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OPINIONS expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Wessex Cave Club as a whole, unless stated otherwise.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB HEADQUARTERS:

UPPER PITTS. EASTWATER LANE, PRIDDY, nr. WELLS, SOMERSET BA5 3AX

EDITORIAL

OF BATS AND MEN

Recent events on and around Mendip have raised some rather disturbing questions. These are the closure of a Bath Stone mine, the Brown's Folly Mine affair, and the problems at Gough's Cave caused by goats. To take each in turn:

I have no solid information on the mine closure, but I have been informed that a re-opened mine near Bath was forced to close on "environmental" grounds the suspicion being that "conservationists" were behind this action. If this is so, then that is irony indeed, since the mine, a small-scale business hurting no-one, was engaged in producing stone for repairing the beautiful old buildings in this area.

Whoever smashed the lock on Brown's Folly entrance did no-one any good. That lock had been jammed for some time, and should have replaced, and this does lend credence to the automatic assumption aired in virulent Press reports that the culprits were frustrated cavers (I am not aware at time of writing of any proof one way or the other). Now, that was a criminal act: if the owners prosecute the vandals, then perhaps the CSCC should publicly support the Trust. Certainly the Wessex Cave Club condemns the break-in: and that's official.

The goats were using Long Hole as a shelter, to the apparent disgust of Gough's Cave's bats, so the management have had to fence Long Hole and also introduce a rather involved application form for intending visiting cavers. What are the goats doing there? Someone introduced them to browse the Gorge vegetation into an approved form.

These and similar incidents lead to the inescapable conclusion that conservation, starting as a perfectly-laudable principle still guiding many worthwhile projects by undoubtedly-sincere people, is losing itself in a mass of political point-scoring. Nature conservation is an emotionally-charged subject, a powerful political weapon, backed by publicity-conscious propaganda (lots of pictures of whale-killing, or else pretty flowers and cuddly furry things among the Bath-stone and thatch). Protecting wildlife, and come to that, geographical features, is an excellent premise, so where has it gone wrong?

In my view, conservation as a whole - don't forget we are amateur conservationists ourselves - has made two big mistakes. Firstly, it has allowed itself, like so many other activities and principles, to become too political in the widest sense (not Party political). Secondly, it has allowed itself to be ruled by factions whose own specialist interests blind them to other aspects of Nature study. These people sometimes become so tied by their own discipline (usually wildlife) that they regard other, overlapping, interests as highly undesirable.

We should be working with naturalist's groups, not quarrelling with them, or trying to stop them riding roughshod over us (or our hosts, the farmers). Who has been championing the cause of our little winged mascots: how much of what the conservationists know of bats has been the fruits of years of research by caving naturalists? Yet at the first whisper of a wing-beat, up go the shutters. Do normal caving activities really affect bats? Or are us cavers simply an easy target? Furthermore, what is a cave if it is not itself a piece of Nature? By the way, does grilling a hitherto-open entrance disturb resident bats by suddenly introducing an obstacle to their familiar flight-path? That might be a point needing study.

No, Nature conservation is not filling secluded woodlands with twee paths and number-posts: it is an attitude based on a broad understanding and appreciation of what constitutes the natural world.

Cont. on p56

THE
WESSEX CAVE CLUB
HEADQUARTERS BIRTHDAY APPEAL

Nearly twenty years ago, our members raised the money to build Upper Pitts. They also gave freely of their time, energy and enthusiasm.

For the last few years, our present members have shown a similar generous commitment too to the improvement and expansion of caving facilities. The work progresses well, but slowly, through a lack of money.

It is felt by the members of the 1986/87 Committee that the H.Q. could-and-should-be completed for its Twenty-First Birthday in 1990. This would represent a "Keeping of Faith" with past generations of cavers, and a clear investment and encouragement for the next. To this end, we appeal to members to make this project a reality:-

Firstly, in the form of outright gifts of money.

Secondly, in the form of interest-free, short-term,
covenanted loans, in multiples of £25
repayable on Oct.1st 1991

We seek at least £2000 to complete the work
as soon as possible.

The Hon. Treasurer has worked out a budget for the next three years to enable us to make regular, fixed repayments of money lent, into a special account supervised by the Chairman, Hon. Treasurer of the day and one of the Trustees. They will supervise the Repayment Account, and of course the redemption of the loans.

It is our belief that we can come to this Year's A.G.M. with the bulk of the work well on the way to completion, but to do this we need your support. The present Committee have such faith in this project that they have already pledged over £700 to the Covenanted Loan Fund. Please help.

Details of how and where overleaf.

cont from p54.

I am not asking that we all ought to take a cosmological view of Nature: apart from anything else, as I know personally, many would probably find the concepts too shattering for comfort! All it needs, if you like, is for the naturalists to realise that soaring avens and the delicatest of helictites are as important to us as the most exotic wildlife is to them. And of course, vice-versa...

1986 was Bat Year. The trendy put "Bats Need Friends" stickers in their car windows. Yet bats have had friends for years:-

Cavers.

NAVEL CONTEMPLATING

Do you think that the National Caving Association really represents you (assuming you want it to, of course!)? Tav and I attended the NCA AGM, coming away deciding it does not!

I spoke out strongly against the principle of becoming too involved with the Sports Council, NOT because the present officers of both organisations worry me particularly (you can take 'em or leave 'em), but because no-one seems willing to ask what such foundations for FUTURE interference in our pursuit may we be unwittingly establishing. This is a point several delegates agreed, though one who did not was Frank Baguley (Cambrian), who has Welsh Sports Council committee experience so merely brushed my comments aside both at the AGM and in the CCC N/L. I put forward an example: the SSSI fiasco. I KNOW the SC were not involved (I have been accused of implying otherwise), but there, warnings from some of those most closely involved, uttered several years ago, were ignored. And look what happened.

THAT problem rumbles on. The NCA Chairman, Mick Day, innocently referred to "behind-the-scenes" discussions between Tony Waltham et al (not NCA officers) and the NCC, on Mendip scheduling, apparently still continuing. Mick Day was flayed by the CSCC delegation over this, yet he still would not (could not?) explain a) the nature and content of these talks, and b) why CSCC had not even be told of, let alone consulted over, them.

A propos the Re-Organising of Britain's caving structure: The Working Party set up to consider the various options available, needed a Chairman. The CSCC proposed one of its observers: Nigel Graham.

I was flattered to be considered by them as able to take on the task, but declined due to pressure of other commitments (like the one you're now reading!). However, I would like to thank the delegation (Dave Irwin, with Tim Large, Graham Wilton-Jones, etc.) for the compliment.

GOTTALOTTAWAFFLE

The same weekend as the NCA AGM, I received a questionnaire from the Sports Council office at Taunton, on behalf of the club, inviting us to take part in a joint project to form a network of information on regional sports clubs, etc, and to help - and this is all it amounts to despite the gimmicky presentation - to help the SC and the Milk Marketing Board (sponsoring to the tune of £1½ million) plug themselves by TV advertising! The actual questionnaire was quite innocuous, simply asking basic details of the club, but I found the whole approach demeaning and rather cynical. I took it the Committee: so indignant were they that I had difficulty putting over my feelings that though etiquette demanded we reply, I agreed with the rest that we take no part whatsoever in this exercise, not wishing to become involved that closely with the SC. In the event, we neither returned the form nor wrote back to the SC. The scheme would nothing the Wessex and many other clubs and societies do not do anyway: put the relevant details on club files in reference libraries, etc.

AND HAVING CONTEMPLATED?

After the NCA AGM, Tav and I toured GB Cavern: well we had to recover somehow!

Happy Caving!

THE
WESSEX CAVE CLUB
HEADQUARTERS BIRTHDAY APPEAL

If you are able to make a donation or a loan, or have any specific enquiries, please contact the APPEAL SECRETARY, Michael Dewdney-York, on 0272-46835, between 8a.m. and 8p.m., or by letter to:

Michael Dewdney-York,
59 Kennington Avenue,
Bishopston,
Bristol,
BS7 9ED.

Thanks are due to the following for their generous help:

R. & P. Halliwell, F.G. Balcombe, Mac. Brown, Sir John Wedgwood, Rev. C. Cullingford, J. Parks, M. Dewdney-York, P. Hendy, J. Moon, J. & M.Rands, M. Thompson, D. & D. Walker, N. Graham, P. Hann, D. Frew, R. Taviner, P. Watts, D. Morrison, R. Lawder, D. Boomer, R. Acton, N. Dunmuir, L. Crockart., R. Kenney.

JILL TUCK

Some of the older members will be saddened to hear of the untimely death of Jill Tuck (formerly Rollason). Jill passed away on January 9th. 1987 at Llanfrecha in South Wales, where she had lived since moving from the Mendip area. Jill will be remembered for her early involvement in the exploration of Stoke Lane Slocker as well as being very active at many cave dig sites. Her interests turned more towards archaeology when, after marrying Norman, she moved to South Wales, where she was responsible for excavating a Roman mine at Draethen. Many will remember that she played a considerable part in the construction of the stone building currently used as the MRO equipment store. The gargoyle at the end of the building was also her work.

Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to her husband Norman.

CLUB NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

The Wessex Cave Club Welcomes:-

Andrew Gell. Fieldview, Westhill, Wraxhall, Somerset.

Gordon Kaye. 9 Main Street, Wilsden, nr. Bradford, Yorkshire.

Peter Thomas Rees. 27 Cottrell Road, Eastville, Bristol BS5 6TJ.

Paul David Lambert. 10A Chnchfields Drive, Ansford, Castle Cary, Somerset.
James Ian Sebastian Eaton. 5 Kay Road, London SW9.
Anthony James Nagle. 34A Cannon Hill, Southgate, London N14.
Nicholas Pollard. 32 Holsom Close, Stockwood, Bristol BS14 8LX.
Phillipa Jane Horlock. 4 Manor Way, Cheshunt, Herts., EN8 8UL.
Jeffrey Peter Horlock. Celtic Gate Motor Hotel, Wdig, Dyfed, Pembrokeshire.
Lynn Robinson. 15 The Drive, Cross Gates, Leeds LS15 8ER.
Vaughan Thomas. Rivendell, Newton, Heytsbury, Wiltshire.
M ark William Palmer. 114 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol.

UPPER PITTS PROGRESS.

The lightweight partitions originally envisaged for the new showers proved not to be viable, on grounds of durability as well as cost. Tiled block walls will be installed. The next major task is the rebuilding of the heating system, hence the Appeal. The administrative side of this has been organised by Mike York and Jim Moon, with very careful consideration by the Committee and on legal advice. Here it is opportune to mention that the design of the Appeal advertisement in this Journal is also Mike and Jim's work, with advice from a professional graphic artist whom they consulted.

At time of writing (mid-May), the work in hand includes the shower partitions and a wall in front of the bulk gas tank. Proper repairs to the drive will, unfortunately, have to wait a little longer, but some maintenance is carried out from time to time.

A start has been made on manufacturing more Club TACKLE. As with the building and maintenance work on the HQ itself, offers of help will be much appreciated here.

SECURITY. Members are advised not to leave possessions about the HQ from weekend to weekend (unless locked away): several people have "lost" items.

An APPRECIATION to follow that note: from a member who, on learning from a telephone call one evening to the Editor to locate expensive personal gear that the item in question had not only been seen left at Upper Pitts but had been safely locked away awaiting claiming —"It's nice to be a member of a club whose fellow-members think of such things".

CAVE ACCESS. The Committee point out that conditions of Access to controlled caves MUST be complied with. This follows the finding underground, and reporting to the next Committee Meeting, of a tag whose wording implies a deliberate and repeated flouting of CCC rules - it was too well-made to be a one-trip (e.g. rescue practice) item; and it bore the Club name!!

CHARTERHOUSE PERMITS: the Five-Year Permits have been replaced by ONE-Year Permits. Existing permits are still valid, but new ones must now be for the shorter period (still free to Members).

