications to book caves controlled by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs should be made with the name of the club spelt in full to avoid confusion. This is not likely to happen with the Wessex, as all bookings should be made through the two Caving Secretaries, who use headed notepaper.

Wales

Pwll Swnd Hereford C.C. has pushed an extension near the bottom of the second pitch, which after a 40 ft pitch enters 40 feet of passage ending in a choke. It has been named May Day Pot.

Llygad Llchwyr It is hoped that diving work here will permit an upstream extension in the 5th chamber.

Ogof Craig-a-Ffynnon One month's notice is now required, made to: Jeff Hill, York Ave., Ebbw Vale. (Tel. E.V. 304415) for weekends only. The leaded system is to be maintained. Wet suits and small parties

essential.

Ogof-y-Ci The boulders in the main chamber are unstable. The tenancy of the farm on which this cave and Ogof Rhyd-Sych lie has recently changed, and visitors to these sites are advised to call in at the farm, in order to maintain good relations.

Otter Hole RFDCCC are expressing concern over damage, carbide dumping and abuse of access conditions. The latter may be modified as a result.

Parc Mine. Llanrwst There is no need to apply for permission to the Forestry Commission, as this mine is not on their property.

NORTH AMERICAN DIARY

Paul Hadfield

My diary records my first, caving trip in America to Flint Cave in Cascade County, Montana, in the foothills of the Little Belt Mountains. The cave itself is hardly worth writing about, however the trip itself proved rather entertaining to an Englishman unaccustomed to the local mores. It began in a remote ranch house where we were regaled with tales of a cave that went for twenty miles to emerge in the next valley, and it was in fact this local rumour that my two companions, Eugene Regan and Ed Klein were following up. The two sons from the ranch volunteered to guide us and shortly afterwards we were following their little International Scout down a two rut track along the bottom of a wide coulee. At the fourth ford the Scout was swamped and refused to budge further, requiring the assistance of Ed Klein's Ford to traverse the creek. It was judged too dicey to take the vehicles any further along the track and so we proceeded to backpack to the cave. By this time Eugene's suspicions about the '20 mile' cave were confirmed and he was able to tell us that it was in fact Flint Cave we were headed for, well known for many years, and certainly no 20 miler. Some four or five miles and several fords further on we reached the cave entrance having walked through the biggest herd of cows I've ever seen together with their attendant bulls.

The cave itself is small, consisting simply of two rooms, one on top of the other entering an inclined bedding which was heavily choked by collapse, with some smoky names and dates which appeared genuinely to go back to the 1890's. Our exit from the cave was enlivened by a sudden yell and twenty feet leap by one of the ranch boys. It transpired that he had almost trodden on a big diamond backed rattler who had noisily objected. No amount of coercion could persuade our reptilian friend to come out from the shadowy recess where he had retired, and we were treated only to a noisy warning off and an occasional view of head and rattle as he prepared to defend himself.

Returning to our vehicles we were obliged to pull out of the creek two trucks driven by schoolboys, who had managed to successfully swamp their engines, before we could make the return journey to Great Falls.

My next outing was to visit Whittaker Sink in Judith Basin County, also in the Little Belt Range. This cave is at an altitude of 6,572ft and for a long time, although only 381ft deep, was the deepest known cave in Montana. Essentially it consists of two pitches of 140ft and 160ft and it must be said that the first pitch is very attractive, being for much of its length the dimensions of an enormous gun barrel, only changing to a more familiar rift like shape at the bottom.

On the occasion of this visit it was not possible to reach the lowest point of the cave as the passages from the foot of the second pitch were flooded with winter meltwater. We also, sadly, found evidence of deliberate vandalism in one of the few decorative areas of the cave where had once been a delightful cracked mud floor.

Leaving Great Falls I went south with Eugene Regan to the town of Dillon in Beaverhead County where I made my first trip of many down French Creek Cave. This cave lies on the French Creek branch of

Rattlesnake Creek, and its entrance is some 100ft into the adit of a gold mine owned by Stanley Schafer of Dillon. The entrance is at an altitude of 7,332ft in the Pioneer Range of mountains.

The objective of our first visit was for me to examine a promising lead at the bottom of the cave with a view to blasting it the following day. French Creek Cave is composed of two distinct levels separated by two pitches of 39ft and 69ft with approximately 10,000ft of surveyed passage and about 5,000ft unsurveyed. We successfully bottomed the cave and examined the suggested lead which I agreed was a good prospect for banging. On returning to the surface we noted the presence of a pick-up truck that had been parked near the entrance when we first arrived, obviously cavers who had gone underground and were still there, and who were probably exploring the upper levels of the cave since there had been no tackle on the pitches. Eugene left a note on the truck informing them that they were trespassing before we packed up and headed off down the hill into Dillon. Next evening, we came back again, this time armed with a 5lb chemical hammer. However, parked near the entrance was the self same pick-up truck. We both had our suspicions roused and so we headed off to the first civilization around, the old mining town of Argenta, where we telephoned the local sheriff. Indeed, some people were missing, so Eugene and I set off back to the cave as fast as four wheel drive would permit (with 6½ litres of it that was pretty quick). Suffice it to say we found a boy and a girl who had been underground for 62 hours with no light, food, water or protective clothing. Fortunately apart from exposure and its associated symptoms they were unharmed and we led them out of the cave with no problems. This earned Eugene and I a first class dinner of prime rib from the couple the following day and a place on the front pages of the local papers.

Unfortunately the owner, Stan Schafer, as a result of the incident, and thinking of the consequences had Eugene and I not been to hand, determined to close the cave by blasting in the adit. However before he took this step, he consulted the Forestry Service on whose land the entrance stands. They, together with Eugene and I, persuaded Stan to withhold from this action and to accept having the cave gated. As a result of this I spent several trips down the cave with various members of the forestry department, Eugene, and alone in the construction of a substantial concrete and steel gate. Needless to say this did not thwart our original intentions and a number of good 'thumps' were heard at the dig.

