



# THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

## VOLUME 21 (NUMBER 235) SEPTEMBER 1992

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Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor  
or of the Wessex Cave Club as a whole unless expressly stated as being so.

## Officers and Committee of the Wessex Cave Club. 1991-1992

Officers whose address does not appear here may be contacted via Upper Pitts

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		<b>Ordinary Member:</b>	Keith Fielder
		<b>Librarian:</b>	Mike Dewdney-York
<b>MRO Coordinator:</b>	Paul Lambert	<b>Survey Sales:</b>	Maurice Hewins
<b>Sales Officer:</b>	Max Midlen	<b>Journal Distribution:</b>	Jim Moon

# Club Notes

Club members will note with regret the death of Giles Barker while caving in Spain in August.

## Wessex People

### Change of Address

Struan Macdonald, Allwynds, 59 Avon Rd., Devizes, Wilts, SN10 1PS, 0380 722828  
Martin Wise, WO's & Sgt's Mess, Prince William of Gloucester's Barracks, Grantham, Lincs, NG31 7TJ

### New Members

Welcome to:

**Peter Guarnaccio**, 35 St. James Road, Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 4HS  
**Matthew Stoodley**, 4 Diamond Cottages, Warren Row, Near Wargrave. Berks. 062882 6702  
**Les and Wendy Williams**, The Chapel, Charterhouse, Blagdon. Somerset

Welcome back to:

**Anthony Burletun**, 27 Doncaster Road, Bristol. BS10 5PN

### An announcement from the Sales Officer

Not only has the Journal moved into the computer age, thanks to Mr 'Proff' Williams, but now the sales locker has too!

At long last new sweatshirts are available. The old design of the dragon and lettering are carried over but instead of the old-fashioned screen printing the new ones are embroidered by computer. The computer tape charge is a one-off payment, and the tape remains the property of the Club. If there is enough interest it is possible to have this embroidered badge sewn onto other garments besides sweatshirts. So un-pick that Berghaus badge and replace it with the latest in fashion!

The sweatshirts are of really excellent quality (better than old), available in black (hardly ever needs washing) and lightish blue (a bit more frequent washing required). Sizes available are small, medium, large, extra large and tent sized. Forget the sizes of old, when 'small' really meant 'large' for a typical Wessex member. When we say medium, we mean medium!

Cost is £15.00 per shirt, and they are available from Upper Pitts.

Several junior members of the club have expressed interest in obtaining **back issues of the Journal**. While we have a large stock of these for most recent issues, and a few older ones, there are many which are no longer available except as photocopies. If any of the older members of the club have copies of their earlier *Journals* which they no longer want, please contact the Editor. Similarly, people wishing to obtain back issues should also get in touch.

The NCA recently took expert advice on the new **Food and Hygiene Regulations**, and were told that they were highly unlikely to apply to caving huts. This takes the pressure off work on the Upper Pitts kitchen for a while, but we are still planning to have a major blitz on it soon. Anyone willing to help with labour, or better still with materials, please contact Keith Fielder who is organising the work (address and number as for Roz Fielder at the front of the Journal).

Please note that the telephone number for Upper Pitts printed in the last *Journal* was incorrect: the correct number is 0749 672310.

# Caving Notes

The **NCA's rebolting programme** marches steadily onward. A list of safe bolts in the Derbyshire area has been published. While the demand for these bolts in the Mendip area is obviously not so great as elsewhere in the country, training for anyone wishing to place bolts can be provided by contacting the NCA's training committee, or the CSCC. Recently, some concern has been expressed that the chemically bonded anchors appear to be loose, but this is not the case since the anchors are designed to flex in use. Owen Clarke, the NCA's equipment committee convenor, has recently pointed out that this is perfectly normal. The breaking strain of the anchors is 1¼ tonnes., and further details of the methods by which the anchors are placed, their design and how their strength has been tested can be obtained by contacting Owen on 0494 773175.