E.T.O. Messages - the M.R.O. have requested that more details be put on the board (e.g., car registration numbers).

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS. Would Proposers / Seconders please ask their applicants to put their full addresses, with Postcodes, on the form?

REGIONAL NOTES

MENDIP

SLUDGE PIT & NINE BARROWS remain closed (SSSI problem), as does LAMB LEER (where the

landowner wants to charge CSCC an excessively-high lease). As mentioned in the Editorial, problems have been caused at GOUGH'S CAVE by goats sheltering in LONG HOLE. The management have therefore fenced the entrance to the latter cave. They have also instituted a written access request form for cavers.

There's only one problem with digging barrel challenges: the caves play hard-to-get! However work continues. This Journal's Log section shows the Wessex activities, whilst elsewhere on Mendip TWIN Ts SWALLET (NHASA), UPPER FLOOD SWALLET (MCG), etc. proceed "steadily down the dip". Flooding at LONGWOOD VALLEY SINK by overflow from the main Longwood Hole sink should be alleviated by furling the latter. The SSSI affair left a sad legacy (which some cavers in other regions find difficult to comprehend), in that some digging teams are now very reluctant to report their work. One promised report for this Journal has been withheld for that reason - and the site in question nowhere near an SSSI.

SOUTH WALES

DAREN CILAU yielded 1400ft+, plus some 900ft of oxbow, named "Saturday Night At The Movies", continuing the divers' work in the upstream series.

The resurgence area for Mynydd Llangattwg is complicated, difficult to penetrate - and very promising. One site, Ogof CAPEL, ends at a choke thought to underlie the Heads of the Valleys road up Clydach Gorge, but recent radiolocation tests have shown the choke to be beyond the road. Work has started. With the 8 miles of Chelsea and Gloucester S.Ss. finds in Agen Allwedd early this year, the work going on in the Gorge, and of course the BEC's digging in Daren Cilau, Llangattock must be one - perhaps the - most exciting areas in the country for current exploration. Sadly though, there is a blot on the horizon. The "Mynydd Llangattock Management Committee" working-party, set up to revise access to the escarpment caves, has been beavering away behind the scenes, apparently as quietly as it can. One result could be that Daren Cilau will be gated. The cynic may well ask why Nature's 1800ft long gate already there is not sufficient...

The Wessex is keeping a watching brief on the Severn Barrage proposal. So too is Cambrian Caving Council, who report on the land purchases by quarry companies (likewise on Eastern Mendip). The Welsh Sports Council has been collecting the views of sports representatives (including CbCC) on the scheme.

NORTH

The collapse of the NOTTS POT shakehole, sealing the entrance, was reported in the last edition. It is still closed, though Northern Pennine Club ferrets have pushed an extremely tight alternative entrance from a bedding plane in the shakehole wall. The club is now attempting to re-open LOST POT.

The owners of WHITE SCAR CAVE have applied for planning permission to extend the show section into The Battlefield. This met with overall approval from the CNCC, NCC and National Park at a meeting to discuss the proposal, with the proviso that the spoil from the works (including a 50yd tunnel) must be removed from the cave, or least "hidden". The management had considered dumping it in the lakes, but are now studying the alternatives. The meeting thought the scheme would be beneficial in helping to protect the formations.

CASTERTON FELL. The long-standing access agreement broke down recently when the land agents started to apply commercial access charges. The Nature Conservancy Council have offered to mediate for the agents and the CNCC to form a new, CNCC-run, agreement. Meanwhile, cavers intending to visit the Casterton Fell caves are requested by CNCC to notify the agents, Davis & Bowring, of their intention, but do not pay them.

50 YEARS AGO

From Circulars No.22 (March) and No.23 (April), 1937.

New Members were Messrs. Hobday, Trower, Wise, Perry, Mr. & Mrs. McMillan, Misses Brown, Feaver, Newman.

T.G. Baker was appointed Gear Curator: "in future all gear must be washed... before it is returned to Baker who will dry it", (The last point was of course of particular importance then: natural-fibre rope.)

Dr. Crook took on the Secretary post on A.J. Gould moving away, to a new job

"THE LOG. The Club intends to produce a Log this year. Leaders of parties and others doing work of interest are urged to send their reports to the Editor, Arthur Pryor." (The present incumbent regards the urge as still here!)

Members were also urged to leave no litter underground, and to remove any they find, "This of course applies to such things as cigarette packets and beer cans as well as the more common food wrappings".

Jack Starke (Hon. Treasurer) was about to marry. Hywel Murrell was collecting for a Wedding Present from the Club.

"Wednesday May 12th. Lamb Leer. It is proposed to take down a portable wireless set in order to listen in to the Coronation Ceremony. Special illumination is being arranged and the party will celebrate the event in an appropriate manner".

Forthcoming trips included a weekend at Pont Nedd Fechan to visit "several newly-discovered caves of considerable importance"; and a long weekend in the Dales in order to visit Gaping Ghyll. Accommodation arranged for the latter was to be a furnished cottage in Wensleydale (25 miles away).

Cost of cottage use: 5/- each. The Welsh trip was much dearer: 10/-.

PORTLAND: A MISCELLANY

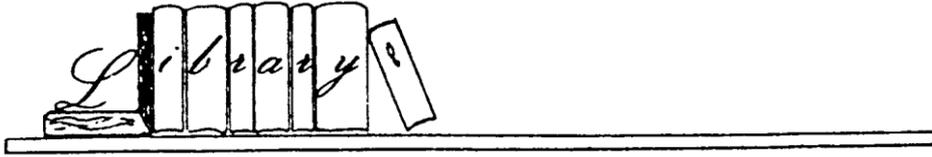
-Nigel Graham

I suppose every caving area has its quirks - no I don't mean the caver's - and Portland is certainly no exception. Lately, "my" little group of Wednesday Nighters have been coming across some curious caving tales, which I thought could well be collected together with an up-date on the present explorations.

Most of Portland's "Tophill" area has been either built on, or quarried away, so goodness only knows what speleological marvels have been lost for ever. In recent years, four recorded caves have gone: Crocodile Canyon (rift) by quarrying, Australia Rift, Horseshoe Hole and the White River Cave site by backfilling (Horseshoe by illicit tipping). White River Cave was being dug by Mike Dewdney-York & co.: returning one day to continue their efforts to pass a fallen slab, they were dismayed to find stone-works residue being pumped into the cave. Appeals to the masonry works failed, the cave - still with the team's tools within - was filled with white stone paste, then, last year, the site was finally levelled.

We can only guess at the extent of caves exposed and destroyed over the last few centuries of quarrying, but hints emerge. Two totally separate sources tell of a cave reputedly entered somewhere near Blacknor Hole; it was even credited with going to Limekiln Cave away on the SE sea cliff! One of these informants was one of the earliest cavers as such on Portland, some 40 years ago. He related the disbanding of a small local club on Official Orders: they had only dug through a brick wall sealing a cave off from some secret installation or other!

Cont.on p75



Club Library Additions & Book Reviews

--Pete Moody

Our esteemed editor, by reviewing recent club acquisitions, has shamed me into honouring my responsibility as librarian to write a regular item for the journal. I intend to list all new items received by the library, provide reviews (not necessarily by me) of books (should any money become available for purchases) and highlight anything that catch my eye in the exchange publications.

Additions to the library (to 31/4/87)

Caving Journals

Axbridge Caving Group Journal

Spring '87

B.E.C. Belfry Bulletin

No. 439 (April '87)

Includes a Mark Lumley article describing life in the recent nine day camp in Daren Cilau and a very entertaining piece by Chris Castle explaining how he came to be rescued from two show caves on the same day.

Cave Diving Group Newsletter

No. 83 (April '87)

An objective of the C.D.G. is to encourage the exchange of information. The newsletter, published quarterly, aims to log all British dives in which original observations were made, whether the diver was a member of the group or not. The spring edition has Rick Stanton's report of his breakthrough in P8, Derbyshire and, of interest to Wessex members caving in the Dordogne this summer, thirteen logs of a reconnaissance diving trip made to the region last August.

Cerberus Speleological Soc. Journal

Vol. 16 No. 6 ('86)

Vol. 17 Nos. 1, 2 ('87)

A very well printed bi-monthly production. Notable among the many good articles was one by Pete Glanville about show caves in the Ardeche region of France and another detailing the C.S.S.'s disastrous '86 expedition. (Their planned trip to Morocco had to be abandoned at the port of Algeciras in southern Spain when they discovered half the population of Morocco trying to make the same ferry crossing - their booking coinciding with the European workers' holiday and the Muslim New Year. Cutting their losses they retreated to Portugal and the article gives us a flavour of some of the rather limited caving to be done in that country.

Chelsea Speleological Soc. Newsletter

Vol. 29 Nos. 4-7 ('86/'87)

Run off monthly the Chelsea Newsletter is sent out to exchange clubs three or four times a year. This batch, as usual, has the latest on the Daren/Aggi front. The large number of cavers attracted to Llangattock can, understandably, strain the society's hospitality to casual visitors to their cottage on the escarpment. Shocking to read were several angry letters of complaint about boorish behaviour by some Wessex there at New Year. (See p62 -Editor)

Grampian Speleological Group Bulletin

Vol. 5 No. 2 (March '87)

Contains a detailed description of a self priming syphon used to open the static sump in Allt Nan Uamh. Employing the venturi principle powered by a nearby stream the technique might work with some of the digs in Swildon's.

Shepton Mallet Caving Club Journal

Series 8 No. 1 (Autumn '86)

No run of the mill articles here. Sixteen pages from Martin Mills on Caves in Music (no cavers' songs included). I particularly like the reference to the composition which won the music category of the Italia Prize for Yugoslav Radio in 1977: 'It was written for stalagmites, stalactites and voices and appeared wordless, with a choir dispersed throughout the cave, stals struck, scraped, etc.' A pre-World War 1 manuscript found slipped within the covers of a book at Hay-on-Wye describing a trip to Mammoth Cave, Kentucky is contributed by Ray Mansfield. Also, from Mark Faulkner, an article about caving in the Grands Causses, France. With maps, descriptions and references it is a most useful introduction for cavers who want an alternative to the overcrowded Vercors.

HERMIT'S CAVE

The cave entrance is in a disused quarry, now overgrown with trees. Access: walk up the North side of the quarry, opposite a farm track where cars may be left, to the top of the rubble slope. Turn left, and the entrance is at the base of a small rock face in the bottom of the hollow. To the left of the entrance is a collapsed rock face, and a rift which is the daylight connection to Hermit's Cave.

Hermit's Cave is a rift cave with a low entrance leading to a small chamber. The walls and roof are of fractured and loose rock. A climb over a clay slope leads into another small chamber with a solid wall on the right and loose rock on the left. A second clay slope leads to the final chamber which ends in loose rock. There is a light connection to a nearby rift. A bedding plane can be seen leading into the hill, but it is only about 10cms high. The last chamber is in a continual state of collapse, and offers little chance of extension.

Although the cave is small, its unstable nature means a visit to it should not be undertaken lightly.

A dig at the end of the cave, which had extended it by 16 metres, has collapsed and has now been abandoned. Some waterworn features were seen in the dig, and there was a draught.

(The tracing from which the survey, opposite, was printed, will be put into the Club Library.)

FOOTNOTE

Since receiving the above paper, the Editor and Andy Ward held an interesting telephone discussion on the area. It would appear that Hermit's Cave is something of a hybrid: relict waterworn passage invaded by a mass-movement, or gull-, cave. These are common on Portland, but seem to be rare elsewhere, let alone on the Cotswold Hills, not hitherto regarded as cavernous (solution caves). Perhaps the area has more potential than had been thought.

