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Wessex Cave Club, Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane,  
Priddy, Nr. WELLS, Somerset BA5 3AX

## EDITORIAL

I am always surprised at how many people send me something for the Journal with a note saying, "I hope this suitable", and then go on to provide just the kind of thing that is wanted. So, please do not be discouraged from having a go. If you are in any doubt as to what is acceptable, contact the Editor first. There is a note on page 126 about presentation of material.

May I draw your attention to the notice on Journal binding on this page, and remind you of this year's journal prize.

## CLUB NEWS

Cave Bookings Anyone wishing to book caves in Yorkshire or in other regions should let Jeff Price know - address inside front cover.

Upper Pitts Progress Work is continuing on essential maintenance and other jobs that were scheduled before the alteration plans. The kitchen ceiling has been re-boarded, and plans are being drawn up for a front porch. Would members please close doors behind them to help stop wasting fuel! A working weekend is to be held on the 7th-8th April.

Hut Fees for guests have been increased to £1.75 per person per night - members still £1. The number of guests staying at Upper Pitts has been limited to fifteen.

New Members The Club welcomes the following new members:  
Kevin Clarke, Baggeridge Bungalow, Wellow, Bath  
Clive W Barlow, 33 St. Patrick's Rd., Yeovil, Som. BA21 3EX  
Anthony J Bennet, 39 Marr Terrace, Ranmoor, Sheffield  
Douglas Adams, 36 Rownham Road, Hotwells, Bristol  
John and Jennifer Cornwell, 26 Russell Rd., Fishponds, Bristol (re-applied)

## JOURNAL BINDING

Members who would like volume sixteen of the Journal hard-bound should send their copies, plus £10.80 (includes return P&P), either to Mike York, 59 Kennington Avenue, Bishopston, Avon or to Upper Pitts by the end of April. They should be sent as they are to be bound, i.e. in the correct order, with or without covers as required, etc. Other volumes of similar size may be bound as well, if wished, in which case please send additional £10.80 for each.

### HYWEL MURRELL

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Hywel Murrell on January 20th. Hywel was the last survivor of the original five cavers who met at Croscombe in September 1934 and resolved to form the Wessex Cave Club, He was elected the Club's first Secretary at the inaugural meeting, and was a leading light in Mendip caving for many years.

The club was represented at the funeral; we express our sincere condolences and sympathy to Ruth and her family.

## MENDIP NEWS

Digging Competition is on again. The Mendip club to find the most passage wins a barrel. For details, see the notice in the Hunter's.

Charterhouse Warren In 1972, Glyn Bolt, John Cornwall, together with the rest of the Rhino digging team and others, started at this site. A shaft was first dug straight down, but it was found that the rock line was sloping. Digging for cave was abandoned, but the Audsleys continued working there for archaeological interest. Recently, John Cornwall suggested that the dig be looked at again.

On a wet and windy Sunday, a contingent of 'hard' diggers, not-so-hard diggers and assistants went to investigate. Within a few minutes, the infill was removed and thirty feet or so of passage regained. After some hours, three feet of progress were made through earth/rock fill. The rocks got bigger, so it was decided to use chemical persuasion. While all this was going on, the wriggly-tin shed that housed the winch, shoring materials and assorted junk, was tidied up. Jenny Cornwall provided tea and hot dogs.

### SPECIAL NOTICE; THE DIARY OF HOWARD KENNEY

Howard Kenney's untimely death in 1980 deprived the Club and Mendip of one of its most tireless and energetic members, His long and valued service on the Club Committee, and to MRO, is all too easily forgotten as years go by.

Yet Howard continues to be remembered for his exploits underground. His interest in caving, like that of so many others, was fired by the immortal H E Balch. He started helping Balch in his excavations at Badger Hole. By meeting other cavers, he was soon exploring Mendip's subterranean landscape.

In this 50th year of the Wessex Cave Club, we are most fortunate, through the kindness of his widow, Edith, to have the opportunity to publish Howard's caving diary. It starts in 1940 with that meeting with Balch and continues up to 1952. In its 100-plus pages we read detailed accounts of caving trips on Mendip and in South Wales. We learn (or are reminded) of what it was like to cycle, rucksack-laden, to go caving, and the frustration of arriving and finding that something has been left behind! We join his clandestine trips to Swildons Hole, and in post-caving visits to local inns. During the war, much of Mendip was a military training area, but we learn how stealth allowed Howard and his companions to slip past the sentries to cave at Charterhouse.

Howard's log gives more than just the flavour of the times. We read of digging and discovering passages which are now taken for granted - Kenney's Dig in Swildon's, the first crossing of the Black Hole, and the discovery and exploration of Primrose Pot. All the time we meet his companions - Stanton, Hazell, Devenish, Frost, Williams, Lawder and others.

Howard's style is so fresh that the only way to do justice is to publish the log as a facsimile. It has received no editing or commentary, for these would be superfluous. It is to be a limited edition. Copies will be hardbound in black buckram after the style of the Journal.

Please order by sending £25 in advance (payable to Wessex Cave Club) to Phil Hendy, 10 Silver Street, WELLS, Somerset, BA5 1UN.