Scapegoat was the next item on my agenda and to date I have made two trips into the area. The first starting from the trailhead at Benchmark some 20 miles down the dirt road from Augusta, entails a 16 mile walk gradually climbing along Straight Creek to the Ranger Station at Green Fork before it steepens for the final 4 miles into the Scapegoat cirque. The bulk of the trail is through dense lodge pole pine and undergrowth. Once off the trail the going is extremely strenuous, climbing up and down over deadfall and struggling through the brush. Fortunately this is only necessary for the final mile before making camp below the imposing rock walls where the caves are found.

'One More Day' Cave was our objective, and it wasn't long before Eugene was off into virgin passage with the rest of us on his tail. After a few hundred feet he met a dead end and I managed to find the going lead. This soon pinched out but I had noted a tight slot some way back which on investigation proved to be a goer. Go it did, for over 300ft, always flat out, until blocked by rocks with passage visible beyond. I was accompanied on this final section by a determined young lady named Beth Dayton and together we measured the length of the crawl way as we exited using my waistline. The final sections on the way out were something of an epic. What had been a relatively firm mud floor on our initial entry had been churned into a sea of liquid mud by the efforts of much larger and heavier cavers to get through. It was in this morass that I lost a water bottle and carbide container, thinking for some time that they were part of the muddy lamp I was pushing before me down the passage. The resulting soaking and cold obliged me to make a rapid exit from the cave. Thus ended the discovery of Jerusalem Series and Cathusalem's Revenge.

A month later I was back, this time walking in over Crown Mountain Pass, known to the cognoscenti as 'Pig Fucker Pass'. In winter this is the only route in as the dirt road to the Benchmark trailhead is normally impassable to vehicles. The Crown Mountain trail joins the Straight Creek trail at the nine mile point having climbed up a 2,000ft pass and down again, and when you've done this the origins of the colloquial

nomenclature are no longer a mystery.

Once again One More Day Cave was our objective, this time with the intention of running a survey into Jerusalem Series and more probing into the maze way of joint and bedding controlled passage in the hope of finding a lead which would take us away from these controlling factors and down to the streamway that must be there somewhere. On my previous visit, entrance to the cave had been made by climbing down between the cliff face and a 10ft snow bank. This time there was no snow and the entrance was almost sumped by the tremendous amount of water coming out. It took over three hours of strenuous hydrological engineering before the level was lowered sufficiently to enable entry to be made whilst getting only the feet wet.

In the cave it took only a short time to run the survey down Jerusalem Series to Cathusalem's Revenge, beyond which point there was little enthusiasm for progressing. However, splitting up into two parties more passage was found by both groups, both routes heading down dip and controlled by the ever present beddings. It was no real surprise after some time when we heard the voices of the other party coming from the far side of a boulder ruckle. In an attempt to force a way through the ruckle I found myself in more virgin passage with a number of side leads. Off I steamed full of enthusiasm; once again. I had found yet another branch of the seemingly never ending maze. After running a few more surveys, beginning to tie in the new passages with the old survey, we left One More Day for yet another day and the long backpack out to civilization.

Perhaps the most significant trip I've yet made in Montana was to Pine Coulee Cave in the foothills of the Little Belt. This cave, in the middle of a large sheep ranch was discovered only last Fall by Mike Beer et al. and extended for only 300ft into the hillside at the side of the Pine Coulee Creek. It is however an active resurgence and I was persuaded to take along a bottle and dive the sump. I was fortunate in only 55ft to pass the sump into new cave. The passage found went only for 150ft or so to a second sump, this one of generous dimensions (about 8ft x 6ft) and apparently a clean rock phreatic bore tube. Lack of air and a suitable line prevented further exploration but I hope to return in the not too distant future. This trip was significant, as I have said, as this was the first and only successful cave dive ever done in Montana, possibly in the NW United States, and indicates I think some of the potential over here. Only one other cave dive to my knowledge, has been attempted in the State, and this was at the presumed resurgence of 'Lost Creek Cave', and was terminated after 10ft, the diver being sub-aqua and not cave orientated.

As the reader will have observed, although resident in Canada my caving has been exclusively in Montana, largely due I must explain to reasons of caving companions and geography. I feel I must mention here the 'Shining Mountains Grotto' of Montana. A small group, basically of three active cavers who have a whole state to play with, much of it karst. There is perhaps, as much karst in Montana as in the whole of Northern Spain, and I suspect that is an underestimation. It is to this group that I owe my introduction to American caving, and their acceptance of that 'goddamned Englishman', his peculiar ways and strange habits, and the hospitality they have extended to him has made my outings both entertaining and pleasurable.

Medicine Hat 25.7.78

A DENE HOLE AT WALTHAM, KENT

Barry Gay

The telephone rings. It's Julian Penge. Would we be interested in looking down a Dene Hole in Kent, not far from Canterbury? On behalf of Barry Wilkinson and Marian I commit them both to this mystery trip. It transpires that none of us know a thing about Dene Holes, apart from the fact that it would be in Upper Chalk, and is a hole in the ground.

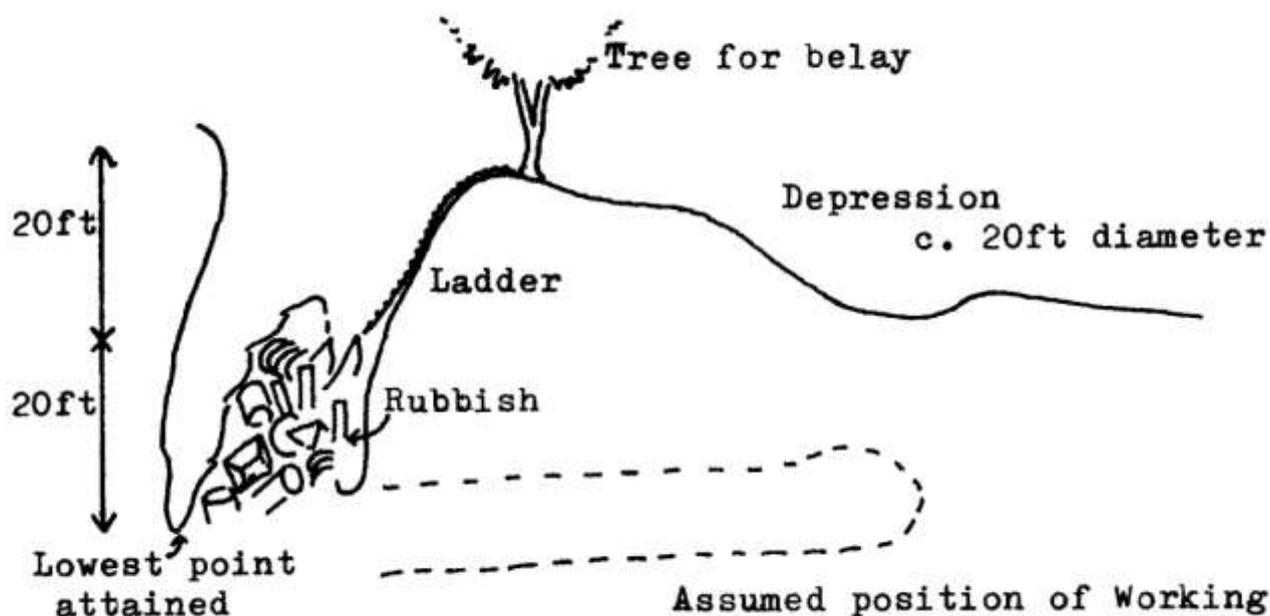
During the next few weeks Julian Penge departs to the States for a gruelling course in basic geology leading me to organise the trip with the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation.