Gull caves are fairly common on the Cotswolds. I visited a small group of short, crumbly rifts in a quarry near Dursley, several years ago, and now Andy reports the main one has been crudely gated by persons unknown. He turned up there with Tim Stratford to survey it and found they were locked out! Why, and by whom, is uncertain since the caves themselves are not particularly inspiring. More recently, though, came a hint in an anti-caver press report concerning Brown's Folly: the Avon Wildlife Trust spokesman is a Dursley resident. Could the same group be responsible? Does anyone know?

-N.G.

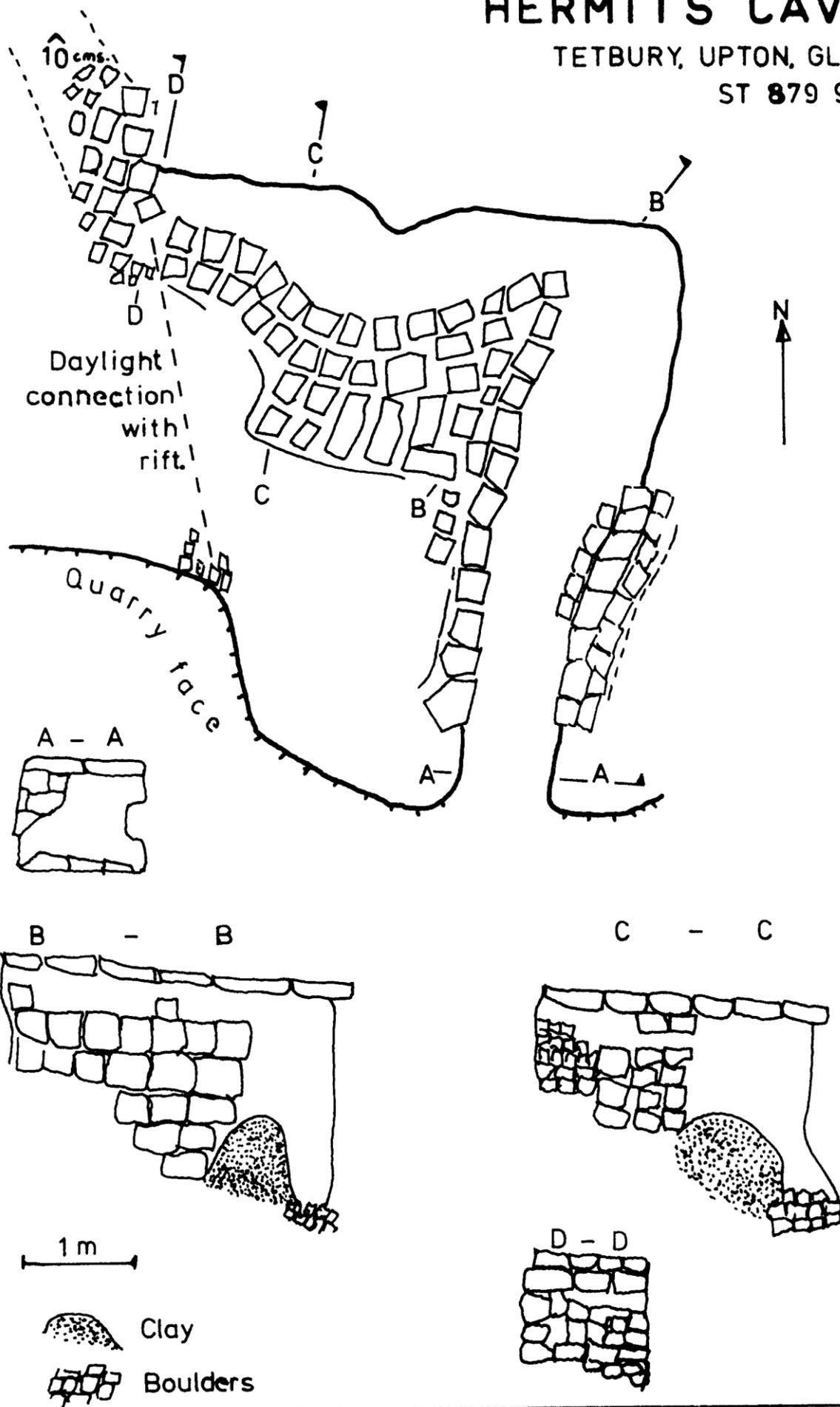
CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY COMPLAINTS (mentioned in Pete Moody's Review of CSS N/L). There were two complaints, both aired in their N/L. The first, in a very colourful letter, concerned a "request" to a WCC member who had lit a cigarette: the complainant claimed his was a polite request. It was anything but (or it would have been complied with in a civilised way), thus causing some antagonism. The second more serious matter was the Wessex presence itself on what we later learned was a CSS members-only holiday: we stayed one night on the strength of an unconfirmed verbal request for accommodation - a misunderstanding.

-N.G.

HERMIT'S CAVE

TETBURY, UPTON, GLOS.

ST 879 945



SURVEYED: T. Stratford, A. M. Ward.	DRAWN: A. M. Ward.	4/1/1987
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CHINA RECONNAISSANCE



-Paul Weston

In December 1986, two Wessex members, Bob Lewis and myself, and two Severn Valley CC members, Doug MacFarlane and Mike Adams, went to South-West China to reconnoitre an area not hitherto visited by Western speleologists. On the way we visited the Geological Institute in Guilin to discuss our ideas with Professor Yuan Doaxian and Mr. Hu Mengyu - they were most helpful and took us caving!

We arrived in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou Province, a large mountainous area containing much limestone, on December 9th, having entered the People's Republic five days previously. There we put our plan to go to the South-West (to the Anlung area) to Mr. Li Xingnomg, a Government hydrologist and Mr. Yan Long, the Secretary-General of the Geography Society at the Normal University. Much to our relief, after a day or so of consideration, this was accepted. On December 13th we set off, clutching a Police permit, on a twelve-hour bus ride to Anlung with Mr. Li and Tan Ming, a geomorphologist from the University. Our reasons for going to this remote area were that no foreigners had explored it before, and there seemed, even from the abysmal maps in Britain, to be much scope for cave development, despite a modest altitude of 3000 - 4000 feet.

Anlung

On our first day, on foot and by tractor, we investigated two resurgences, a boulder-filled sink, a small Mendip-type crawl, and a large arch, in an area of Triassic limestone to the South of Anlung. We also enjoyed the warm sub-tropical climate, the peace and quiet of rural China, and the beauty of Cone Karst as far as the eye could see! However, there wasn't much cave passage to explore. On our second day, still in an area of Triassic limestone, our ambition began to be realised. We were travelling to the village of Dushan, to the North of Anlung, in a Government mini-bus, when we saw a river disappearing underground near to the road. This, we discovered, is the Li Su River Sink. A large, arch-like entrance with a deep pool inside was all that we could see. It was noted for further investigation.

Shortly after, we arrived at Dushan, where the head man of the County told us there were many caves in the area. He would take us to one "very big one", however this would involve a walk of several hours with our rucksacs, over the mountains. Our hopes were fulfilled, for at the village of Anhe, situated in a wide, deep doline, were huge cave entrances at all levels.

Rhinoceros Cave

The cave we investigated, Rhinoceros Cave, was a high-level, apparently-abandoned system. A forceful draught made itself felt at the top of a high steep bank of crumbly old stal., and a deep shaft of "9 seconds" was peered into. At the top of this, Tan Ming pointed out evidence of ancient earthquake damage.

In another part of the cave a large trench, about 50 feet wide and 50 feet deep, disappeared into the gloom beneath us. Banks of dry, old gour pools almost big enough to lie down in, were common. A farmer's house fitted neatly into one corner of the entrance arch. At one point we estimated passage size of 200 feet wide by 95 feet high.

At the end of the day, four happy Bristol cavers made their way back in the dark to Dushan for supper as guests of the village and of the Secretary of the County's Communist Party.

Anhe Doline

Plans were made for a return visit, and two days later we were billeted in a farmer's house and let loose in the doline. This has a diameter of approximately 2 kilometres and a depth of 400 metres. Down in the bottom at one end is a summer flood resurgence. This drains to a large entrance arch at the other end, leading to a big passage and a streamway. Nearby, also in the bottom of the doline, is an intriguing sink / resurgence which seems to have three rivers in it. According to local farmers, they have traced three rivers to this site, but exactly what they used was uncertain.

In the doline, which is divided in two by a ridge, were in excess of thirty caves. We were able to investigate about a dozen in all – many of them high, abandoned systems containing large, old stal. columns and gours. Local farmers acted as guides for most of our trips. Only one shaft could be descended, at SNAIL CAVE, to a depth of 55 feet, as we could only take 100ft of rope to China due to weight and space limitations. There must be many bats in the area as the farmers use their droppings to make gunpowder!

On the return to Anlung, the LI SU RIVER SINK was entered by Bob, in the "Expedition Wet-suit", to reveal a Swildon's-type streamway. After this, whilst waiting for out transport, a brief investigation was made of a dry sink and a large, horizontal cave passage nearby.

Some interesting facts emerged from a study of Chinese 1 : 50000 scale maps of the area which makes it a distinct possibility that three rivers drain to Anhe.

Invitation

On our return to Anlung, the head of the County Government gave us a written invitation to return in 1987/88 with a larger group. We also had our photographs taken with officials to record our visit.

To conclude, our reconnaissance was entirely successful. Our Chinese colleagues were the most generous and helpful of hosts, and our plans made during the previous twelve months entirely justified. Our new goal is to mount a full expedition to that area: Tan Ming and Mr. Li have already indicated that they will join us in this venture.

Incidentally, if water tracing is your particular interest in the world of caves, you might like to know that one of Mr. Li's efforts involved dumping from lorries, four TONS of salt into one sink!

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

Reports & Accounts 1986

REPORT BY THE HON. SECRETARY & TREASURER FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31st DECEMBER 1986

The year will be mainly remembered for the tragic death of Dave Anderson of the CRO who died whilst taking part in a cave rescue at Rowten Pot, Yorkshire on the morning of Sunday March 23rd, 1986. Dave was the first cave rescuer to be killed in action in this country. He was known to many of us on Mendip, and his loss cast a shadow over the Jubilee Celebrations. It was a bittersweet year for caving on Mendip itself as it began with the death of Attila Kurucz down Longwood Swallet yet ended with happy memories of the fun and festivities of our Fiftieth Birthday Party weekend at Priddy, held in September. It was good to have something to celebrate at the time since caving there was at a low ebb for almost eight months owing to the closure of the major cave systems in the village. The long dispute between local landowners and the Nature Conservancy Council was on the way to being resolved by December, and we were soon back in business.

Callouts were, unusually, bunched at the beginning and end of the year, with a Summer lull. The accompanying incident log gives the details. As traditional on Mendip, it includes the names of all taking part in rescues. There are two good reasons for this. First and most importantly, MRO is not a separate rescue service but part of the local caving community, and relies on experienced cavers from the clubs. Secondly, all who go underground to help must be recorded for insurance purposes. It's the best way of thanking and recording the work of the many who willingly support fellow cavers in trouble.

We retain close links with other rescue teams through the British Cave Rescue Council and the South-West England Rescue Association. I am very grateful to the wardens who regularly attend the distant meetings of both bodies so that our voice is heard beyond Mendip. Our divers also went to a national symposium on the problems of rescuing cave divers, arranged by John Cordingley in Derbyshire. It was a useful weekend, and we look forward to the publication of the proceedings, particularly as MRO was first in this field with the pioneer Normalair Sump Rescue Apparatus in the late '50s. At that time, we were concerned about some of the problems of foul air, as well as the possibility of distant rescues beyond the far sumps in Swildons. Now there are much longer and deeper sumps to contend with of course. The logistics alone of a rescue from the far reaches of Wookey Hole Caves would be formidable. And now there is the underground river at Cheddar to reckon with. A major exercise through the sumps in Swildons was organised by the Wessex Cave Club on 27th April, whilst Bob Drake and Jeff Price arranged a very successful training session for the CDG with the Kirby Morgan sump rescue apparatus in Wookey Hole over the Jubilee weekend in September. Bob's encouraging report of this practice is appended for the record.