A specimen page from Howard Kenney's Caving Log. This reduction is smaller than it will appear in the final publication.

Small Wades

After dark. On the way back we explored several side passages, but none led to anything really interesting. We soon reached the point where we had found the stream, but instead of leaving it, we crossed a dam structure, but soon found it impassable. Next we explored some leading all the way in which we had approached the stream in the early part of the trip. By this means we found the "Small River". It was composed of a whole series of rock holes with only a narrow stream of water between them. From time to time we entered a whole mass of tiny passages. Dean & I systematically explored them, but did not get into the main one, so he started on the other side by himself. The passages found to be an easy way, but our only discoveries of interest were a pair of spectacles & a set of magnifying glasses. I eventually used his "Biological Research" & decided to take them out. Much to our delight we found a much easier way out, which brought us to the first rock entrance. It meant we could walk instead of crawling. We were greeted at the entrance by the entrance guide from the P.A. Apparently we had missed the most interesting part of the cave. This brought us to another cave, "Past Canal" a short distance away. There were quite a number of holes in the hillsides, all evidence of the repeated attempts by the landowners (many interested in strong rooms) & cavers to find a cavern. We were unable to find the correct one, which led by means of a tight squeeze to an underground lake. The sun being quite hot, Dean & I decided to have a walk in the nearby river. It was effectively dried out, & the water



Small River

was beautiful. Returning to the cave entrance, we stuffed & batted ourselves in the sun. After returning the keys we returned to the bus. It was still early, so we decided to try a bird & snake to find or build for the birds. It was a low ridge over the

## OGOF HESP ALYN

Paul Whybro

Discoveries in Ogof Hesp Alyn (OHA) in the Summer of 1983 by members of the Wessex, Bath University and BEC have highlighted the potential for discovering a large system in the Alyn Gorge area. Our activities have certainly forced some of the locals into action; if sustained this may lead to more cave being found next year. There are open leads to be explored. One unpleasant aspect of this local awakening has been the changing of the lock on the cave - presumably to deny access to any but a select few North Wales cavers?

OHA had been explored as far as Sump II the previous year by a large Mendip team, but further trips that year had to be abandoned when the cave flooded. Flooding occurs in Winter almost totally, the entrance acting as a resurgence in periods of high rainfall. OHA was permanently flooded until the 1920-1930s. With the digging of an adit from the coast to unwater some of the mines in the area, it was completely drained, leaving a system of muddy passages and crawls with seven pitches, several steep mud slopes and ending in a sump. Tony Jarrat did the original dive in Sump One, but the sump was not passed until 1982 by Chris Milne.

OHA II is a muddy, ascending passage, mostly walking or hands and knees crawling which then splits, with both ends sumping. The total length of OHA is about 200 metres. The purpose of the first 1983 trip was to dive the most promising looking of the two sumps. Chris passed this after a dive of only 3m and was quickly followed by the other divers (Pete, Rich and Kev). More muddy crawling followed. This led to a 10m climb and two ways on, one to a 10m climb leading to a 7m pitch and a spectacular 8m dia. by 20m deep shaft. As the team had no ladder, exploration halted for the day. On returning the next day, Rich descended the shaft to find a small sump and a large passage leading off for 40m to another 20m shaft with an aven above. The rest of the team having reached this point looked around for other leads. It looked then as if the shaft would provide the key to progress, but having again run out of ladder, no descent was possible, Kev investigated the aven but did not push it.

The team withdrew for a few weeks, returning with a different composition and more ladder on the 27th of August. The shaft was laddered and dropped but found to be choked. The aven was examined, and eventually went to a draughting passage to a large chamber. This was followed by a pitch into a larger chamber and a way on. 350-400m of passage were followed to a draughting boulder choke with the sound of running water. Everyone got excited; it was a happy group that sat in the pub that night. The next day, a few more side passages were checked out, resulting in another 50-100m being discovered.