The first contact with the Kent, people is not too encouraging as they give us a map reference which proves to be a quarter of a mile out into the Channel! We feel this maybe incorrect and phone just to check. A second reference seems more hopeful, at least it is on dry land. Marian reports the serious fact that pubs in the area appear to be somewhat distant, Mr Wilkinson pales visibly at this sobering news. Marian meanwhile returns with larger scale maps and reference books from the Licensed Victuallers Association etc., and is able to reassure us that the minimum distance was about two and a half miles, so the trip is just viable.

On the appointed day we drive down from London; and Marian navigates us with unerring accuracy to a point well into a large field. We eventually locate the Men of Kent half a mile down the road.

Not knowing what we will have to descend a reasonable amount of tackle was brought down with us. We are guided through the Nature Reserve to a point almost at the top of a valley side, the slope of which is about 1 in 5. Here we are shown what looks like a large open shaft approximately 25 feet square. A ladder is belayed to an adjacent tree and is dropped down. The sides of the shaft have run in considerably in this position and there is a fair amount of vegetation growing which I attacked with my bread knife, this being the only cutting instrument we have available. It is soon very apparent that there is a lot of rubbish in the hole, in fact about 20 feet of it. This we were able to ascertain by climbing down to an undercut, corner which had remained reasonably clear of extraneous matter.

It was generally agreed that to remove such a vast amount of rubbish would be a mammoth task, as some of the objects were heavy and awkward, i.e old mangles, large steel drums, bits of old farm implements and other identifiable but odious matter.



Dene Hole at Waltham, Kent. From a sketch by B.A.G.

After a thorough investigation in the lowest accessible parts of the hole it was decided that nothing further could be gained by remaining. During this time, though, we had begun to notice a certain dryness in the throat caused, in my opinion, by the presence of old chemical waste or residue from the dumped drums. Fortunately for all concerned we were able to obtain a remedy for this serious condition in the form of an elixir prepared locally by a Doctor Shepherd Neame. After adequate treatment and repeated requests to leave the Doctor's 'waiting room' we returned to the site to make a check on the surface to see if any other indication was left of old excavations or workings. Unfortunately nothing at all was found. It was assumed that the large depression down hill from the Dene Hole must have been a collapsed working from a heading in the main shaft, but there was no real evidence to prove this.

It was generally agreed that the whole day was most disappointing and that we had gained nothing on Dene Holes at all, apart from the fact that they, like all other holes in the ground, are used by the locals as dumps for their rubbish.

We are still interested to know what a Dene Hole is, who dug them and when and for what purpose? I should be most interested to hear if anyone has positive factual information on these holes, or where a good example is accessible to visit.

THE CLOSURE OF SURVEY TRAVERSES

P.R. Cousins

Introduction

Sooner or later every cave surveyor comes up against the problem of closing a survey traverse. The problem was discussed by Bryan Ellis in 1966 and the conclusion made that generally the simplest method of distributing the error equally to each survey leg was the best. The article also discussed the problem of multiple closures where three routes were surveyed between two points in a cave, and mentioned the possibility of finding the triple mean, without giving a detailed procedure. Ten years later, Dave Irwin and Roger Stenner described the techniques of locating major errors in complex survey networks, and went on to present the results of a computed 'least Squares' fit - but without explaining the program used. The principle of closing multiple traverses using least squares theory was in fact introduced by Mike Luckwill in 1969, but is fairly complex even for the three traverse network he describes; and has not been widely used. The aim of this paper is to derive a simple formula for closing multiple traverses, which still allows each traverse to be 'weighted' in inverse proportion to its likely error.

The See-Saw Analogy

Since we will be discussing the way to find a mean position from two or more 'weighted' survey traverses, it is convenient to introduce an analogy which includes real weights. We imagine two children of known weights w_1 & w_2 sitting near the opposite ends of a see-saw (fig.1).

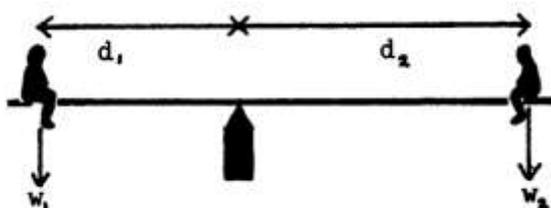


Fig.1

To obtain a balance the heavier child must move to sit nearer the central pivot. Simple mechanics tell us that at balance the pivot is the 'centre of gravity', 'centroid' or 'mean' position of the children (neglecting the mass of the see-saw).

By taking moments about the pivot, we find that:

$$W_1 \times d_1 = w_2 \times d_2$$

where d_1 and d_2 are the distances from the respective children to the pivot.