Over the years, we have concentrated on getting our equipment right and ensuring that callouts are responded to quickly. Active cavers with professional skills applicable to the many facets of rescues make everything work effectively. We prefer this approach rather than one which sets up special rescue teams, for the next step in this direction is a service divorced from those who go caving. The threats in South Wales created by bids from Fire Brigades there to be called out for cave rescues are ominous even if ludicrously absurd in practical terms. We will support those resisting such changes because, unlike fire services, we have only the best interests of those going caving to consider. Both the Police and the Fire Brigade in Avon and Somerset recognise that cavers are the best people to rescue those in trouble underground. We have co-operated successfully over the years on Mendip and are particularly grateful to the Chief Constable, Mr. Ronald Broome, and the Chief Fire Officer of Somerset, Mr. Nigel Musselwhite, for their support in such matters. They regard continuity, consistence and commitment as crucial, and cave rescuers must safeguard these standards to remain indispensable.

A good example of co-operation with the Police has been the development of the Search and Rescue Radios now in use: we have provided and serviced the sets and they have covered the necessary licence fees. We must also thank Bob Whitaker and the Wessex Water Authority for great help in up-dating our radios this year, and to Eric Dunford for developing the system. Brian Prewer has improved our ability to communicate with rescuers underground by making "through the rock" cave-to-surface radio telephones from plans kindly provided by Bob Williams. Rescuers in Yorkshire have been using "Molephones"(reg.T.M.) for some while; in South Wales they have the "Ogofone"; and now MRO has the "Grunterphone"!

A big attraction of the Jubilee Celebrations was the opportunity for cavers to abseil off the High Rock in Cheddar Gorge. Sandra Lee and Chris Bradshaw of Cheddar Caves kindly made the arrangements, and over a hundred descents were logged throughout the day. Tim Large and Tony Jarrett provided the rope with welcome financial support from the Bristol Exploration Club. The Birthday Party at Priddy Village Hall was masterminded by Glyn Bolt and his helpers from the Wessex Cave Club. Alison Moody and her team of assistants provided a feast to remember. The whole occasion was well supported and enjoyed; every club took part and letter of thanks were sent to over fifty people who helped to make the weekend a success. The accounts that follow tell their own story.

But the passage of time has another side, of course, and I must record the resignations of three long-serving wardens: Philip Davies, Brian Woodward and Mike Palmer. Phil was a warden for over thirty years and was especially active as a cave diver during the '50s and early '60s. Brian succeeded him as one of the leading cavers and divers of the '70s on Mendip. We valued their involvement, and I personally have enjoyed their company on mountains and in caves around this country and abroad over the years. Their influence and friendship remain as strong as ever and they are still willing to help if needed. Recollections of Mike Palmer go back to school days almost shared together in Wells.

I will close with two examples of the support that MRO receives from Mendip cavers. Over Christmas, Richard Stevenson and Rob Palmer gave illustrated talks about the "Cheddar River" and the "Blue Holes" in aid of MRO funds, and the evening was much enjoyed, particularly by Bill Bufton and family for Bill was one of the original hard-hat cave divers back in 1935. The years since then have been enlivened by characters such as Alfie Collins and his songs. He has retired but continues to turn up and give us the benefit of his lyrical talents. Such examples show how things can be done without the need for grants. Cave rescue is up to us.

SUMP RESCUE DEMONSTRATION AT WOOKEY HOLE CAVES, 27th SEPTEMBER 1986

by Bob Drake

The Kirby Morgan Bandmask 10 apparatus was demonstrated at the resurgence pool outside the caves. About forty people attended throughout the day. Many of the divers who came, from other caving regions, which gave them a good opportunity to try out our sump rescue equipment and techniques. Several non-divers tried the mask on land and were shown how it works. A few divers experimented with the apparatus in the resurgence pool, testing it for buoyancy and air consumption.

We then did a rescue dive through the resurgence sump as Owen Clarke from South Wales volunteered to be the victim. The mask was fitted and the air supply belted around his waist. He was lowered into the water face upwards. I then took hold of him around the chest and under his arm so that he could grip my hand for communication and leave my other free to hold the diving line and guide him. Richard Bartrop, from Derbyshire, took his feet and had enough freedom of movement to enable any snags we encountered in the sump to be freed with comparative ease. This worked very well, and it only took us about four minutes to tow him through to the mud bank in the First Chamber. About 10 cubic feet of air was used. The support divers were swapped around and the procedure repeated on the return trip to the entrance.

All taking part were impressed with how well the system worked, including Owen who quite enjoyed the ride! We also proved that the Kirby Morgan apparatus can be used quickly and simply without the need for a full stretcher. In deeper sumps, there would still be a need for a buoyancy aid, but the technique would be just as effective.

-R.D.

Jim Hanwell, Honorary Secretary & Treasurer,
Wookey,
February 1987.

CAVE RESCUES & INCIDENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 1986

Despite the closure of the major Priddy caves for most of the year, there were nine call-outs. These are listed below, the figures in brackets to the right indicate the numbers of cavers going underground to give assistance. Many more will be involved of course, either controlling at the surface or standing-by in case needed.

Wed	1st	Jan	Thrupe Lane Swallet	4	Floods, alert	(--)
Sat	11th	Jan	Longwood Swallet	1	Boulder fall, fatality	(26)
Sat	18th	Jan	Swildon's Hole	1	Exhaustion	(5)
Sun	4th	Apr	Swildon's Hole	1	Epileptic fit	(7)
Sun	27th	Apr	Goatchurch Cavern	1	Fall, dislocated shoulder	(4)
Wed	3rd	Sep	Thrupe Lane Swallet	1	Presumed overdue	(--)
Wed	22nd	Oct	GB Cavern	1	Fall, bruised back	(9)
Sat	6th	Dec	Eastwater Cavern	1	Lost, reported trapped	(8)
Mon	15th	Dec	Rod's Pot	?	Presumed overdue	(--)

Additionally, we also passed on calls for the Cheddar Gorge Cliff Rescue Team on Sunday 13th April and Sunday 23rd November. Cavers assisted at the former. Dr. Peter Glanvill attended the Buckingham's Rift incident in Baker's Pit, Devon, on Saturday 15th November, when a caver was stuck. His report should be helpful to the DCRO.

Wednesday 1st January Thrupe Lane Swallet

Will Edwards contacted Brian Prewer direct from Butts Farm because he was concerned for the safety of an overdue party that had entered the cave at mid-day and should have been out at 4pm. It was 5.15pm and very heavy rain had caused the main swallet to pond up. Some of the steeper banks had collapsed. Parties were alerted at Priddy and the Police informed of the situation.

A party from the Wessex Cave Club led by Jeff Price arrived at Thrupe Lane within twenty minutes. At 5.45 pm the overdue party surfaced safely. They had not experienced any difficulties. Even Cowsh Crawl had not sumped or silted.

Brian Prewer was contacted by Yeovil Police at 2pm. They had been informed by Kathy Bonnick, who had been with an Imperial College Caving Club party down Longwood Swallet, that her group had chanced across an incident underground within minutes of its occurrence. A 16-year old on a trip organised by Greater London South Caving Committee, had fallen when a boulder collapsed in the rift leaving the bottom of the Main Chamber. He had been pinned by the chest, and although extricated and resuscitated, had not regained consciousness. The worst was feared. Brian was unable to talk to the informant direct because she had been calling from another residence in the Charterhouse area rather than from Mr. Trim's at Longwood Grange. The people at this unknown place had not wanted to be bothered further!

John Dukes and Trevor Hughes were alerted at Priddy. Jim Hanwell was then called at 2.07pm and set off to organise everything there. All three arrived at Longwood at 2.30pm. It was appreciated that a lot of cavers would still be underground and that it would be difficult to contact rescuers at that time of day. Mr. & Mrs. Trim kindly allowed the control to be set up in Longwood Grange yard. They also provided hospitality throughout and did much to comfort those directly concerned in the original parties. P.C. Terry Coopey was also on the scene at this stage, Inspector Milton from Taunton arrived a little later as the senior Police Officer on site. Bristol Waterworks maintenance men were already at the pumping works. Although the stream was high, it presented no danger to those underground or to the rescue work; nevertheless, in view of the serious nature of the incident and the long time that the rescue was likely to take, Paul Hodge, BWW Sources Engineer, was advised. He came straightaway and remained for several hours, until all danger from higher stream flows had passed.

Greater London South Caving Committee had organised a weekend's caving activities on Mendip. Their County Advisor for caving, David Hatton, was with the group. They were staying at Wookey village Church Hall. All were well-equipped and suitably experienced for the trip planned. Cave keys and Charterhouse Caving Committee permits had been obtained in the approved way. Their plans were straightforward and sensible: Whilst one half of the party were led by Dave Hatton down Rhino Rift near by to train with SRT methods, the remaining four were taken down Longwood Swallet by Paul Wootton at about mid-day. The latter were Sebastian Prince, Clive Jarvis, David Weaver and Attila Kurucz. Attila was keen on caving: he had been down the cave once before and was well equipped, having just acquired his own wet-suit. The party had decided to descend Longwood series only; a passage not much over 1000 feet long and no more than 200 feet deep. The series does not carry the main stream but is extremely constricted in places, notably the tight Bedding Plane squeeze and awkward Shunting Yard nearer the entrance shaft.

Paul Wootton's party reached the Main Chamber at about 1pm, then set out to explore the Wet Way passages at the bottom of the Longwood series. Whilst climbing into this passage on his back and facing upwards, Atilla dislodged a large boulder and fell some 5 feet with it pinned to his chest. It took all the remaining four to lift the boulder off the trapped caver, a difficult task which took several minutes. They assessed the injuries and began AR and ECM immediately. No pulse or breathing could be detected, however. At about that time, Malcolm Barr, Chris Birkhead and Kathy Bonnick in a separate Imperial College party arrived from the more distant August Hole series. Whilst Malcolm Barr, a graduate, stayed to assist Sebastian Prince and Clive Jarvis with Atilla, the others joined forces to surface and raise the alarm. This was done within the hour, following all the correct procedures.

Dr. Donald Thomson arrived at 3.30pm and remained at the entrance throughout the rescue. Jim Hanwell, Richard West and John Dukes controlled and marshalled traffic at Longwood Grange - a task made more difficult by cars following the Mendip Hunt whilst they chased through part of the wood and nature reserve. Eric Dunford established radio contact by mast but experienced problems because of the deep valley until he took to the high ground. Trevor Hughes and Alan Taylor went down the cave with drag sheet and hauling gear. Trevor would assess and deal with Atilla whilst Alan would return with verbatim news. He would also persuade Sebastian Prince and Clive Jarvis, of the original party, to return with him. It was understood that Malcolm Barr was a First-Aider and was likely to stay to help. He did, splendidly. Further carrying parties were alerted and Brian Prewer arrived with Tony Church to lay a telephone line throughout the cave. Lucy Workman manned the surface link by radio to Jim Hanwell and Richard West.

At about 3.30pm Jim Smart entered the cave with the Mager carrying-sheet, followed by Brian Workman, Aubrey Newport, Peter Watts and Mike McDonald. They would start the hauling. Relief teams were stood by at the Belfry and Upper Pitts by telephone from Longwood Grange to avoid radio "leaks" as to what had happened. Until more details were known, it was considered that the presence of the media would be unhelpful. Their time would come in due course.

Good progress was made hauling Atilla up the Main Chamber Pitch and the rifts above. Another party comprising Tony Jarratt, Fred Felstead, Tim Barnard John Chew, Howard Price, Jeff Price, Graham Price, Lawrence Smith and Jerry Breakspear left at 4.50pm. A complete changeover took place after the Shower-bath Chamber below the short drops. The first party surfaced between 6.00 to 6.30pm.