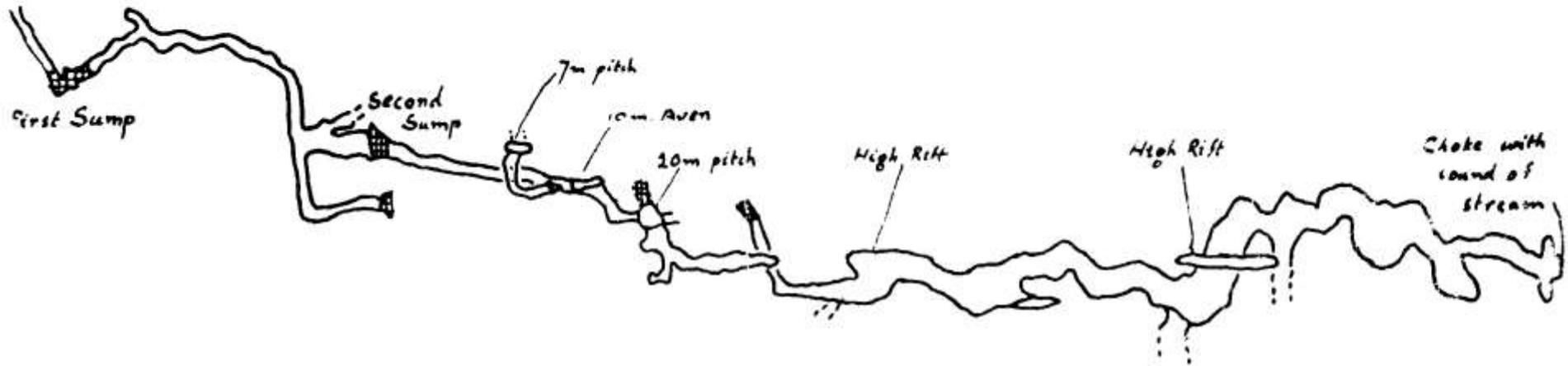
A few weeks later, I had a phone call from Chris to say that the NWCC had syphoned the sumps and that we should get there to make sure that we explored all of the loose ends before anyone else. Being laid out low with a cold, I did not go. It turned out that the trip was something of a race between WCC and NWCC. The Wessex tied up one loose end but left a question mark over two or three others. The NWCC team did a fast tourist trip of the Wessex extension but did not enter anything new.

With the changing of the lock mentioned above, it would seem that they have decided that they want to be first in when the flood waters recede next year.

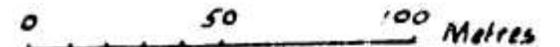
# SKETCH OF OGOF HESP ALYN EXTENSION

## PLAN

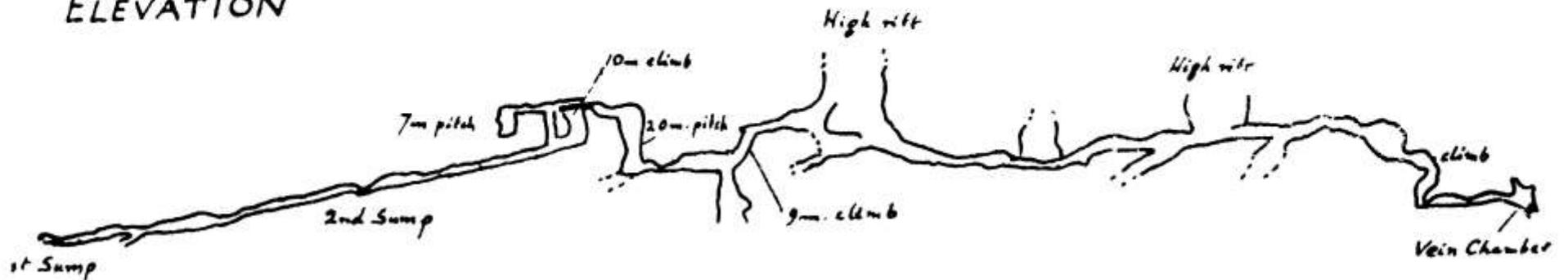
North ←



Vertical and Horizontal Scale



## ELEVATION



1983

# EXPLORATIONS IN GREECE, AND OTHER TRIFLES

Steve Gough

"That is a fine day", I said,  
"What are you doing with a lamp in the white morning?"

Myles na Gopaleen; The Third Policeman.

During the summer of last year, a small group of which I had the good fortune to be a member undertook a reconnaissance of the Mount Ghiona, Mount Parnassos massif of central Greece. While three of the team flew to Athens, Tony Bennet of the Craven Pothole Club and Myself drove the gear out in Tony's Land Rover. This gave us the opportunity to cave in France on the way back.

There is little enough to be said of our journey out, using the route through Yugoslavia, although it may be of use to someone to know that the roads, or rather, the road, in Yugoslavia is still very bad, that Yugoslav petrol stations do not accept Yugoslavian money, and that Yugoslavian lay-bys tend to be full of sleeping Turks on their way home from Germany. It took us eighty-eight hours.

The Parnassos Ghiona region is as big as the Yorkshire Dales, with the mountains rising from sea level at the Bay of Itea, to 2500m. The two ranges are divided by the Amphissa Valley, which is of great importance to the economy of Greece, containing, it is reputed, a million olive trees. The mountains consist in the main of heavily faulted Cretaceous and Jurassic limestones alternating with bands of flysch, and, although the hydrology of the area has been thoroughly studied by a United Nations team led by Dr. David Burden, there has been almost no work by cavers. With sinks at over 1500m feeding, in one instance, a five cumec spring below sea level and over 20km away it certainly seemed worth a look. In fact, the amount of passage entered seemed rather disappointing, due largely to the problems caused by snow plugs and silting. Nevertheless, some spectacular cave was explored.

Eftastomo Kathavothres is a magnificent double shaft, spanned by a rock bridge, and exactly over the presumed line of flow of a major sink half a kilometre away. I had carefully learned a formula for calculating the depth of shafts by timing falling rocks, and this had led me to estimate the larger and more northerly shaft at 75ft - "about the same as Cow Pot" I reported cheerfully to the others. As a result, my descent was interrupted by arriving at the end of the rope. This at least provided an opportunity to try out a knot which Pete Seed had shown me. The stones fell for four seconds. Perhaps you know a better formula.