Reverting to our cave survey; where two traverses meet at a common point inside the cave, it is apparent that we can write:

$$w_1 \times d_1 = w_2 \times d_2$$

where d_1 and d_2 are now the distances of the two traverses from the mean position S , and w_1 and w_2 are the respective 'weights' of the traverses, Since neither S , d_1 , nor d_2 will be generally known we must rearrange this formula before it can be of use. If the surveyed traverses are calculated to end at points S_1 and S_2 we can eliminate the unknown distances d_1 and d_2 since:

$$d_1 = S - S_1 \text{ and } d_2 = S_2 - S$$

We rewrite the formula as:

$$w_1 \times (S - S_1) = w_2 \times (S_2 - S)$$

and rearrange this to:

$$w_1 \times S_1 + w_2 \times S_2 = (w_1 + w_2) \times S$$

In this formula only the mean position, of the two traverse ends S is unknown, and all that remains is to decide on the values of w_1 and w_2 in a cave survey situation.

Weighting Survey Traverses

The random error in a survey traverse is statistically expected to be proportional to the square root of the number of survey legs. This has been accepted by cave surveyors since Denis Warburton's classic paper in 1963. However in statistics the 'Mean' or common Average, is found to be the value which minimises the squares of the errors – hence the term 'least squares fit'. It is apparent that if we wish to take into account the relative errors of several survey traverses we should apply a 'weighting' to these traverses in inverse proportion to the squares of their probable errors. Thus the weights should be inversely proportional to the number of legs in each survey traverse. Hence for w_1 we can write $1/n_1$ and for w_2 we can write $1/n_2$ and the formula becomes:

$$S_1 \times 1/n_1 + S_2 \times 1/n_2 = (1/n_1 + 1/n_2) \times S$$

It is easily shown that this formula gives a solution identical to that found by redistributing the error equally to each survey leg - as recommended by Bryan Ellis 12 years ago. However our new formula is capable of being extended to the situation where three or more routes have been surveyed between any two points within the cave system, thus:

$$S_1/n_1 + S_2/n_2 + S_3/n_3 + \dots = S/n' \quad \text{where} \quad 1/n' = 1/n_1 + 1/n_2 + 1/n_3 \dots$$

This extended formula can also be derived from the see-saw analogy, using three or more children.

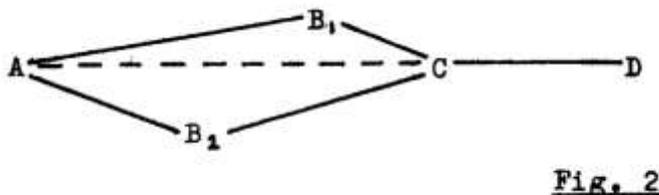
The value of S would normally be calculated separately for the Easting, Northing, and Altitude coordinates, and the individual legs of each traverse must then be adjusted by giving an equal share of their residual traverse $S - S_1$. It can also be shown that this method of closing traverses has been known for at least 50 years as Bowditch's Method, although usually expressed by apparently more complex formulae, The method is, according to one of the older text books on surveying, "particularly suitable for

magnetic compass traverses" (Norman-Thomas 1956).

The Traverse Network

It is probably certain that a complex network of mis-closing survey traverses can only be solved by computer techniques. However the simple formula derived above can be used in some cases of intermediate complexity.

Consider the situation of a cave A - C - D, where multiple routes have been surveyed between some of these points, e.g A - C via B₁ in n₁ legs, and A - C via B₂ in n₂ legs (fig. 2).



We know that the mean location of station C is given by:

$$C_1 / n_1 + C_2 / n_2 = C \times (1/n_1 + 1/n_2) = C/n'$$

However if the point D is also known by other means, or is perhaps coincident with station A, there may still be a residual error to distribute along the traverse A - C - D. What proportion of this should be applied to the two sections A - C ? The answer is that A - C now has the apparent length of n' legs, and can be weighted as such. It can be seen from the formula that n' is the harmonic mean of n₁ and n₂. Thus the traverse network

$$A - B_1/B_2 - C - D$$

has been reduced to the simple

traverse A - C - D where the section A - C now has the length n' legs for the purpose of weighting. This process can of course be repeated as often as necessary to simplify the survey and calculate the mean, coordinates of its junctions.

Finally, a word of caution. Throughout this paper it has been assumed that traverse errors are proportional to \sqrt{n} whereas Bowditch's rules assume that errors are proportional to \sqrt{L} where L is the traverse length. Often there will be no significant difference as the leg length will be similar throughout the cave, but where this is not so, the author's preference would be to use the traverse lengths for weighting purposes, as these may be more closely related to the likely error than the number of legs. This preference follows directly from comments made by Denis Warburton 15 years ago regarding the relative accuracy of surveys of difficult passages: viz, that surveyors tend to take more care in difficult sections, rather than less. It is assumed that the cave passage is the principle factor likely to alter the average leg length from one part of the cave to another.

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THE NEW TUNNEL AT GOUGH'S CAVE, CHEDDAR

W.I.Stanton

A fundamental feature of Gough's show cave is, or was, its T-shaped layout. One of my earliest memories is of a visit to this cave, when aged perhaps five or six, and I can still picture the T, although the crossbar seemed longer then. More interesting, to my juvenile mind, was an active dig at the foot of Pixie Forest, which must have been opening up the low level route to Aladdin's Cave.

Pixie Forest is a bedding plane rising steeply on the north side of the stem of the T. Above the illuminated stalagmite groups it becomes a roomy gallery that slopes down gently to re-join the main passage nearer the cave entrance. It is an up step in the ancient streamway that was short-circuited and abandoned. The highest point is only about 30m from the north (St. Paul's) arm of the T, and, over decades, cave managers and guides would speak wistfully about connecting the two by a tunnel. This, by creating a local one-way system, would reduce congestion on the big flight of steps below St. Paul's. At the same time, the climb up these steps, which old and infirm visitors sometimes found distressing, would be replaced by a longer, more gentle ascent.

In 1974 the owners, Longleat Enterprises, decided to construct the tunnel. I made a preliminary survey and feasibility study, which showed that it would be about 35m (116ft) long and would rise about 4m (12ft). It would take a curving route for aesthetic and practical reasons, the latter being the need to follow the central axis of the wedge of rock between Pixie Forest, St. Paul's and Aladdin's Cave. As the point of the wedge was neared it would turn sharp left and enter St. Paul's at right angles to the chamber wall, at floor level. Thus the risk of blast damage to the existing show cave would be minimised, and, if the entry into St. Paul's was made low and narrow, the visitor might be the more impressed by this big chamber with its vast flowstone waterfall.