Little difficulty was experienced in the hauling through the extremely tight passages at the head of the short drops. The Bedding Plane Squeeze, however, proved a severe problem as anticipated. Over two hours were spent in attempts to pass it. Another change-over of haulers took place at around 8.30pm. They were advised to cut away and remove excess covering and clothing if needs be. The party consisted of John Cooper, Richard Acton, Kevin Gannon, Peter Morgan, Martin Buckley and Andy Summerskill. As further hauling parties would be unable to pass each other in the constricted entrance passages, another relief team was called to take over when the squeeze had been passed. This party, comprising Tim Large, Phil Romford, Dave Gill and Des Marshall stood by at 9.15pm. Fred Davies arrived at this time. Threading Atilla through the Bedding Plane Squeeze and Shunting Yard took a full three hours and proved to be the crux of the haul out.

The hauling teams reached the bottom of the entrance shaft at 9.24pm and surfaced with Atilla at 9.55pm. Dr. Donald Thomson confirmed that Atilla Kurucz was dead and, after formal identification, the incident concluded at 10.05pm.

Throughout most of the rescue, representatives of television and radio were present, and were advised by Inspector John Milton and Jim Hanwell of what was happening. Reports were confined to essential facts of course, but this aspect of long rescues is difficult enough on site and out of control once on news editors' desks. We need time to get information together, whilst they are in a hurry to meet deadlines. Subsequent reports in the Press were factual and fair because of the trouble taken on the night. Detailed statements were taken from all directly concerned, especially from Trevor Hughes since he was the first rescuer to arrive and assess what had to be done. Richard West attended the Inquest at Taunton on Thursday 26th March and represented MRO. This was understandably both painstaking and painful to Atilla's parents who were present. The Post Mortem found that death had been the result of asphyxia caused by the boulder compressing the chest. No bones were broken. The conduct of the party was praised by the Coroner, and a verdict of Accidental Death recorded.

Saturday 18th January Swildon's Hole

Yeovil Police contacted Brian Prewer at about 8.10pm. A party of four had gone down the cave at 4.30pm and, on returning from Barne's Loop, Jane Orris-Bird, aged 23, was unable to climb the Twenty-Foot Pot. The group was led by Tim Osborne, a non-club caver from Yeovil, with Steve Franklin from Meare, Chris Burgess and Jane, from Bath. The Bath couple were inexperienced with Chris Burgess on his first caving trip and both had borrowed wet-suits. None had experience of wet caves or climbing, but claimed to be involved in sky-diving! Maybe this is why they chose to try out single-rope techniques with one Jumar, sit harness and foot loops but no chest harness, all to be shared between them. They had little knowledge of SRT and less about the cave.

A W.C.C. party comprising Duncan Frew, Pete Hann, Richard Warman and Geoff Newton went down the cave at 8.35p. with a ladder. They were followed by Brian Prewer with basic hauling gear fifteen minutes later. Jim Hanwell and Alison Moody liaised with P.C. Gerry Brice on The Green. Pete Moody, Dave Walker and Bob Lawder stood by at Upper Pitts, and it was known that a strong Wessex party was returning up the streamway about the right time. At 9.16pm Richard Warman surfaced to say that Jane Orris-Bird had

been helped up the pitch and was on the way out unaided. All were out of the cave and on The Green by 9.32pm.

Sunday 13th April Swildon's Hole

Brian Prewer received a call from Yeovil Police at mid-day. The informant, Mr. Plant, reported that Jonathan Turnbull had suffered an epileptic fit at the Double Pots. He was a member of a well-equipped party of five from Bristol, had been caving for about four years, and although on tablets for this particular condition, had not experienced a fit for several years. The attack had been particularly severe, causing him to fall face down into the lower pool of the Double Pots. He had been fished out by Dan Plummer straight away and found not to be breathing. Mouth-to mouth resuscitation had been given immediately and the patient started breathing shortly afterwards and began to regain consciousness.

Cavers at Upper Pitts and the Belfry were alerted and Tony Jarrett organised a rescue team comprising Tom Chapman, Pete McNab, Pete Hann, Richard Warman and Tim Gould. They entered the cave at 12.28pm and were followed by Pete Moody and A. Lovell ten minutes later. Dr. Andrew Nash was alerted in case medical treatment was needed underground and Dr. Donald Thomson was contacted for advice. He suggested that, after the fit was over, Jonathan Turnbull ought to be able to help himself out of the cave. This proved to be the case. With a little assistance, he was out of the cave by 1pm and then taken to Bristol Royal Infirmary for a check-up. We received a letter of appreciation later with news that he was none the worse as a result of the attack.

Sunday 27th April Goatchurch Cavern

Brenda Prewer was alerted by Weston-s-Mare Police at 11.30pm that a woman had slipped and dislocated her shoulder down the cave. The informant was requested to remain by the telephone at Burrington Coombe Cafe. A lot of wardens and cavers were already underground and engaged upon a major sump rescue practice down Swildon's Hole. Brenda contacted Jim Hanwell, who was unable to reach the informant for further details since he was standing outside the cafe and could not hear the telephone ringing!

Glyn Bolt was requested to go to Burrington with Julie Bolt, Graham Johnson, Mary Rands and Nigel Graham, all of whom were already kitted up for their stint on the sump rescue. Nigel Taylor was then contacted and asked to take control and liaise with the Police there. Jim Hanwell and Richard West followed to establish a radio link back to Tim Large at the Belfry.

Janet Carey, aged 26, from Bristol had gone down the cave with Richard, Raymon and Robert Hall. She had slipped and fallen at the Coffin Lid, dislocating her shoulder badly. Fortunately a strong party of four members of the Army Caving Association were also in the cave and able to assist. The shoulder was strapped securely with a belt and the ACA helped Janet Carey to make her own way out without too much discomfort. They did a good job. All were stood down at 12.30pm.

Wednesday 3rd September Thrupe Lane Swallet

An over-anxious mother of a caver from Cheddar called the Police because her son had not returned home from a trip to the cave by 5pm as expected. He turned up only ten minutes late!

Wednesday 22nd October G.B. Cavern

A call was received from the Police at 8.40pm that a caver had fallen from a climb somewhere in the Main Chamber and injured his back. Richard West was alerted and Tony Jarrett contacted at the Hunters' lodge

Inn. Tony called out Brian Prewer, Brian Workman, Mike Cooper, John Ham and Jeremy Henly who were already changed for digging at Twin Titties, Priddy. This team was driven to Charterhouse in Fred Davies' van with the Mauger stretcher and medical kit. Dr. Tony Boycott was advised of the incident by Jim Hanwell and agreed to leave for the cave straightaway. P.C. Coopey was met on the roadside by G.B. by the first rescuers at 9.50pm. Fred Davies took charge at the surface. There were severe thunderstorms and hail throughout the incident and it was necessary for a radio relay to be set up via Jim Hanwell on high ground at Warren Farm to Richard West at the Belfry.

It was learnt that five Bristol University students had gone down the cave early in the evening. They were not UBSS members. On climbing down the wall below the Forty Foot Waterfall, Neil Cox had fallen the last ten feet, landed on his back and lay injured in the pool at the bottom. The fall had smashed his battery case; a lucky break since it probably took much of the impact and saved him from more severe back injuries. He was removed from the pool to await treatment by the rescuers.

Brian Prewer, Brian Workman, Mike Cooper and Jeremy reached the patient soon after 10.00pm. An examination revealed that he was able to move all limbs even if somewhat painfully. With more confidence and assistance, he was able to stand. At the top of the Gorge, the party met Dr. Tony Boycott. His examination confirmed that the patient had only severe bruising of the back. Support parties with tackle stood by further up the cave, comprising Tony Jarrett, John Ham, Kevin Rodgers and Tim Large. All were out of the cave by 10.50pm. Neil Cox was driven to Bristol Royal Infirmary for a complete checkup.

Saturday 6th December Eastwater Cavern

Brian Prewer was called by Dany Bradshaw to report a message from the farm that a caver was stuck somewhere in the system, maybe near Hallelujah Hole. A party had entered the cave at 1.30pm, led by Anthony Wright from Southgate, London. They had been stopped by Mrs. Gibbons at the time as they appeared unaware of the access arrangements. It transpired that they did not know much about the cave either! For some reason, the leader became separated from the rest of his party and got hopelessly lost in the Lower Traverse near Primrose Squeeze. He did not know the route to the Canyon. The others surfaced to raise the alarm at about 5pm. Mrs. Gibbons informed the Police that MRO had already been mobilised.

Fred Davies, Tony Jarrett, Pete Moody, Pete Hann, Mike Haseldon and Chris Harvey formed a search party from Upper Pitts and entered the cave at 5.45pm. They located the "stuck" caver and started to escort him out via the old Boulder Chamber route. Meanwhile, Geoff Newton and Alison Moody had set off to search other parts of the system. The successful search party surfaced at 7.05 pm. The other team took rather longer and wondered where everyone had gone!

Monday 15th December Rod's Pot

Someone in Bristol found a note to the effect that a party from Waldorf School might have gone down the cave. It requested that MRO should be called if they had not returned by 7pm. The informant had allowed 25 minutes and done as requested. In fact, the party had not gone caving at all because of bad weather on Mendip!

Dave Anderson: a memorial trust fund has been established, to be used in the furtherance, particularly in the technical fields, of the many and varied interests in which Dave took a full and active part.

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1986

<u>1985</u> £	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
	Donations:-			
397)	General appeal		570	
)	Collection boxes		243	
55	Rescued parties		270	1,083

241	Hire of M.R.O. Nife Cells			141
-	Sale of equipment			40
-	BEC Berger Expedition			200
-	Surplus on Jubilee celebrations			467
26	Bank deposit interest			46
70	Social events			-
(9)	BCRB Conference			-

780				1,977

	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
	Equipment:-			
149	Radios	98		
99	General and hauling	208		
-	Wookey Hole operations	176		
87	Training	-		
9 *	KMB 10 supplies	-	482	

11	Medical supplies		-	
60	Insurance of equipment		60	
104	Postage, stationery and duplicating		52	
	Donations:-			
10	S.W.E.R.A.	10		
5	BCRC	10	20	

25	Meeting expenses		41	655
			-----	-----
559				

£221	Surplus for year			£1,322

(*KMB 10: Kirby Morgan Bandmask 10)

(Cont. overleaf)

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1986

<u>1985</u> £		£	£
	<u>Current Assets</u>		
	Balance at Bank:-		
300	Deposit account	1,600	
504	Current account	533	2,133

21	Cash with Hon. Treasurer & Equipment Warden		14

£825			£2,147

	Representing:-		
	<u>Accumulated Funds</u>		
604	Balance at January 1, 1986		825
221	Surplus for year		1,322

£825			£2,147

J. D. Hanwell,
Hon. Treasurer,
50, Wells Road,
Wookey Hole.

I have reviewed the above Balance Sheet and attached Income and Expenditure Account which have been prepared from the books and records of the Mendip Rescue Organisation. In my opinion, and to the best of my knowledge, these accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the Organisation's funds as at December 31, 1986 and of the surplus for the year ended on that date.