While this was a fine free hang, with only one rebelay, the more southerly shaft was a nightmare of loose rock, windows, and vertical oxbows; rather like rappelling through an enormous Emmenthal cheese. At the bottom, the cave has some horizontal development which regrettably chokes with shingle before it really gets going.

Our biggest disappointment was a cave called Yerontovzrahos Kathavothres, which was discovered on the same day as three of us climbed the top of Mt. Parnassos. The entrance is at 2100m, at which level one likes to keep on the move so that the vultures circling above know that one is dead. A large down-dip passage leads to a choke on the end of the snow. Beyond, a large chamber. There seems little doubt that this would have been the main point of engulfment for the meltwater from the huge catchment area below the summit of Parnassos itself. The likely resurgence is at 600m a.s.l. and I should think that a couple of weekends digging would see you through.

A considerable number of short caves and plugged shafts were explored, commonly with old mortar bombs (from the civil rather than the world war) and poisonous toads in their entrances. However, I will single out for mention a cave called Karkados Gardinista, to which we were shown by locals and which was reported to have been explored for the first time only three months previously by Athens cavers to a

depth of 330m. Although a fine shaft, it proved to be only 71m deep to a choke which had unquestionably been the end for a very long time.

I must also mention the hospitality of the inhabitants of these mountains who make up in generosity what they lack in numbers. Goatherds earn a hard living in the high basins and any chance meeting was invariably followed by invitation to a meal of bread, goat's cheese, and yoghurt, in a drystone shelter. Equally, in the village of Karoutes, the only settlement on south Ghiona, we became celebrities to a degree which I could easily have grown to enjoy.

For the journey home, Tony and I chose the scenic route, spending a memorable night under a full moon on the Adriatic, and getting in some serious tanning on the next day. The trip from Patra to Brindisi took eighteen hours and cost only £90 for both of us and the Land Rover. We drove the length of Italy in 24 hours and thus created time for a decent trip in the French Vercours. Our chosen objective was the Grotte de Bury, which is often attempted by British parties but, I suspect, seldom bottomed. Certainly, on my last visit in 1980 I chickened out very early in the game! The cave is 3.5km long, more or less as a single passage. The sump is at minus 354m and there are nine pitches, not eight as shown on the very basic survey. These are separated by much deep water, a great deal of free climbing, and many spectacular traverses. We found the section below the last pitch, which takes perhaps an hour and a half each way and involves complex route finding in a vertical maze, to be particularly difficult and exhausting.

Anyway, the two of us bottomed the thing and got out in seventeen and a half hours, a performance with which we were not displeased. The steamy warmth of the forest as we changed in the first light of dawn is not something I shall readily forget. After a long sleep, the journey back to England was begun only with great reluctance, and with the reflection that it is more enjoyable to do what you like than it is to earn the means of so doing.

Finally, looking back on the whole five week period, I would like to make the following general observations:

Our work in Greece was extremely successful in terms of sites covered, despite the small numbers of people involved, and the full report will provide a comprehensive account of cave development in the region. This was possible only because all of the following conditions were met:-

- a) The team was handpicked and it was made clear to those approached that sustained hard work would be required. Everyone had two days off in three weeks. I am slightly less proud of the fact that only three of us were ever drunk, and that was on only one occasion.
- b) We had the use of a Land Rover.
- c) On both mountains, we were able to establish comfortable high level camps (sic). This owed much to the friendliness of the natives, whose attitude might be summed up in the phrase, "why not?".
- d) We had no serious personality clashes. Everyone was always available to everyone else as a working partner.
- e) The whole team had fully discussed the risks involved in lightweight and remote activities of this kind and fully understood that self-injury was to be avoided at all costs. The same applies to our trip in France. Macho behaviour is unwelcome. The situation will make enough demands on one's bravery.

If conditions of this type can be met then I am convinced that small groups can achieve more than big ones, and get more fun and satisfaction from the experience as well. Perhaps there is no need even for H.W. Tilman's typically miserly concession to the advocates of large expeditions, when he said of Dr. Longstaff and the Brocherel Brothers, who, alone, had failed narrowly on a 25,355ft peak, that with "a tent and two pieces of chocolate they might have succeeded".

# NORTH AMERICAN DIARY

Paul Hadfield

(Extracted from a letter to Phil Hendy)

We really do have a fantastic country out here, with enormous potential for new cave. To be honest, it is not possible to exaggerate just how beautiful it is and I know from experience what the impact is on a person from England, - even one who has been around a bit. I know I keep half promising to come back and visit Mendip but this country is so big and there's so much to do in the way of climbing, skiing and just looking for cave, never mind exploring them, that I don't know when I'm going to find the time.

How about this for a comparison with a dig on Mendip? The current going lead here (one of the several) is an open passage 30 metres high and 10 metres wide. John Pollack and I tried to hike into it a week ago but were blown off by deep snow and the very real risk that we could have been snowed in 50 miles from anywhere. As it was, we got into the new area of the cave but had to route before we reached the virgin stuff.