The original intention was that the Cheddar firm of H.J. Maunders Ltd, would prepare the approach to the tunnel, up the roomy gallery above-mentioned, during the summer of 1975. The tunnel itself would be constructed jointly by Luke Devenish (blasting) and Maunders Ltd. (clearing the spoil) in the 1975-76 winter. Surveying and general geological control including rock stability would be my responsibility. Policy decisions would be made by Longleat Enterprises agent Mr. Charles, or by his 'man on the spot' Mr. Say, the Caves manager.

Maunders' work went ahead smoothly during the summer, being done in the evenings and early mornings, outside visiting hours. Rocks and mud were removed and a path built, with a short flight of steps up the steepest section. The biggest boulders, and some bumps and projections of solid rock, were broken with the aid of a rock-splitting device. This was on the lines of a giant split pin, which fitted snugly into a drilled hole and was then irresistibly expanded by the hydraulic insertion of a long gently tapered wedge into the split.

Maunders Ltd. claimed that they would be able to construct the whole tunnel using this device, thereby avoiding any risk of blast damage to the show cave, and the original plan was modified accordingly. I was sceptical, but my lack of familiarity with the rock splitter prevented me from positively recommending against it. In the event, progress was very slow, even though operations were helped by the existence of a narrow mud-filled joint going in the right direction, into which flakes of solid rock could be split off.

When tunnelling began, I made a theodolite survey which allowed the exact route to be planned. Magnetic surveying proved impossible, because, apparently, the concrete floors laid down about 1960 were steel-reinforced!

Before long it was decided to revert to blasting, the tunnel. Luke Devenish carried out vibration tests in November, with satisfactory results. His blasts broke into a wider part of the mud-filled joint, with much coarse sand. This fill was dug out by hand. A narrow rift led for 4m into a small open chamber with a

boulder floor that we had already seen from below, as it was a ruckle choking the top of an 8m aven in the low level route from Pixie Forest to Aladdin's Cave.

The coarse in the fill was not ordinary river sand, I discovered, but a mixture of local materials, mostly pellets of mud and grains of silicified limestone, sub-rounded to angular in shape. At the breakthrough point the mud-filled joint turned upwards to become a shaft. Luke cleared this for 7m vertically, surviving showers of mud blocks, but no open way appeared. At some stage of cave development water must have flowed up the 8m shaft and then up Luke's shaft to some unknown destination. The current was only strong enough to carry silt and mud up Luke's shaft; the sand never reached the top, but was churned around and finally dumped at the bottom.

I made a rapid magnetic survey of the new chamber and found that its extremity was only 3m from Aladdin's Cave. The barrier appeared to be solid rock.

A plan was now mooted to abandon the idea of tunnelling into St. Paul's. Instead the way would be through the 3m barrier and Aladdin's Cave. The latter would be greatly modified and its formations and pools 'repositioned'¹ (as had already been done by Gough eighty years before).

Aladdin's Cave is especially popular among visitors to Gough's. Unlike the major grottoes it is only partly seen, through a low arch. Mystery lends enchantment, the arch is at head height to small children, and one of the commonest exclamations in St. Paul's has always been "Mummy (or Uncle Al, Uncle Pete, Auntie Alison, etc.), come and look at this". I was uneasy about the new plan for this reason, and because most of Aladdin's Cave would have to be enlarged in height and/or width, width, which could hardly fail to cause serious damage. Blasting would be impractical, the rock splitter would be used and progress would be slow.

A decision was required, and I was instructed to assess the pros and cons of four possible routes, two being through Aladdin's, and two being variations of the original tunnel. Rather to my surprise I found that one of the latter could be completed in 47 days, whereas the shortest (and most damaging) route through Aladdin's would take 74 days. My assessment was accepted and work began on the solid rock tunnel on December 10th.

Luke was adamant that his blasting would do no harm, but, being naturally nervous, I installed cement tell-tales at 31 sites in and near St. Paul's and Pixie Forest, where there was possible instability. Although Luke used large charges, advancing the face up to 1m per round, by cunningly arranging, his shot holes and delays he was as good as his word, and none of my tell-tales were significantly affected.

The tunnel (about 2.2m diameter) reached the 8m shaft on December 19th, and some doubtful sections of the roof bolted. The fumes didn't disperse naturally after the firing, and a fan was set up near the face to blow them to the cave entrance through a wide polythene tube. Spoil was wheel barrowed to Pixie Forest and then carried to the entrance in skips by an electric pallet truck.

Work resumed on January 5th 1976 after the holiday break. The tunnel turned 90° right and began, to rise at 12°. The rock was firm and there were no problems. I found that a simple magnetic survey was adequate for day to day tunnel guidance, and only used the theodolite twice: at the half way mark and just before drilling through into St. Paul's. The tunnel was given a double bend at the half way point, for variety.