R. Chant, ACA, FTII,
Bali,
Milton Lane,
Wells,
Somerset.
BA5 2QS

February 1987

Cont. from p.60

The legends of caves crossing the island, or of being used by smugglers of old, we take with a pinch or six of salt. The local ideas on the island's hydrology really stretch the credibility though. Bear in mind that Portland is a series of limestone beds, very heavily fractured with great open joints everywhere (the rifts), lying on deep beds of clays and mudstones, the whole lot the remains of breached anticline whose entire crest has gone, along with most of its core, down almost to sea level. The area's groundwater has never been really studied as far as I know, but it is rather enigmatic. It supports a surprisingly-large number of springs (some, on top of the limestone, rarely fail), whilst its village names of Chiswell, Fortuneswell (both below the limestone), and Southwell are obvious. There was also a well at Easton: both latter towns are on Tophill. So where do they receive their water from? The locals know. The mainland. Yes: the water from the chalk flanks of the North side of the structure sinks below sea-level, flows through - or under - the clay below Portland Harbour and West Bay, then obligingly rises through the clays, the rifted limestones, and into the clayey "slatt" subsoil on top of the lot!

Turning from legend to reality - what of today? July 1986 saw the culmination of several years' work in Blacknor Hole, where the Weymouth & Portland Venture Scout Unit finally entered over 600ft of passage with some fine formations in places, heading South directly for the Northern extremity of Sandy Hole. This find was marked with some acrimony, the WPVSU implying Wessex pirating (of a short cross-rift.) in a news item to "Descent". In fact, that find resulted from a token scratch by the one caver who has been exploring the cave since it was found: me. (Accompanied on that tourist trip by Malcolm Foyle.). The "end" of Blacknor is now almost linked to Sandy to give a potential c.1500ft through-trip (shortest route) - nearly all on hands-and-knees. In fact, we all agreed not to breach the link, to protect the upper cave, except in the event of a rescue (few know its location anyway).

Over on the East side of Portland, at the Grove, the group I dig with (Phil Strong, Martin and Matthew Crocker and Anthony Ward, all independent) has been concentrating on a choked waterworn passage located at an unusually high level in the Portland limestone. North of, and heading South towards, Guano and Flagpole Rifts, we hit a narrow mass-movement rift which has wrecked the original passage, but which links all three caves. This gives a three-entrance system of perhaps 500ft total, which whilst not quite setting the speleological world ablaze with excitement still offers an evening's "fun" caving with some interesting little traverse problems as optional extras (in Flagpole). Our main objective remains tracing the stream cave, heading into an area protected from quarrying by the old Prison (now the Youth Custody Centre) and by housing estates: we are fairly certain this area is not backfilled quarry. One sour note: someone (probably children, but a nasty suspicion elsewhere remains: NOT the WPVSU, though) stole our railway truck and some tools. Result? Portland's first cave gate is going in. A sad day.

My hope is that this gate will be temporary, but it could be replaced with a solid wall, blocking the easy entrance and leaving access open for cavers via Guano Rift. We've an option open for this dig, which is being logged in the Wessex Logbook and Journal. It runs in from the cliff about fifty feet above Coffin Hole, an open waterworn passage choked rather definitely by cliff retreat demolishing the walls of yet another mass-movement rift into it. Hoping it mirrors the upper cave so far at least, digging down hopefully-perched chokes in the linking rift may enter Coffin Hole beyond its present limit.

Finally, back to the weird and wonderful. In a sub-limestone valley below the Verne at the North end of Portland is a housing estate, Tilley-coombe. Last Autumn, the residents complained of repeated tremors at all hours of day and night, until eventually the Council engaged consultants who pronounced them to emanate from quarry blasting about a mile away. In the early mornings? Locals suspect underground MOD work, all hush-hush!!

EASTWATER CAVERN SEARCH

My answer to the Editor's query on my Log entry for Eastwater (6th December) is as follows:

Zot (Chris Harvey) had come in the 'normal' way and was stationed on the 'normal' route, where the rescue party would have had to pass him in order to get out the way. Having swept the round-trip back to him we were left with the conclusion that they must have either:

- a) gone out through the Boulder Chamber,
- b) out via Kentish's Cairn (unlikely as it is tight and Zot would probably have heard them,
- or c) we had been mis-informed of the location of the rescue and that it was taking place in the Lower Series instead.

The detours mentioned were made to check out the last possibility (c) as there was no way we were going back into the cave for a second time if the rescue actually was in the Lower Series.

So the answer to the question is No - we left the cave knowing the rescue had been in the Upper Series, and that J-Rat had taken the rescued part party out the Boulder Chamber route which he had said only a week before was unsafe to use.

I am sorry if the Log entry did not make the sequence of events clear. Now that our Log entries sure being printed in the Journal and exposed to public comment it will be necessary to be more precise in future.

Incidentally, there are good possibilities for a board-game called "Eastwater Rescue" - a rival for Snakes-and-Ladders, "Cluedo" or "Monopoly"??

Yours Faithfully,

Geoff Newton.

The M.R.O. Report of this incident is elsewhere in this edition.

Geoff's point regarding unclear Log entries is raised by a verbal reply from DUNCAN FREW to a Log entry (Gaping Gill, 6-12-86):

Duncan was NOT stopped for speeding, as the Journal implies (and I might add, the original Log Book entry seemed to imply). Someone else was! Sorry about that - though the entry was a little ambiguous.

-EDITOR

M.R.O. DONATIONS

To the Wessex Cave Club

Thank you to all who have contributed to MRO funds through the Collection Tin in Upper Pitts. It is good to have your support like this and also when rescue incidents take place.

Please find a receipt attached for your recent contribution of £33i passed to me by Aubrey Newport.

Very Best Wishes,

Jim Hanwell (Hon. Secretary & Treasurer, M.R.O.)

NOTES on some FOODS, EQUIPMENT & ASSOCIATED PITFALLS.

-Bob Lewis

1 FOODS

After consulting Alison Moody's excellent thesis on the subject of the calorific content of dehydrated foods, only a minimal selection was purchased. This included ALPEN (cereal), BACHELOR'S "CUP-a-SOUP"s, BACHELOR'S SAVOURY MINCE and "OUTDOOR CHEF" meals.

Of these, the OUTDOOR CHEFs and CUP-a-SOUPs are thoroughly recommended for expeditions to karst areas where there may be a water shortage.

The Bachelors SAVOURY MINCE looks better value than it is: the product is retailed in a packet which is glued to the inside of the outer cardboard container. The outer container claims, "This box is sold by weight, some settling of content may have occurred during transport". The packet, glued as it is, cannot be removed from the outer container without tearing, so that though in theory it would be possible to see how much "settling" had taken place before one actually made a purchase, in fact one cannot do so! It is with some dismay that one discovers, on opening the packet, that it is only two-thirds full: this is most probably the reason for box and packet being glued together, an unusual practice, not to say "sharp". *

One advantage of OUTDOOR CHEF meals is that they may be prepared in the foil packet in which they are sold. There's no washing-up! You need only to boil the water before adding it to the meal, so that the receptacle employed to boil the water remains clean. Likewise, this is the great advantage of CUP-a-SOUPs over other brands: it is only necessary to boil water, tip the water into a cup and add the soup.+ One does NOT heat the water and soup-powder together, so one's saucepan remains clean. These are important considerations in areas where you have to filter or boil all your water, even before washing up. Unfortunately the OUTDOOR CHEF meals are hardly cheap at £3.75 to £4.20 each (February 1987), but they are good.

2 "GORE-TEX" 'BIVVIES'

I do not hesitate to recommend that GORE-TEX miniature tents (such as the PHOENIX "PHOXHOLE) and similarly-constructed bivvi-bags be avoided! These, unless of 100% Gore-tex, are a total waste of money. Many of them will set you back £100 or more. If they have a non-Gore-tex panel anywhere, or worse, a whole floor or side of some other synthetic, you will get wet, in one night!

Manufacturers have given no indication in public that these items are one-night-only survival aids, but that is what they are: after use, it is invariably necessary to dry out everything that has been inside them (or face a damp subsequent night). Don't waste your money!

3. LIGHTING

If you cannot carry carbide or re-charge cells, you may find that you're stuck with hand-torches and PETZL ZOOMS. The latter are moderately unreliable lights with a tendency to blow their bulbs or to short-circuit. Whether they are sufficiently robust for difficult caving must be in doubt, further, the beams lack penetration. It is possible to purchase a special halogen bulb to fit the ZOOM, though retailers warn that this bulb will melt the plastic surround of the reflector if it used continuously for more than 3 hours!

Of the hand-torches, the rubber-jacketed ones (VIDOR, EVER-READY, etc.) all have the disadvantages of vulnerable switch mechanisms and uncertain electrical connections. They are adequate only if tended with loving care and will corrode significantly if they are not dried inside, following use in wet caves. The smaller, rather similar, rubber-sealed torches which are frequently seen in motorists' or outdoor gear shops, are potentially better, being enclosed at the base, but give an inferior light. The above retail at between £3 and £6 - they are sometimes given away to people who consume huge quantities of petrol at filling-stations!

A generation of plastic water-resistant torches has come onto the market. The cheapest adequate one seems to be the DURABEAM 2-cell hand-torch, which arrives packaged as if it were gold-plated, complete with two Duracell B-size batteries, costing £6.50 inclusive. Though the Belgian manufacturers have issued free promotional bulbs to purchases of their torches, other bulbs do not seem to be compatible, and it is currently impossible to buy a replacement bulb (in Bristol) if the original one blows.

A Hong-Kong manufacturer has distributed the "REB-RING" torch, which is watertight and very good, operated by a ZOOM-like rotational on-off mechanism. Like other plastic torches of its kind, it will not float if dropped into water, which is rather a shame. The price of £2 in Hong Kong mounts to £12 or more in the U.K. If you are going to Hong Kong, don't bother carrying these on the journey out there. The original frosted diffuser-type bulbs seem to be unobtainable here, but clear-glass bulbs which are compatible may be found in British shops. In this locality, retailers are definitely reluctant to stock the red-ring torches. They say the items are hard to get, but if you place an order for some, they appear quite promptly. I conclude, perhaps falsely, that the Red-Ring is a bargain which, in a free market, might see-off British and other products. As a potential purchaser, I resent the implications of the Red-Ring's absence from the shelves.**

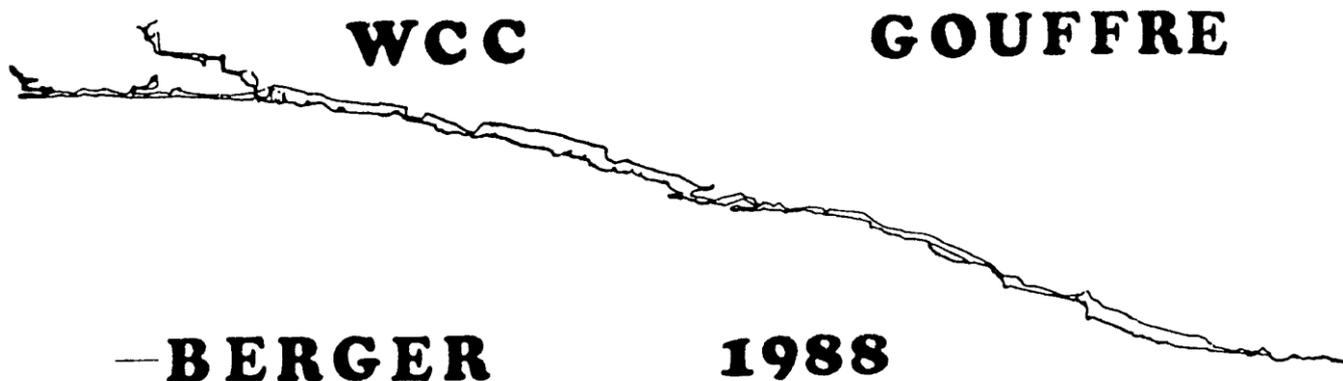
.....

(* This is actually a common practice with dry foodstuffs. Since an explanation is given on the packet, it cannot really be called sharp. The reasons are, I believe, concerned with the operation of the packing machines.

+ The Cup-a-Soup instructions say add boiling water (their stress) to the powder: it probably dissolves more efficiently this way.

** The writer has answered his own question: just look at the prices he quotes! Most torch buyers do not use them in such arduous conditions, so would not need a cave-proof one, so there's no incentive for retailers to stock them.