The **Cave Diving Group** recently decided to pull out of the NCA, saying it no longer did anything to their advantage.

The National Trust's plans to fence large sections of **Cheddar Gorge** have been shelved following a storm of public protest (including a letter from the Club). Serious consideration is now being given to the installation of cattle grids at the top and bottom of the Gorge, but this is not a simple solution given the weight of traffic which uses the road and the angle of incline.

The **MRO** have organised a very active season of talks and fund-raising events, starting with a practical underground workshop in GB cave on October 31. The aim on this occasion is to cover stretcher handling, the administration of Entonox and splinting of broken limbs as well as operation of the Molephone. Other events will be a fundraising Stomp at Priddy Village Hall on 14 November (fancy dress), a lecture on rescue management by Jim Hanwell on 5 December and an end of year coffee morning on December 31st. For further details contact Paul Lambert or Dany Bradshaw.

**Mendip Publishing** have recently announced a £100 prize for the best expedition report published in the year up to the 1993 BCRA Conference. They are also looking for authors of caving books to allow them to expand their list of caving titles. Following the successful publication of *Who was Aveline Anyway?* club members who are potential authors may like to contact the Editor to discuss a collaboration.

**Compton Martin Ochre Mine** was recently fitted with concrete pipes to stabilise the entrance. The entrance has now been gated and keys (which are the same as the Cuckoo and Singing River Mine locks) are available from all major Mendip clubs. The cave will be closed in January of each year, and cavers are requested to minimise visits in winter as the cave is a

bat roost.

**Thefts from cars** in the Mendip area are still on the increase. Cars parked at **Whitepit** and on the **Upper Green** in Priddy were broken into in September: you have been warned.

CSCC are appealing for donations towards the cost of their **digging operations**. Please contact Blitz if you can help.

The National Association of Mining History Organisations have recently published a code of practice for people visiting mines - copies are available from **NAHMO** or the Editor.

Reliable rumours indicate that the **BCRA conference** will be in Bristol next year so the successful Caver's Fair event may move north to Derbyshire. Anyone interested in helping with either event should contact the BCRA Council, NCA Executive or the Editor.

Contrary to previously published information the 20p goodwill fee for visiting **Swildon's** should still be paid at the back door of Manor Farm (on the central village green). Cavers are reminded that parking on the green upsets the locals and that the upper green (next to the village hall) can also be used - this avoids having to walk around the corner past Butch's palace where there have been several near misses recently. If you do walk from the Barn, please use the verge.

**Sludge Pit, Nine Barrows and Lamb Leer** all remain closed.

There was a rescue in **Lionel's Hole** on 23 August caused by flooding: water levels have been low recently but visitors are reminded that wet caves will still flood with heavy rain.

The **WSG** have recently purchased their cottage Caerllywyn, and are hoping to upgrade its facilities and amenities now that they know they will be able to keep it.

Residents of **Llangattock** have been becoming more and more annoyed by the actions of cavers in their area. This has the potential to cause great access problems so cavers are requested to keep a low profile and please use all possible discretion when visiting caves in the area.

A gate has been fitted to **Cym Dwr II** - the key is available from the SWCC.

There is no access to several caves in the **Minera** area, pending the approval of planning permission for the Park Farm Quarry Extension. The cave: affected are Ogof Llyn Ddu, Ogof Dydd Byraf, Pool Park

Mine, Ogof Llyn Parc and Park Lead Mines.

There is unrestricted access to **Ogof Hesp Alyn**, and **Ogof Hen Ffynhonau** (Poacher's Cave) following destruction of the locks on the gates to these caves.

Cavers digging on Llangynidr and Llangattock are requested to register with the **Cambrian Cave Registry** and to cover any vertical surface shafts resulting from their digs. Further details in the next Journal.

A gate has been fitted on the far side of the sumps in **Ogof Capel** to protect the formations in the cave.

The 8mm anchors in **Pwll Dwn** and **Carno Adit** have recently been replaced.