One doesn't really appreciate places like Upper Pitts until you have done a typical Canadian caving trip. That is, drive 750 miles, 50 or so on snow covered dirt tracks, make cold camp, hike with cave gear and 300ft of rope, rope each up 2200ft vertical (very steep, with very heavy brush) in deep snow, go caving for ten hours, exit and stumble downhill in the dark in deeper snow with cave clothing freezing on your body to cold deserted campsite. I know it may sound a bit like some Yorkshire trips you've been on but believe me it's a different league out here. Thing is, out here this scene can repeat itself for several days depending on how durable you are! There are compensations though, and I hope that I'm going to see some of the rest of the Wessex out here before too long.

## MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION

Articles - these should preferably be the original work of members. They should be written or typed with spaces between the lines to make editing easier.

News Items - are of vital importance. Please keep the Editor in touch with such things as dig progress, finds, dates, etc.

Diagrams - should preferably be the size to appear on the page, but reduction or enlargement can be done if necessary. If you cannot draw, send a suitable sketch which can then be redrawn.

Photographs - these are best reproduced if printed on glossy paper. Black and white is preferable to colour, and the photos should be of full tonal range.

Deadlines - News items can generally be inserted up to two weeks before publication. Articles may be held for any issue. Photographs and surveys will be returned to contributors, but not manuscripts unless requested.

## CAVING IN ISRAEL

The following information was sent to the Wessex by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. It is published here as it gives a fairly comprehensive guide as to what is worth going to see out there. If your caving is more of the 'tourist' kind, and you don't mind the imminent other dangers, this could be the summer holiday for you.

ISRAEL NATURE TRAILS in conjunction with the SPNI's Israel Cave Research Centre (ICRC) offers an expanding selection of tours and study seminars on the various types of caves found throughout Israel. These include karstic phenomena, stalactite caves, rock-cut tombs, underground passages and chambers, etc. Programs vary in difficulty, from tours for average hikers to descents requiring special skills. ICRC serves as a pool for spelunking equipment of all kinds: mountaineering and rappelling gear, instruments for various scientific projects, lighting devices, bat nets, etc.

Among the tours offered are: Avshalom stalactite cave with its magnificent concentrations of unusual formations; Haritun cave in the Judean Desert, used by man for habitation for thousands of years and still partly unmapped; sinkholes in the Golan region; the mysterious "bell caves" of the Judean foothills; karstic caves in Galilee; and many other sites that are still being studied. Each day includes several hours of hiking.

Following are some details of the caves in Israel:

In Mount Sdom, 400 meters below sea level, one can find some of the most spectacular caves in the world: caves in rock-salt. The rock is quickly dissolved when it is exposed to air and elements. Only in an extremely arid climate such as near the southwestern corner of the Dead Sea can it exist for thousands of years. But even here, because of the high solubility of the rocks karstic phenomena are fully developed.

Vertical shafts and sinkholes catch the flood water from small watersheds and deliver it into long horizontal caves. At last, the water emerges from the cave right into the Dead Sea, near the natural salt sculptures, traditionally termed "Lot's Wife".

Driving north of Mt. Sdom, higher and higher cliffs rise along the Dead Sea rift. Among these dolomite cliffs, are the caves in which the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden for 2000 years. Their first discovery here was made by a young shepherd who threw a stone into a cave and heard a strange sound when it hit a clay jar.

Later on, more discoveries were made in remote caves, accessible only with special mountaineering gear. Here the last fighters of Bar Kochba found refuge after their failure in their revolt against the Romans. Letters of Bar Kochba himself were found in the caves of Wadi Muraba'at and Nahal Hever. These have thrown new light on the history of that revolt.

The Bar Kochba revolt was carefully prepared many years in advance. This is clear from many excavated labyrinth caves which were found in the Shfela region, southwest of Jerusalem.

These are only a small portion of thousands of caves which were excavated during ancient times in the soft chalk of the Shfela region. Such an artificial cave might include dozens of rooms which were used for living, agricultural industry, water reservoirs, burial, etc.

Caves were also excavated in other parts of the country, mainly for burial purposes. Every period in history had its own style. Underground water systems are very spectacular in several of Israel's ancient cities.

The people of those periods were unbelievably accurate in their location and excavation of water systems and the superb storing devices. The Shiloah tunnel in Jerusalem, more than a quarter of a mile long, was excavated 2700 years ago and is still functioning as a carrier for the waters of the Gihon spring, a karstic spring.

The Gihon with its siphon action is one of the karstic phenomena so common in the chalk and dolomite rock which covers most of Israel. These phenomena include horizontal caves and vertical shafts. Various deposits (speleothems) are found in these caves, consisting mainly of travertine; the caves in the desert regions contain spectacular deposits of gypsum "flowers" and salt stalactites.

The caves of Israel are home to 26 species of bats and many other animal species. Some of these animals are able to live only in the caves, and they are left over from long-gone climatic conditions saved from extinction by the isolation of their habitat.

### Show Caves

Several of Israel's caves have, been developed for regular tours.