-The Editor)



The Committee has appointed PETE WATTS, as Caving Secretary, to take overall responsibility for organising the trip. This does not mean he will be doing all the work – others will be handling various aspects (transport, etc.). Those wishing to visit the cave must have no illusions concerning the severity of it. It demands SRT competence and considerable caving fitness.

Jim Moon is trip Treasurer: £50 deposits to him as soon as possible, please, so tackle purchasing can be put in hand. Cheques payable to "BERGER 99" account.

FROM THE LOG

Charterhouse Cave

25th January. Pete Hann, Malc Foyle, Rob Taviner. Re-arranging the boulders in the end ruckle. A good long session, now looking very promising, with lots of very loose bits in roof. The way it's going we will have to put a sign at the start of the dig: "B is for boulder all covered in s.....,
H is the Hann all covered in it!"

28th January. P.H., Graham Johnson, Merv Ingram, Jackie Ridewood. Pete and Graham to the dig with more cement in boulders, while Merv and Jackie collected gravel from upstream.

1st February. P.H., Julie Bolt, G.J., Nigel Graham. The boulders in the floor were attacked and vast amounts removed, with grunts and groans, up the shaft. A large hole appeared going down for 10-15 feet. As the roof looked loose, it was prodded before pushing on down. The long bar was shown to the roof which completely collapsed, filling in the passage.

Boulders 1 Diggers 0

When the dust had settled and I had emptied my wet-suit of adrenalin, a hole was noticed in the roof. This was pushed after a bit of gardening for about 12 feet in large boulders to smaller, loose rocks, beyond can be seen going for another 5 feet to flowstone walls and lots of loose stuff. Plenty of cement will have to be put in before that can be pushed.

Boulders 1 Diggers 1.

5 hrs.

22nd February. P.H., J.B., N.G. Cementing end boulders.

22nd March. P.H., J.B., Paul Lambert. More cement in end boulders, some of which got fed up waiting, decided gravity was better, and descended on me, half burying me. Was soon dug out intact, to replace them - plus added cement.

On same day, N.G. led a couple of visitors around. Duties were not neglected, as a gallon of sand accompanied us. -N.G.

5th April. P.H., J.B., N.G. More cement in end boulders. Dig is approx. 15ft deep, 30ft long, measured in H.B.L.s ("Hann Body Lengths").

12th April. P.H., P.L., Duncan Frew, Nick Pollard, N.G. Pete, Nigel & Nick cementing, Paul & Duncan collecting gravel.

Portland

7th January. N.G., Phil Strong, Martin Crocker, continuing rapid progress in GROVE CLIFF DIG (still only a provisional name). Extracted some peculiar "geode"-like formations from the spoil (sand / clay silts). Two good specimens recovered for cleaning: resembling small potatoes, they consist of a hollow sandy, calcareous shell with a wizened, irregular-crystal? "lining". I have been advised that they were probably formed as deposit around something which was subsequently dissolved away. I've not seen formations like these before: they were within the silt, but lying in a clay parting, possibly an open surface for a time. Phil & co. were photographing the extension in Blacknor Hole over the holiday: he reports seeing damage to the formations there already: it's only been open since July '86.

30th January. GROVE CLIFF. Same 3. Well, should have been! Cold East wind was all the more reason NOT to go there, so workshop session instead, building railway track for the dig. Got so carried away, we nearly missed the pub!

11th February. Same dig & crew. Good session saw railway installed and commissioned (with the odd derailment). Truck is bogie from a scrapped, experimental model locomotive (don't worry, diesel, not steam!). N.G. went to nearby GUANO RIFT, assessing its suitability as a SRT practice "GYM".

25th February. "GROVE CLIFF DIG" (Still haven't thought of a name). Same 3. Delayed start after looking at rather odd cave remnant in old quarry at the Verne. Not an auspicious trip: Martin's lamp failed, frequent derailments, N.G. was pounced upon by lump of wall - his hand fortunately protected by the spade handle. The offending boulder, thrown out of the cave, crashed away down the overgrown undercliff slope for ages, totally worrying someone walking along the old railway far below (he was in no danger): we saw his torch flashing wildly in all directions.

Now a view into a cavity, probably a cross-rift, with beautiful moon-milky roof. A deep rift here may intersect COFFIN HOLE (waterworn) beyond that cave's present limit collapse...

18th March. N.G., P.S., M.C., Anthony Ward (full complement!). Attacking boulder choke above cross-rift. -N.G.

Swildons Hole

OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER DIG.

8th & 9th March. Aubrey Newport, Ian Jepson. Total 3hrs.

22nd March. A.N., I.J. Laid charge, fired and retired.

Surprising number of parties in the cave on Sunday evenings of late: may have to consider early morning trips! Ugh! I.J.

Tween Twins Hole

25th January. Duncan Frew. A token dig (futile gesture) shifting noisy cobbles (too loud) among tree roots at the top end of the right-hand hole. The clay in the left-hand hole proved quieter.

31st January. P.H., D.F., Pete Watts, M.F. Dunc to RH hole, working in weird atmosphere of blackcurrant; going under the mini-entrance, eyeballing the spiders, "interesting" progress. Pete W. out in the cold; Malc playing at being a winch for Hann confusing the issue in the LH hole. Much spoil removed before we had to quit so Mr. Foyle could go for his tea.

1st February, D.F., Tav, Geoff Newton, Rich Websell. Confusing the issue still further, now a question of dig and see; potential for a few more entrances yet - and if we're very lucky, a bit of passage!

14th February. D.F., Tav, Jim Rands, M.F. + Fi, "Matey-in-a-Capri" (Paul Lambert -Ed.). Further confusing the issue. Digs a bit moist. The spoil heap is getting bigger. Tav did a through-trip from the top to the RH entrance. The LH must go somewhere: we are not the first to dig here - we're now following a mole hole into caverns measureless to mice. Malc had to go for his tea early.

22nd February. G.N., J.R., Aidan Williams. Very positive day's digging: 41 buckets (estimated 1 ton) of spoil removed. Looking good. -J.R

Perhaps it ought to be re-named "Fester" or "Festering" hole, since everyone uses it as an excuse for not doing something more dramatic when they have hangovers. -initialled by several?of the team...!??

Warren Farm Swallet

10th January. Pete & Alison Moody, Doug Adams, Jim Moon. No draught on way in, so were rather surprised to find the sump had drained and the way was open to the end dig. Shifted a fair amount of clag, still more to dig out, doesn't look particularly promising.

7th February. P. & A. M., Tav. Dig at the end is going both left and right. Left is a fair size but totally choked, right requires bang. Before leaving, put a charge on the boulder ruckle above the very draughty Mk 1 dig. Cave quite wet: can see any more rain sumping off the end area once more.

Pierre's Pot

Pierre's Pot has yielded, via a couple of squeezes, a streamway with good formations and an upstream sump not yet fully explored (April '87).

Consequently, by arrangement with Pete & Alison Moody, Log entries (other than for non-pushing trips) have ceased, so as not to pre-empt a full report on the cave. Work, including a series of water traces, continues.

The link to Pseudo Johnny Nash's Hole is now completely blocked.

+++++

10th January 1987. SWILDON'S HOLE. Start of the silly season: overdue party. 10?am to 9pm for Short Round Trip. Jim Moon, Doug Adams, Jim Rands, Malc Foyle, Pete Watts and Jeff Price (Leader) had to go through all the trouble of changing in the freezing cold only to meet the party at the gate - -Thanks!

11th January. G.B. CAVERN. J.R., A.W., Gena, Chris. Silly Season continued: Boozing till dawn (Jeff Price's 'Pete Watts' barrel) then being woken up at 8.45am to go caving on a trip I organised 3 weeks ago. 1-2 hours sleep, a kipper for breakfast, then change and off to G.B. Defrost the lock before it would open at 12.30, out for last hour in the Hunters' -here we go again! -J.R

3rd January. DAREN CILAU. Geoff Newton. Late start due to car trouble, everyone had left by the time I reached Whitewalls. So, a solo trip down Daren Cilau, poking around in Kingston Sands and Aggy Passage. Met Jim, Ken and Angus on their way out. -G.N

17th January. Upper Pitts. P.H., M.F., Tav, G.N. Fitting the new bogs and repairing burst pipes in the roof space. (Thanked in last issue's Club Notes for latter work -Ed).

18th January. Day Two of bog fitting. The prat who bought them wants his b...s chewed off: 1 pan cracked, and the one fitted in left-hand cubicle stand so far out that there is only 1 inch clearance for the door. Work not completed as the day was rounded off with a wally who would not come back through Swildons Sump One, having just dived it. After much persuasion and the threat of being tied up in the Sump Rescue kit and pulled through, he plucked up enough courage to catch hold of Darny's hand, and with a little push from Mac, he was through. A quick exit from the cave to clear up the tools around the Hut.

20th January. GOATCHURCH CAVERN. Tav, Dean, Gen, +2. A quick look at the new bit of Goatchurch; approx. 100ft at bottom of Giant's Stairs. Tight and small, made interesting by a few pretties and a very awkward squeeze.

24/25th January. DAREN CILAU. G.N., Clive Gardener (Chelsea). With two new passages running off Gothic Passage, from Lower Southern Stream Passage in AGEN ALLWELD, towards Daren, expectation was running high for a connection. The hill was full of people digging frantically for the connection. We were foolish enough to join the Rock Steady Crew digging at Acupuncture. An 8½ hour trip in uncomfortable conditions in a total of 20½ hours. The trip out was knackered. The dig made 25ft to where an air-space of 6" or so appeared. It looks promising but nobody is in a hurry to go back. A week's underground camp is planned for Easter - for the really hard men. Not me, I think. Not much progress was made from the Aggy end, either. -G.N.

25th January. SWILDON'S HOLE: Operation Rolling Thunder Dig. Aubrey Newport, Ian Jepson. Laid ½lb charge, fired and retired. 1¼hr. -I.J.

31st January. SWILDON'S HOLE. N.G., Phil s., Martin C., Dave Taylor. Thought a late start would miss worst of crowds: thought wrongly! Phil and Martin had been after a Swildons trip for ages: this was only their 2nd Mendip trip. Phil entered Two, for a brief look around, returning by ignoring the rope and swimming through. -N.G

3rd February. UBLEY HILL POT. Tav, Dean, Gen and Vaughan (West Mendip C.C.). Inspecting the possible dig site at the bottom of Bone Chamber. The inspection was cut short by a boulder collapse - the boulder I was standing on. It bounced and hit Gen. Cue rapid exit. This could have been a very serious

incident, in this case only bruises were sustained. WARNING: this whole area appears very unstable - Take Care. -Tav

8th February. PALMER'S DIG. Pete & Alison Moody. The cave hasn't improved in our absence. Now of the opinion that it's not worth persisting with the passage it's taken so long to bang along. Decided to start on a rift halfway into the cave. -P.M.

7th February. Craven Cottage Users' Dinner. At "The Crown", Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Meal followed by Hann slide show (G.B. tour / Swildons Through-trip sequence), which met with Northern approval. Guests: Malc & Fi, Keith & Roz, N.G., D.F., P.H. P.W., Jeff & Jo arrived later. Northern members were: Ric & Pat Halliwell, "Parrot", Andy Hayter, Maggie & Gary, Lynn, Chris, Steve Pic., - and all those people I'm too pissed to remember! -?

8th February. SWILDONS HOLE. Tav and Dean. Short trip due to craving for bar, to look at everyone else's digs. Lowbow very wet - interesting? (Desperate).

8th February. SWILDON'S HOLE. Jim Moon and Paul. Swildons One: first-ever trip for the brother. He's most impressed. Is this a first - a novice managing not to fall into one of the Double Pots?? -J.M.