**Clearwell Caves** recently published a series of guidelines for visiting cavers - please contact the editor for details.

**Dan-Yr-Ogof** has appointed a resident Iron Age man to live at the cave!

In Derbyshire, the Lathkiller entrance to **Lathkilldale Cave** is still without an access agreement - this is in the process of being negotiated. Bad air and pollution, particularly in the Northern Lights area of the cave have been causing problems. The entrance to **Yoga Hole** was recently stabilised by members of the Masson Caving Group, but there is still no access of any sort to **Ashford Marble Mine**, **Conie's Dale Pots**, **Holme Bank Chert Mine** or **Dale Mine**.

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## Club Diary 1992

10 October	MRO Circus	Hunter's Lodge Inn
17 October	AGM Annual dinner	Hunter's Lodge Inn, 2.30pm Coxley Vinard, 7.30pm
31 October	MRO Workshop	GB Cave from 9.00am
7 November	Yorkshire booking	Lancaster Hole/Link Pot
8 November		Long Kin East/Rift Pot
14 November	MRO Stomp	Priddv Village Hall, 7.30pm
21 November	CSCC Meeting	Hunter's Lodge, 10.30am
5 December	MRO Lecture: Rescue Management	Hunter's Lodge, 7.30pm
	Yorkshire booking	Juniper Gulf
31 December	MRO Coffee Morning	Belfrey Store
30 December	Yorkshire booking	Notts Pot
31 December		Lost Johns Cavern

Please contact Keith Sanderson (address at the front of the Journal) if you wish to attend any of the Yorkshire bookings.

Novice instruction is available on all Club trips: please contact Andy Summerskill (address at the front of the Journal) for details.

# Slaughter Stream Cave

Andy Tyler

In the last few weeks, I have been going across the bridge to my nearest caving area, the Forest of Dean. Eighteen months ago the Forest hit the headlines and people became interested in it and its undoubted potential. The Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club, whose previous claim to fame was the discovery some years ago of Otter Hole (which the experts claimed should not exist), announced the discovery of a major new cave.

The cave they found is called Slaughter Stream Cave. It is located at Wet Sink (which is in fact dry) next to the Dry Sink which (you guessed) is wet! The reason for the confusion is that the stream was diverted. The cave is called Slaughter Stream Cave because the rising which the cave is known to feed on the banks of the River Wye is called the Slaughter. Symonds Yat Swallet which is several miles away and feeds the same rising, has a chamber called 'The Slaughterhouse'.

Slaughter Stream Cave had been dug over about 40 years, mainly by Hereford C.C. but not in the last few years because of problems with the farmer. When he died the RFDCC started redigging the site which consists of a 15m deep and 5m dia. shaft situated in the bottom of a valley. Access to the gate at the bottom is down fixed ladders. In December 1990, eighteen months after they started digging, they broke into the cave which had a howling draught coming out.

Inside the gate the cave consists of rifts, crawls and a 15 metre fixed ladder and a short drop to the balcony. From here there is another fifteen metre pitch. The cave continues as a wet crawl and squeeze to the Main Junction: right is the upstream and the fossil passages, left is the main stream way.