1. On the northern coast, the Rosh Hunikra caves (30 kilometres north of Haifa) provide a unique example of wave action on soft chalk rock. The caves are entered by way of an aerial tram and maybe visited all year round. The site includes a restaurant on the cliff top and other facilities.
2. Beth Shearim (20 kilometres southeast of Haifa) offers a large complex of Jewish burial caves of the Roman period. Jews from all over the ancient world were buried at Beth Shearim. Many of the caves are open daily.
3. The most famous stalactite cave in the country is the Sorek cave (20 kilometres west of Jerusalem). The cave forms a hall 90 x 80 meters in size, with a great variety of cave deposits. The cave is open to visitors daily between 8.30-3.45.
4. Other karstic phenomena are visible in the "Chinese pothole" at Ofra (20 kilometres north of Jerusalem), part of a system of dolines and sinkholes in a highly developed karstic region. The pothole includes several connected avens. It may be entered by a series of metal ladders which descent to a depth of 60 meters. Visits may be arranged through I.C.R.C., Ofra Field Study Centre, telephone 02-951-740.
5. In Jerusalem, the Cave of Zedekiah (underneath Damascus Gate) is a vast quarry whose stones were used in building the Second Temple and many other ancient structures in the city. Various traditions and legends cling to this cave. It is open to the public daily.

Special visits to other caves of types mentioned above may be arranged through I.C.R.C.

### FOR MORE DETAILS APPLY TO:

#### ISRAEL NATURE TRAILS DEPARTMENT

Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel  
13 Helene HaMalka Street. P.O.B. 930  
Jerusalem 91008, Israel

Telex 26144 BXJM IL, Ext. 7343. Tel: 02-249-567  
Licensed Travel Agency No. N/93/82

## FROM THE LOG

8 May Wookey 20 Chris, Brian Woodward, Paul Whybro. Dived through to 20 via deep route in about 10ft vis. First trip for B.W. since 1976. Climbed into upslope tube just after lake (approx. 150ft after) first noticed by B.W. and John Parker in 1970. Tube goes upslope for about 100ft up a short climb and emerges into a low bedding. Progress along bedding through tight section (too much neoprene) leads downwards to a wider section, slopes down at 30-40°. Passing through holes between these blocks gives access to another sloping bedding which is traversed for 20ft to a short section of low passage to foot of aven, 40-50ft high, 5-6ft high at base narrowing to 2-3ft. Hole in floor at base of aven goes downwards over loose blocks to down sloping phreatic tube which ends after 70ft at a mud fill. J.P. and B.W. penetrated into first bedding sometime in 1970.

7 May Swildon's - Watergate Connection. Chris, Alison, Paul, came in from 4, opening up the ducks to start an air circulation, while Annie, Pete and Phil Dunk went in via Lower Fault Chamber and surveyed the connection and Pete dived the next sump upstream. This was hopeless - far too choked with mud to get through, but was obviously shallow. Once the others began bailing out the sump to join us, we started to bail the next one. This caused some consternation until they twigged what was happening. After two hours hard bailing, we had both the way back to Four open and the new sump. A short duck through led to a short cross rift and another low section went straight on down and into a phreatic tube for 60ft or so, climbing steeply to another bastard sump. P.M.

7 May Nine Barrows P Hann to look at a small inlet a short way in on the right. 5ft of progress was made with hammer and chisel to a rock pillar, which requires bang - open space can be seen beyond. 11/5 - Pete and Alison, Pete Hann, to bang pillar. The way on proved to be too tight and the site will now be left. A squeeze in the entrance was tried by Alison but her bum proved too big to get round a bend. P.H.

14 May Singing River Paul Whybro and Andy Symonds (BUCC). Diving in flooded cavities in West Series. Dived possible sump uncovered on the 8th Jan. - discovered it isn't. Dived flooded cavity in passage floor immediately upstream of previous site - possible way on under stacked deads, uncertain due to bad vis. Dived flooded working up side passage downstream of squeeze into lake chamber (8/1). Dive for 10m or so leads to large flooded cavity with way on right and up. Up leads to an air surface, possibly that mentioned in CDG NL 37.22. On return, surprised to find Andy had heard me surface in the chamber. An examination of a passage over the top of the sump, and some digging at the end, revealed a small hole which must lead to the chamber - needs digging from both sides. Way on underwater not examined due to bad vis. Short trip into East Series and out. P.W.

21 and 28 May Swildon's - Watergate. Chris and Annie, Pete and Alison, Pete Seed (CPC). Took two large hoses down to the extension and were able to bail out the next upstream sump without trapping ourselves in. While this was being done, the first sump was bailed right out and a way on underwater was found off to the left. This must be the way on to the first Mud Sump and is large enough to dive. The top sump was eventually dug and bailed out. Beyond, a chamber 12ft square was entered. The water was coming down a rift climb which was not pushed as the air was becoming poor. It looks as though we are coming up near the Greasy Chimney. In the chamber, there is a phreatic tube going on, but it requires digging. P.M.