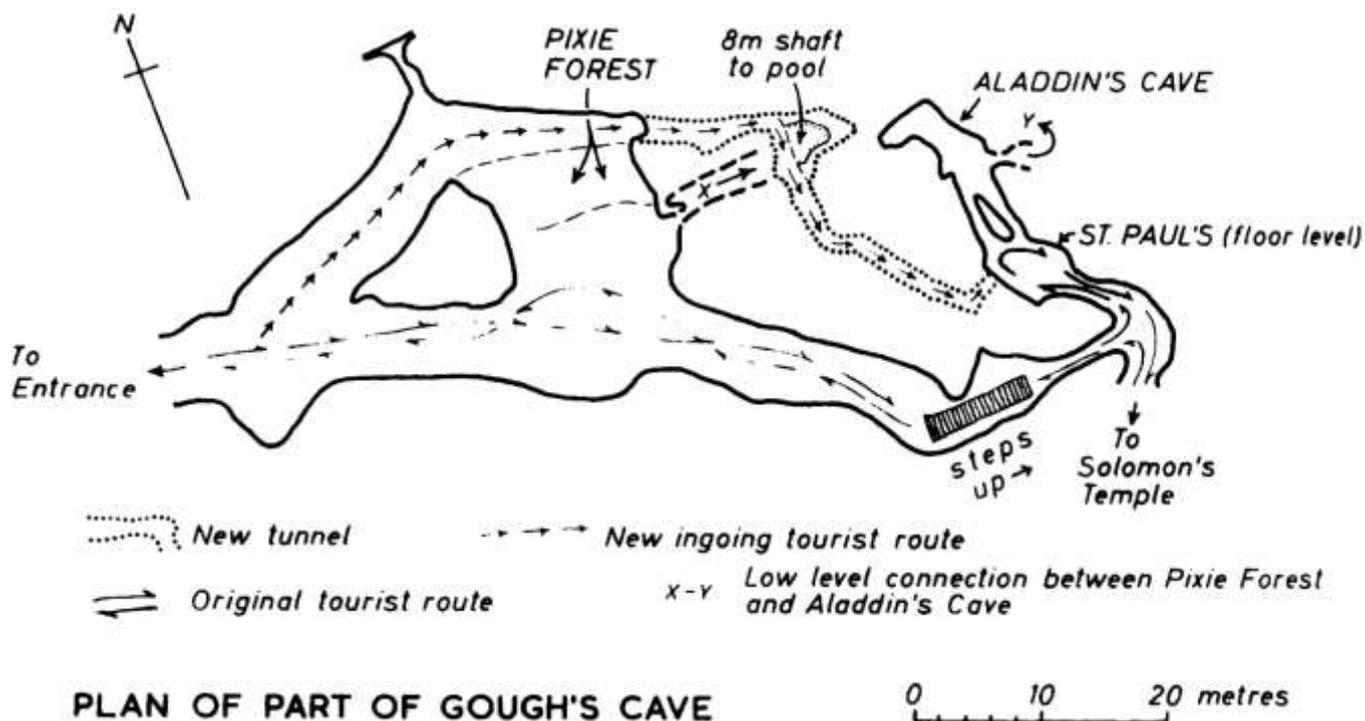
On February 2nd came the crunch. The tunnel was now, supposedly, running parallel to and 4m away from the southwest wall of St. Paul's, at floor level. I marked the angle at which Luke was to drill a 5m hole into St. Paul's, where the target was a dot of paint at the planned exit position. Returning anxiously in the evening, I found a neat round hole in the chamber wall less than 0.2m from the dot, and could hear some very cheerful miners at the far end of it. Relief!

The rock splitter was to have been used for the last 2.5m of the entry into St. Paul's, but the blasting had been so trouble free that Luke was asked to hole through. He did so very delicately, on February 9th. The number of working days had been one less than the 47 predicted. My part in the work was now over. Maunders' still had a lot of tidying up to do, which included removing the steps and handrail in St. Paul's and levelling off the floor, and widening the entry into King Solomon's Temple. In the tunnel itself the natural rubble floor was retained, and more variety was introduced by enlarging the 8m shaft to many times its original diameter, and then building a bridge across it. The tiny stream at the bottom was dammed to make a pool in which a large stalagmite was placed, in the true Gough tradition.

These details took a month to complete. The tunnel was ceremonially opened by Viscount Weymouth on March 3rd 1976.

A few days later I lurked unobtrusively in St. Paul's listening to visitors' comments as they emerged from the narrow tunnel exit. "Wow-ee" and "Cor, look at this, Fred" were fairly typical utterances. It seemed that, from the visitor's viewpoint at least, the thing had been a success.

Acknowledgement: This article appears by kind permission of Longleat Enterprises.



EQUIPMENT NOTES

Mendip Mushroom

Spelio Shunt

I have used this device successfully for some time in four different roles.

The first, on rappel, as a trailing descendeur break, for which job it was originally conceived. Secondly, in an identical configuration and fastened to the harness in the same way, as a shoulder point suspension for a rope walking rig. Thirdly, on a trailing descendeur self lining device for ladder work, and lastly, as a self lining device for climbing up ladders.

For ladder work the cam is clipped into the harness via a karabiner into the loop tied in the eye of the cam, and the remainder of the tape used in the first two configurations is tucked out of the way around the back of the body.

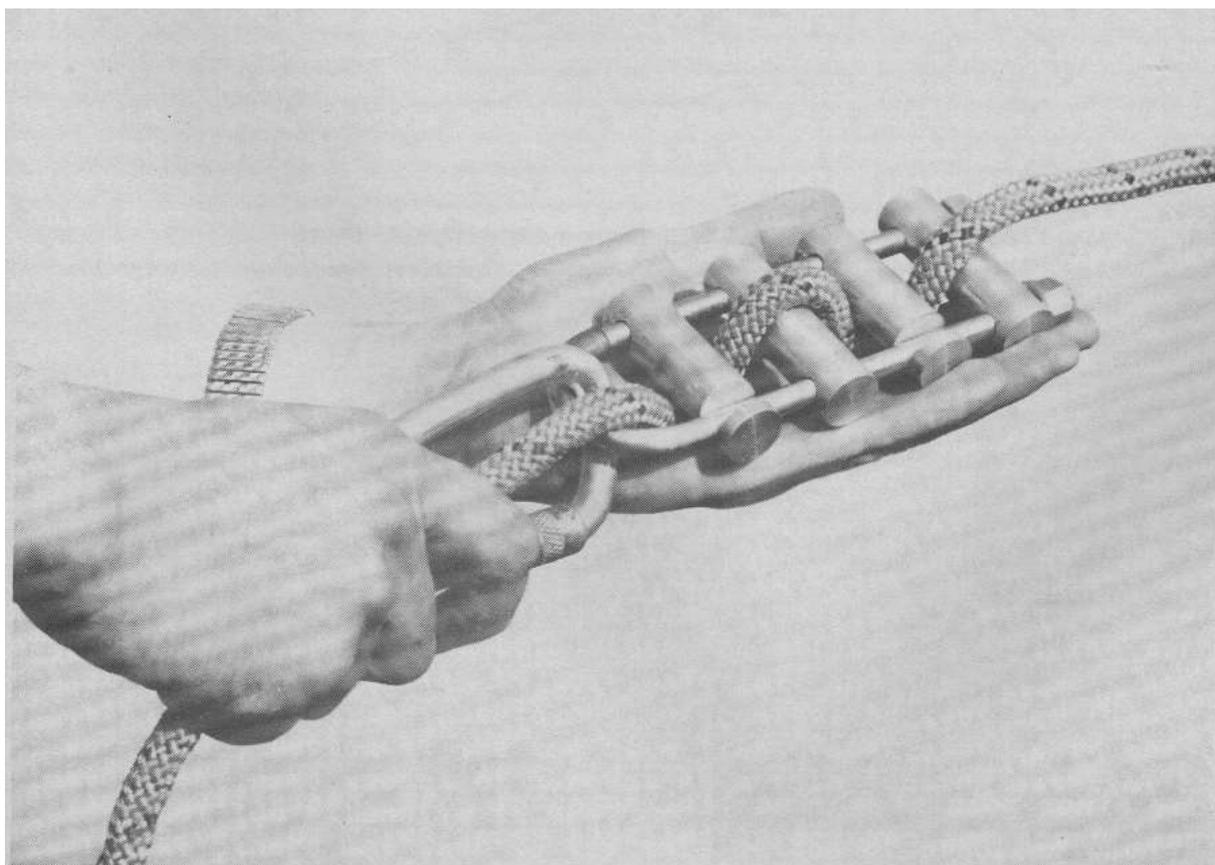
Ideally as a trailing descendeur brake, for rappel situations, the tape to the cam should go from the body harness, through a chest point to the cam sited just above the descendeur so that a free falling body would 'trigger' or 'set' the cam as soon as possible. In practice I use a longer length of tape which serves as my shoulder point harness for rope walking and which goes directly from the main sit harness suspension point to the cam. I have not yet found any great disadvantage in the system, and in fact when using varying diameter ropes (and they do vary) the available slack in the system; has prevented embarrassing hang ups.