9th. February. Upper Pitts. What a pleasure to come into a clean, tidy Hut on a Monday morning. My blessings to the Acting Hut Warden.

14th February. DAREN CILAU. G.N., Mark Simpson. To Kingston Sands, a seldom-visited part of the cave. Squeezing through a small high-level hole gained a short, tight rift. At the end a 10 minute dig broke through into walking-size passage which soon became 15ft high by 8ft wide. Just as it seemed we had it made it came to a dead stop. Way on is a constricted hole, needing bang, halfway up the wall. Length of new bit from dig, about 100 feet. -G.N.

15th February. BLACKMOOR SWALLET. Tav, Nigel, Jim, Dunc. To rescue a spaniel which had fallen down it. An official rescue despite the fact that the insurance doesn't cover animal rescues. Ten minutes' work for good P.R. and a happy family. Wish they were all this easy and had happy endings. -D.F.

17th February. LIONEL'S HOLE. Dean, Tav, Gen, Vaughan (WMCC). Ventured in Horrorface One as Gen & Vaughan hadn't been there before. Gen didn't seem too keen but Vaughan can't wait to go back again! Tav wandered up hill to look at FOXES HOLE & TRAT'S CRACK digs; both flooded, Foxes still full of hay.

21st February. SWILDONS HOLE. Bob Pyke, Ken Dawe, Chris Baker, Jim Moon, "Zippy". Blue Pencil, up and down Four, back and down to Shatter Chamber. To quote Bob, "Vintage Swildons". Grand time was had by all, a good impression on those who hadn't been there before. Ducks cold as ever. No allowances made for venerable antiquity.

21st February. OFD TOP to ONE. Malc, Tav, Dean, Brian Prewer, Greg + 5. Superb trip: 12000 feet or so of superb streamway, fine situations. Good fun trying to drown each other in the potholes, we didn't get lost once! Cave drops nearly 900 feet from Top to 1, with no ladder pitches.

1st March. "FESTERHOHLE". G.N., P.H., D.F. Zippy made a breakthrough after the removal of much sticky spoil. We now have three entrances and a bit of cave which doesn't really go anywhere, but we're not defeated just yet!

(Oops - this should have been in the classified section, filed under TT -see quip on name! -ED.)

1st March. GOATCHURCH CAVERN. Fred & Hannah Felstead +3. Much weege.

1st March. BURREINGTON DYE-Tests. P. & A. M., Graham Mullen, Sarah Ayling. Detectors in Pierre's Pot and in W. Low Level in Lionel's Hole. Dye in Ellick Farm, Flange and Top Sink. Also detectors put in

Rickford and Langford Rsngs.

1st March. SWILDONS HOLE. Rich W., Malc F. Swim down to Five. It's 'orrible! 3hrs.

1st March. NOXON PARK IRON MINE (Forest of Dean). Ian Pearson, Andy Ward, Rich Warman ("Kermit"). All three achieved over 90 metres from base. On return to base, Kermit removed 60 metres of old line. A.W. lost and found his knife. Vis 20 metres, max depth 20m. -Kermit.

1st March. OLD HAM IRON MINE. S. Wales was exceedingly wet (as usual), so a toss-up between Daren Cilau and the pub resulted in us doing a through trip, (Old Ham to LAMSQUAY Mine) in this enormous complex. Many route-finding problems and plenty of grovelling, mainly over weedge. Only lost the way once this time although once for ½ hour. -Tav.

22nd February. BLEADON CAVE. Pete & Alison. First trip for either of us to this cave. Had a really good look around, quite interesting but don't think we'll be in any hurry to go again. Thanks to Chris Richards for organising access. -P.M.

4th March. SWILDONS HOLE. Kev Gannon, Jim Moon to Swildons Two as an excuse to go to the pub. It makes a change to have the cave to yourself!

4th March. EASTWATER CAVERN. Tav and Gen. Upper Traverse - Primrose Path - Lower Traverse - Canyon - out via Kentish's Cairn. Fine grovelling trip. Boulder Chamber seems to be on the move again. Met a party in First Rift Chamber who didn't have a clue where they were: I understand that Primrose Path is now below Dolphin Pot, and the Rift Chambers are below the Twin Verts! -Tav.

4th March. GROVE CLIFF DIG (another one not classified here!). N.G., P.S., M.C. Inaugurated new (purpose-made) railway truck, which a carefully set shift system helped us remove an estimated ¾ ton of spoil (by pebble tally). (This estimate of silt quantity accords with that given in the Tween-Twins entry above: the silt in the two digs is similar material.). Entered head of narrow rift and associated collapse: which way next? -N.G.

8th March. TYNINGS BARROWS CAVE. Tav, Kev, Mike Hearn (BEC/MEG). Quick trip to end, taking in Drunken Horse Inlet and other inlets on way out. Boulders at end of Drunken Horse in dangerous state. -Tav.

14th March. PENYGHENT POT. D.F., Rich W., Steve Gough, Alan Marshall, Trevor Faulkner, Jim Rands, N.G. Nice start - snow in entrance, and icebergs in crawl. Jim & Nigel retired at head of 7th pitch, Jim nicknamed himself "Grandad", whereupon N.G. decided he was "uncle", only to get home to find many a true word spoken in jest!

"Someone had a pee in the sump for everyone".

And, after 6hrs, (in the Canal): "If I had a w... now, my hands are so numb it would feel like someone else was doing it to me", splash...splash...

"Come to think of it, it would feel like someone else was doing it to someone else". ...splash...

"That's if you could find it..." splash...splash... silence...

A very enjoyable trip even if we didn't all reach the bottom (better luck next time.). -various.

8th March. LUDWELL CAVE. D. Pike, R. Warman. D.P. dived first, on training dive. R.W. then dived to check condition of line. Line found to be in good condition. Vis not good. Max. depth 1 metre.

17th March. WOOKEY HOLE. R. Stevenson, R. Warman. Photographic dive from 9:2 to 15½. Vis 5m. -R.W.

14th March. LANCASTER HOLE. Pete Hann joined 13 CPC members for a run around before the fell closes on April 5th. With the large party we still moved smoothly, to the Colonnades, Fall Pot, on up to Cape Kennedy and Fire Hydrant Chamber, which is very nicely decorated. Back to Stake Pot, past the

lovely colouring of Painter's Palette, into the Minarets, Corne's Cavern, to Wretched Rabbit Passage and out to daylight via New Cave (approx 100m up valley from County Pot). An excellent 6hr trip under the perfect guidance of Paul, who never once got lost (I didn't have a clue where I was after 15 minutes!).-P.H.

21st March. Micho the cat visited the Hut after a very long absence. He's still very nervous about it.

21st March ROD'S POT. Carl and Charles Pickstone, Richard, Nicholas Irving, William Heston. Ventured down Rod's Pot on the First Day of Spring. It's still muddy and tight after 25 years. -C.P.

21st March. G.B. CAVERN. Tav and N.G. A trip to recover from the National Caving Association Annual General Meeting. Pleasant wander around Gorge, White Passage, Loop, Bedding Chamber, Oxbow, Bertie's Pot, streamway, etc. -Tav.

21st March. SWILDONS HOLE. M., S., & E. Hewins, J. & M. Thomas, +2 fit, strong lads from Fleet. Baptised Sally in stream of St. Swithin. Both Thomases ventured to Barnes' Loop, losing car keys on Twenty, rest fully explored Upper Series. 2½hrs.

21st March. DAREN CILAU. Ken and Angus Dawe, Bob Pyke, Jim Moon, Len Dawes, Stuart and Grant (Derwent Mountain Club). An assault on World's End. All spent lots of time exploring the hole bit by bit. Didn't quite have it to ourselves: there seemed to be lots of tired and manic cavers in lower reaches. The Hard Rock Cafe camp was wonderful, sleeping area immaculate, but cooking/relaxing area stank of sweaty food and rancid armpits!

Very fine 14 hour trip, during which we were fully converted to "Hotcans" -J.M.

22nd/23rd March. BURRINGTON water tracing. P.M., G.N.

22nd March. MANOR FARM SWALLET. Tav & Gen. To end of NHASA Gallery. Only smelly bit was inlet by start of NHASA Gallery. Very pleasant; cave wet, and no people in it. -Tav.

28th March. DRUNKARD'S. G.N. Slow progress (digging).

28th March. WARREN FARM. P.M., Mark Madden. Tourist trip. Dead sheep in ent.

28th March. G.B. CAVERN. Tav, Gen, +3. Tourist trip, cave fairly wet, mainly in Devil's Elbow. -Tav.

28th March. SWILDON'S HOLE. J.M. + 3 adult novices. To Sump 1 and back, fun sightseeing trip to clear my post-birthday hangover. -J.M.

29th March. PIERRE'S POT. P.H., D.F., N.G. Latter to 1st squeeze, where Pete had to rearrange his lunchtime cheese roll to accommodate. Downstream to Prat's Temple area, upstream to Hanging Gardens, encountering a muddy Moody there. Dunc went to upstream sump to place diving-line bolt. What Mrs. M. didn't mention was this is another example of their use of minimum force for maximum progress, therefore maximum effort for minimum progress on the part of the caver! Nice sump, shame about the passage! Good fun.

4th April. PIERRE'S POT. P.H., D.F., Tav. Not content with his own bulk Pete took his metal handbag along (photographic gear). Tav discovered there was more to the cave than he thought, on the other hand, the cave isn't as big as it ought. -D.F.

4th April. PALMER'S DIG. P.M., N.G. Clearing right-hand rift halfway into cave. Doesn't look a very hot prospect. -P.M.

5th April. SINGING RIVER MINE. Tav & Gen. Sunday hangover-cure trip. Doesn't work. Water in lakes pretty high. Lots of fun trying to re-lock mine. On way back, passed party of picnickers - all Mendip to choose from and they choose the triangle by Longwood; daft! -Tav.

BACK PAGE

DIARY DATES

CNCC Bookings.

6 June 1987	Gingling Hole Dale Head Pot Birks Fell Cave
4 July	Top Sink - Pippikin Pot (if access allowed)
3 September	Birks Fell Cave
4 October	Top Sink – Pippikin Pot (if access allowed)
7 November	Mongo Gill Hole
5 December	Death's Head Hole - Big Meanie
6 December	Rumbling Hole.

LAST TWO WEEKS AUGUST: DORDOGNE.

This is not intended as an "expeditionary" trip, rather as a relaxing caving/walking/wine-sampling/whatever holiday. Quite a number of Wessex members are going, anyone interested, contact Pete Hann or Duncan Frew for venue. (Note, people joining in from now will probably need to make their own travel arrangements).

12 / 13 September B.C.R.A. Conference, UMIST, Manchester. (The WCC Committee Meeting scheduled for that weekend has been moved forward to 5th September.)

WESSEX CAVE CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday 17th October 1987
followed by the
ANNUAL DINNER
at STAR HOTEL, Wells.

Calling all potholers

There are now so many facilities in the Weymouth and Portland area for potholing that I believe it is time an organisation was established to regulate their use.

To this end, I wonder if there is sufficient support among your readers to support the formation of a Weymouth and Portland Society of Potholers?

The envisaged aim of the society would be to protect and preserve the potholes in the Weymouth and Portland area for the benefit of the community.

Naturally, if such a society were formed the actual tasks necessary to achieve the aim would be the business of those forming it, but I believe the following would be a guide:

1. To compile a pothole register.
2. To provide a pothole advisory service.
3. To draft a pothole brochure suitable for inclusion in the Weymouth and Portland holiday guide.
4. To form a pothole search and rescue unit.
5. To raise money for charity.

A.F.MURKIN
Weymouth.

This appeared in the "Dorset Evening Echo" in early April – no not the 1st. Outcome of N.G.'s meeting with him in the next edition.

~~HAGAR~~ HANWELL THE HORRIBLE



WITH APOLOGIES TO *DICK BROWNE* + *'THE SUN'*