3 June Forest of Dean - Prospecting. Nigel G. solo. Study of OS 1:25000 showed a stream vanishing into its valley S of River Wye at 554131. Further down valley is Oldstone Well at 553141. Walk from Staunton village (short way to SW), following large forest tracks (marked on map). Sink is spread over small area of boulders and tree branches just upstream of embankment taking side road, and it was taking quite a sizeable stream (reasonable Swildon's size) with no backing up. The local geology is fairly complicated, but this appeared to be on good limestone. Oldstone Well is a spring discharging too little water for it to be the resurgence from the above sink. Flood rising for it perhaps? A second stream which may be worth looking at rises at Calf Well, 546133, possibly sinking at 536142. N.G.

3 June Limpley Stoke Stone Mine Friday Night Club meet in mine recently re-opened. Group were shown around new workings and old parts. Latter area has two hand-cranes still standing, some railway tracks and wagons and various implements including a stone-saw blade, still in sharpening bench. New workings have cut down into floor of old tunnels - the lower strata was too hard to have been cut by hand. N.G.

7 June Swildon's Hole Mark Madden, Sean Walsh (BUCC). Spent 6½ hrs bolting, climbing and falling off the aven just downstream of Tributary Passage in Swildon's 4. Couldn't quite get to the top but far enough to see that it almost certainly doesn't go. NOTE - left a sling near the top that isn't attached to very much!

12 June Downhead Swallet Mark, Chris, Pete and Alison. Began work at the site. We saw the landowner who has a trout farm further up the valley. He's very enthusiastic about the dig, wants to come down and is pleased as punch about having a cave on his land. It is a pity that it's such a nasty one. Spent most of the day removing flood debris blocking the entrance and diverting the stream into the further entrance. Found three trout - one brown, one rainbow, and one dead. P.M.

17 June Goatchurch Friday Nighters candle-lit trip and barbeque. About 20 wandering around through-route, prevented from bottoming the cave by vast hordes of wegees! Highly entertaining evening. N.G.

25 June Longwood Pete and Alison, Mark Madden, Paul Whybro. Trip down to end of Reynold's to dive sump. Spacious kit-up area. Dived about 20 – 30ft at about 10ft depth. About 6-10 ft from base, passage enters rift on left after ducking under a flake. Passage continues downwards as a rectangular tube about 18" wide and 4-6 ft high. Visibility about 4 inches. Passage continues. Uneventful exit, but took ages. An interesting, sporting trip, well worth a visit.

2 July Mangle Hole Paul Whybro, Kev Clarke, Mark Madden diving the up stream sump. 12-15ft deep plugged with boulders, which we tried to shift. Way on is half open. Visibility excellent. Good trip, although Aldermaston squeeze needed digging a bit.

6 July Swildon's, Renascence Graham, Nick, Matthew, surveying trip and detackling. Grimmer than ever. Unanimous decision never to venture into that scab hole again was quickly agreed by all. But all in all a good trip.

11 July Mangle Hole Paul and Mark diving the upstream sump, at about 15ft deep and 10ft in, a very tight squeeze is encountered (see 2/7). After de-kitting, Paul was unable to pass this. Mark was able to wriggle through to see a beautiful rift at least 20ft deep and 1ft wide getting bigger on the way down. Backing out due to impending lack of air was difficult – by removing cell and helmet (by breaking the chin strap!) a return was made. Way on is definitely there. Visibility excellent.

23 July Chris Milne and Paul Whybro to Wookey 20 to survey passage found on 8/5. Vis excellent. Chris forced to remove jacket to pass the bedding squeeze. Nasty moment when Paul dropped mask in the water while kitting up on exit. Surface in Nine to flash bulbs and applause from tourists.

31 July Longwood Kev Clark and Paul Whybro. Trip to sump at end of Reynold's. Second attempt - see 25/6. Went for 15m, vis no better than previously. Passage becomes about 40cm wide and lower.

2 Sep Obtained permission from UBSS to dig Pierre's Pot in Burrington Combe. It is an open rift blocked by a very large displaced slab. 3 Sep: Kev Clarke, Anne Lavender, Pete and Alison, ¼lb plaster charge echoed all around the Combe - frightfully loud. Cleared debris and put second charge on. 4 Sep: Cleared debris but found lower half of slab still intact. Further work soon revealed hole down which boulders fell and a fine draught. Tuska and Penny arrived and everyone took turns knocking hell out of the slab. Hammer broke but at that moment Paul Morris arrived with another. Ten minutes more, and we had a Tuska-size hole and we were in. About 100-150ft found. Upper level walking size with lots of white 'tufa' on walls. Lower series blocked by breakdown. The way on is a rift whose entry is choked with cemented rocks, draught is most encouraging. 5 Sep: Banged head of rift and retired for an hour. On return, only Alison was able to drop down into rift. 10ft down, a bulge prevented further progress. The rift also continued across but way on was barred by loose rock. Banged head of rift again before leaving. 7 Sep: Banged squeeze on way to work. In evening, with Alison, Paul Morris and Pete Hann, dropped down rift to pretty hopeless choke. The blast had cleared the loose rock, so Alison crossed the rift to more of same. 10,11,14 Sep: More clearing and banging. 17,18 Sep: Finally cleared rift and climbed up to discover - a wrecking bar and two old galvanised buckets. With some people down Pseudo Johnny Nash's Hole we soon had a good aural connection through to them. P.J.N.H. was blocked in about '68 and a fair amount of digging would be needed to open up the through trip. The draught is coming out from the base of the rift but it is very badly choked.