Used in the rope walking role it acts as a straight forward cam with the added advantage that at changeover the cam release is made much easier by the lever action, of the karabiner.

As a self-lining brake for descending ladders clipped close to the waist it has the characteristics of a 'hands off' free running device which is very easily set by a quick tug on the cam. I confess I have not tried this in a genuine free fall situation! The quick and easy release characteristics are also soon appreciated. Exactly the same considerations apply when wearing it as a self-lining, device for climbing up ladders.

Mini Rack

Recently I have had the opportunity to try out the prototype of the new 'mini rack' shortly to be supplied by the maker of the 'Goldlock' rack under the trade name of 'Curlew'. This device takes the form of a mini super rack with overall dimensions of 6½" x 2½" approximately, weighing 11½- 12oz.



Mini Rack. Photo by John Cornwell

This small four bar rack carries far more conveniently than its larger brother and has much shorter 'on' and 'off' times. Pitches of varying lengths up to 50m have been dropped on Super Braidline, Marlow 16 plait and Bluewater under varying conditions. The drops have all been smooth, approaching those obtained on a 'whaletail' and control has been easy. Towards the end of the drop, or if carrying an extremely heavy load a little more breaking may be required for changeover, less space is taken up in the

tackle bag and less nuisance is caused when generally manoeuvring in the cave. It has become a firm favourite of mine and has permanently replaced my conventional rack.

A few further modifications are envisaged which would make it even more attractive. One is a reduction in the size of steel used for the frame which will reduce weight, another is the introduction of a spring clip to neatly retain the bars in a closed position when not in use hence removing the problems caused by bars involuntarily opening and snagging.

Once you have used this device I predict that you will be reluctant to revert to your present rig apart from in exceptional circumstances.

* *

DELIBERATE MISTAKE

If you've spotted Journal 174's deliberate mistake send the answer on the back of a pound note to the H.Q.. Your prize could be a reaffirmation of the laws of Newtonian physics in North Hill Swallet....

REVIEWS

Somerset Sump Index. 2nd Edition. Revised 1977 by Ray Mansfield

Mendip was the birth place and cradle of British cave diving and the new revision of the Somerset Sump Index, compiled by Ray Mansfield and published by the Cave Diving Group, provides an excellent account of the history of the diving on Mendip from Graham Balcombe and Jack Sheppards' dives in Swildon's in 1934 until the present day.

The basic format used in the 1964 edition is retained; the name and location of the cave together with general references to the C.D.G. Reviews or Newsletters containing the original dive reports. Some continuity is lost by splitting the description of each sump into a log of the principal dives but the reader is more than recompensed by the heightened sense of history and drama the style gives. This is particularly striking in the exciting story of the diving at Wookey Hole, twelve pages of reports and surveys cover the forty two years of diving in the cave and make a memorable finale to the publication.

The unsatisfactory attempt to end each description of a sump with a definitive conclusion such as "too tight for further progress" or "no object in further exploration by the CDG" made in the first edition and continued in the 1964 edition has now stopped. Unhappily this omission is not the result of any consistent policy for also omitted from the revision is an appendix of lesser sites; there is no reference to the sump in Tynning's Barrows Cave, Gurney Slade Rising or any other undived sump. A sump index should live up to its title and refer to every sump whether it has been dived or not, deciding whether a sump is divable and whether it could be pushed should be left to the individual. Not only do techniques improve and divers abilities vary but sumps are scoured out by floods and opened up by digging; what may be too tight today may be well worth a look tomorrow.

Some minor points! Why no bibliography? Many interesting sources of information are not covered by the references given in the text. Why persist in using the name Springhead Rising when it is more widely known as Rodney Stoke? No mention is made of the diving done at Ludwell by Pat Cronin, Ken James and others. A reference should have been made when describing the inlet sump to Stoke Lane Slocker to the large temperature difference between its waters and those of the stream which sinks at the entrance; some of the water resurging at the inlet sump must come from further afield than the surface rift. Considering what has been omitted from the index why bother to include the puddles in Shatter and Troubles Series in Swildon's? They did not present the original explorers with water filled barriers and at the most, only require a few minutes bailing today.

It would be wrong to end this review on a critical note. The Somerset Sump Index is no dusty

compendium of interest only to the cave diver but an exciting record of cave exploration. Ray Mansfield must be congratulated on all the hard work he has put into this publication and at 60p it is excellent value for money.

Copies are obtainable from Dr O.C.Lloyd, Withey House, Withey Close West, Bristol BS9 3SX.