10 Sep Wooky Twenty Chris Milne, Paul Whybro. Digging near the base of the climb up. At mud/boulder choke found about 20ft circular passage 5-6ft dia. going to sump pool which seems to be perched, above water level of rest of cave. 25 Sep: In dubious visibility to investigate perched pool. Paul dived sump for 10ft to total silt blockage. Dived lake in bad vis to -50ft to no particular conclusion. Maybe worth another look, Chris noticed an obvious passage leading off in the roof near the lake, 9 Oct: To investigate passage. Combined tactics put P.W. in hole - discovered this closes down after 6m but carries on too tight. Examined more of 20, including 20-24 boulder choke and passage beyond. Heavy current in 20, vis not bad.

9 Oct Swlldon's Hole G Wright and I Jepson to dig in Abandon Hope. Baled dig and removed 12 sacks of spoil. Situation now looks slightly more encouraging. Cave very crowded. 5½ hrs I.J.

26 Oct Swlldon's Lowbow. P Hann, C Barlow, J Scott removed a fair amount of spoil until a space over the fill could be seen. Just as this was going to be examined, the roof collapsed, blocking it off again. 30 Oct: P.H. and Nigel Graham surveying. P.H. N.G.

15 Oct Downhead Rich Websell. Pete and Alison, Pete Watts. Cave in flood. After diverting stream way, tried to get into upper entrance. The first squeeze was badly silted, and trying to tackle it low down with helmet and cell off, the stream swept my helmet away. Alison attempted squeeze without success and backed out just as dam broke and sumped the passage. Went for tea in the landowner's house. 22 Oct: Recovered helmet, re-excavated squeeze and went on to the end of the cave. The stream was still very high and the bang part was under water. Air very fresh and the high level rift further back may be a better bet.

6,13,20 Nov Dallimores Rich Websell, Chris and Annie, Pete Watts, Pete and Alison. Recommended digging east passage last tackled in '75 by us. There's a draught and it looks promising. 27 Nov: Anne, Pete and Alison. Amazed to meet a party of eight down cave. The dig went. The rift is some 15-20ft high but pinches out and stals up apart from a tube which led into the continuation of the rift. We banged along this to a pot which Alison was able to get down feet first. The way on was then another body-sized tube leading upwards. There was no turning space, so Alison went on feet first. After about ten feet, everything narrowed down. Decided to abandon dig - some very difficult banging would be required and although there is a good draught it all seems very minor. Before coming out had a look at another site which looks

a real goer - a tight squeeze beyond which is what sounds like a big rift. Banged this, and the next week, went into virgin passage. Various leads went to chokes. It looks as if there is another vertical rift at one end. P.M.

23 Nov, 11,14 Dec Swildon's Lowbow. Pete Hann, John Scott, Chris Barlow. Removed some of the roof collapse until two large slabs of stal encountered. Pete Moody banged them, making them into dust, which was removed. A curved roof in rock can be seen and is beginning to look good again. P.H.

Christmas Day Pete Hann, Pete and Alison. Banged the passage in St. Paul's Oxbow which should lead into the extension the Shepton found beyond the Mud Sump. P.M.

1 Jan 1984 Pierre's Pot, Burrington. Alison got my hair muddy - Fred.  
Chris attempted suicide by slashing his wrist on broken glass. Phil and Lynne found the cave interesting, particularly the exit Pete Moody envisaged on the first through trip (both ways) with Pseudo-nash's Hole, while Alison dug out a loose choke in a phreatic tube to allow Pete Ham to stand up in a horrendous boulder ruckle. A good time was had by all except the bats, who probably got pissed off with all the coming and going.

Alison laid on a spectacular meal in the evening, lots of food and fun, ending in a late night port-drinking session. Phil. H.

4 Jan Swildon's Lowbow. Pete Hann, John Scott, Clive Barlow. Just as I was entering the squeeze there was a loud bang and the rock vibrated; this was owing to Alan Thomas firing a charge at Scotty's dig below the old forty. The small chamber at the end of the squeeze was entered feet first and was just big enough to sit up in. A record five tubs of spoil was removed and the way on can be seen, a choked passage with 3" air gap over the top blowing out a very cold draught. P.H.

8 Jan Phil and Lynn Hendy represented the WCC at Twin T's. Three ginormous boulders winched out to cries of, "Stop!" "Go!", "Stop!", "Slow!". . "Slower!" amid twanging winch rope. Repaired to Hunters to calm nerves. P.H.

## CROSSWORD COMPETITION – RESULTS

Only one entry was received - I shall have to be less devious next time! The all- correct solution was sent by Tony Jarrat, who won a £2 book token.

There was a mistake in the clues; 27 across is a two-word answer.