P.M.

BCRA Conference, UMIST Manchester, 9th and 10th September 1978

The conference this year was well organised and presented, maintaining interest throughout the two days. Many members will be pleased to hear that a short silence was observed to the memory of Dr E.K. Tratman before the proceedings began.

The first choice of Saturday was between Cave Biology and Stereo Photography. The latter is very striking but only for those with a very stoic attitude to their caving. Other features of Saturday which deserve mention were David Carlisle's lecture on metal mining in the Yorkshire Dales and Martyn Farr's on recent cave diving in Ireland.

After a rather over populated night in the halls of residence we joined a large crowd on Sunday morning to hear John Parker describe Craig-y-Ffynnon. While this was most impressive it was very much upstaged by the report of the Mulu Expedition, presented by Andy Eavis, Tony Waltham and Dave Brook. An account of this expedition would be impossible here. Suffice it to say that 30 miles of new caves were found without the cavers having to dig, crawl, or bother with anything much less than 100ft in diameter. There is no doubt that the cavers benefitted considerably from the parent RSG Expedition, and any further exploration in this area would have to overcome substantial financial and logistical problems. The lecture programme had built up to this Borneo climax. It would be unfair to end without remarking that the lecture and projection facilities provided by UMIST were excellent. One would only comment that future organisers should note the dreadfully inefficient and inadequate bar facilities on the Saturday evening. May many of the Wessex be at the next one.

S.G.

WATERPROOFING CAVE SURVEYS FOR USE UNDERGROUND

On a recent trip to Yorkshire it was intended to visit part of a large and complex system as a through trip. No-one in the group had any knowledge of the cave so it was agreed that copies of the survey and descriptions would be taken with us, but the problem then was how to keep the paper dry and readable. Even if paper is kept in a box one still has to handle it at some time and this is where the problems start. I found that photostat and print paper can be completely waterproofed if Grangers Mesowax is applied to both sides and allowed to dry. The print does not appear to be affected by this material, and the wax will not come off with handling. The sheets can, of course, be kept for future use and so are not wasted at the end of a trip. Paper appears to absorb approximately the same amount of Mesowax as a thin tenting material and is therefore not too expensive to use.

I feel that others may wish to try this method of proofing when taking surveys underground in wet conditions.

Barry Gay

FROM THE LOG

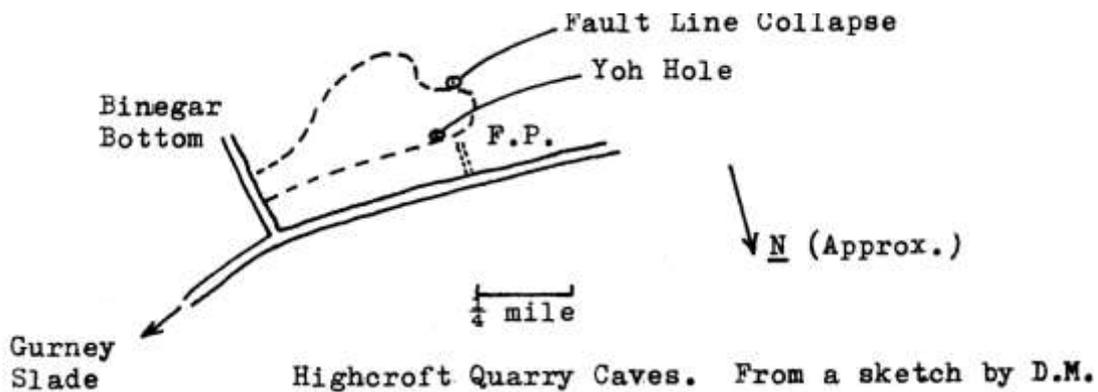
9.4.78 Biddlecombe Valley Sink

Bob, Golly, Dave, Trevor, four kids and an elephant. Large crack in the earth's surface, 1,000's of millimetres of passage which could go somewhere if the end wasn't in sight. Bucket situation was renewed.

First round to the limestone - replay next week.

Highcroft Quarry Caves

14.5.78 Dave Morrison and Jeff Price found two small cave entrances. One is at the top of the quarry face in a gully and leads to a small chamber (10ft x 5ft x 5ft) which may continue. The other is 15ft up one face where a small triangular hole may lead somewhere but the climb up to it is unstable.



21.5.78 The cave in the gully (N.G.R. ST 61904860) was found to be 20ft long, unstable and unimpressive. It was named Fault Line Collapse. The other in the quarry face (N.G.R. ST 61854865) gave only about 6ft of stal walled passage before getting too tight. The climb up to it was stabilised but still requires care. The cave was called Yoh Hole!

30.5.78 Found bones in Yoh Hole, later tentatively identified as belonging to a deer by the Charterhouse Warren Farm diggers. More spoil was removed from the hole, with W.M.C.E.G. diggers doing most of the work.

15.7.78 Gingling Hole, Fountains Fell, Yorkshire

Quack, A1 Keen, Rich Websell and Rob Harper. A fine trip - thoroughly recommended.

11.9.78 Winnat's Head Cavern, Derbyshire

Di Beeching and Dave Walker. The entrance is in a small quarry at the head of Winnat's Pass on the right 50yds from the cattle grid by Winnat's Head Farm. A low crawl to the left inside the entrance leads down over planks to a chamber 6ft high. At the far side a squeeze over a slab leads to another crawl with a 6ft tight section. What follows is a large bouldery chamber with the way on in the boulder choke floor. The descent through the boulders is steep, with several 4-5ft drops to the head of a 10ft rope climb with knotted rope already in place. This is into a damp chamber with a 25ft pitch on the far side, with a boulder belay needing a couple of tapes or a 6ft tether. From the foot of the ladder a steeply sloping passage breaks out into a large chamber, with a floor of large boulders and calcite decorated walls.

CONNECTION FEVER

Following the Keld Head - KMC connection comes the news of the link between Pippikin and Lancaster - Easegill. The NPC find of Link Pot has been followed to Echo Pot in Lancaster Hole and Dusty Junction in Pippikin, creating a system about 27 miles long. This section of the Three Counties System takes over from OFD as Britain's longest cave.