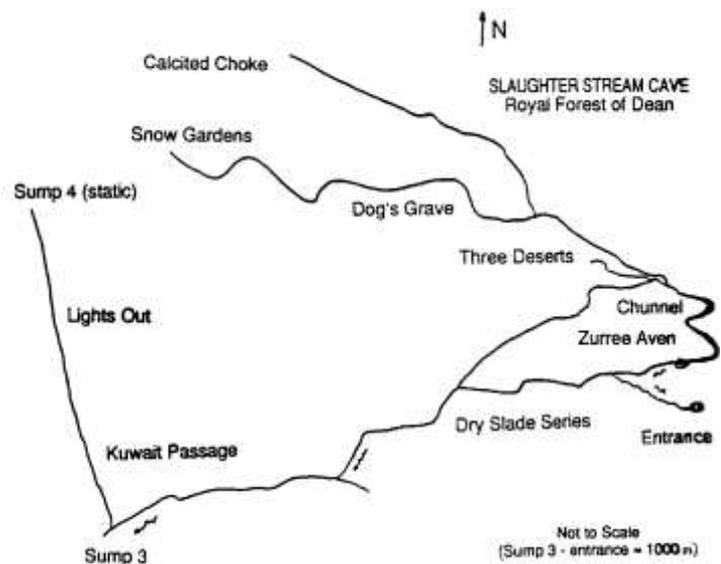
My first trip down Slaughter was in the Autumn of 1991. I went down with John Hutchinson who is the Otter Hole key holder and two others. We had a brief three hour trip up the streamway to Zurree Aven, waterfall which we climbed to the fossil passages. We came to what is known as the Connection which had only just been found. This leads into the Coal Seam Passage which is good walking size until it intersects the Dryslade Series at the Dry Sump which is the bypass between sumps 1 and 2. We continued to Sump 2 and then made our way back to Sump 1 and out.

It was not until March 7th 1992 that I went down again. I went with Andy Dark and Mike Cox of RFDCC on one of their Saturday digging trips. They had just given up digging a rift down which they could hear water but it had no way on. That day was intended to be a reconnaissance trip for new dig sites in the Chunnel area. We identified three or four easy digs into blank areas on the survey. At one possible place I moved several boulders and squeezed into a passage which went straight 2 metres wide and 1.5m. high covered in shattered break down. After a short distance there is a cross roads; to both right and left the passage choked but ahead it kept going. After some way it

choked but had a sandy crawl on the right - in all over one hundred metres of new passage. We know it runs parallel to the Chunnel and comes close to the Three Deserts.

Next week we went down to a place we had identified as a nice and easy dig but we did not get through anywhere. A fortnight later I went with Andy Farrant, a UBSS member. We had a tourist trip with Mike Cox as Andy Dark was visiting the Guinness Brewery in Dublin!

We went down to Sump 3 and then up Coal Seam Passage along the Three Deserts to see Norman. Norman is a partially calcified dog skeleton of medium size but unknown age whose bones have crumbled away leaving its outline. Just before is a mud bank with footprints of an animal - possibly Norman's. Obviously the dog had got in through a nearby, but now blocked, entrance and died of dehydration.



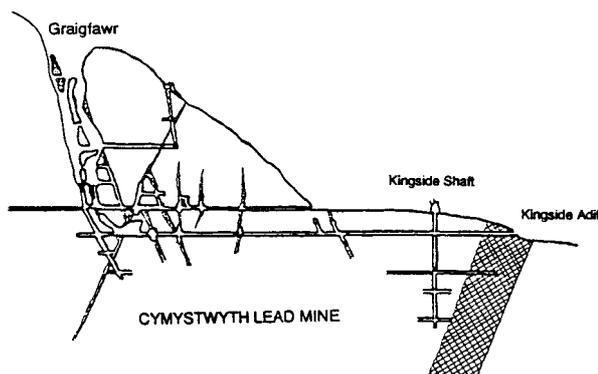
We came to the old dig site and carried on to Tinkle Passage which is a high rift but easy to traverse through except for the fact that it is covered in white stalactite formations including straws and helictites (hence the name). We were only the third party to come through here and it will soon be totally muddied and damaged. Beyond is something even prettier which justified the original explorers decision to push on through the rift. This is the Snow Garden which is an almost static stream on which is forming calcite lilies 5-7cm. in dia. as thin as paper. When they have formed they sink to the bottom and so there has developed two banks of these lilies deep enough to support people's weight but the top is easily crushed at the slightest touch. There is a crawl a little further on to a choke which is the end of the cave at this point. I feel privilege; to have visited this place. This is taped off but Mike claimed finders privilege as he wanted to revisit the place. This took six and a half hours.

# Tuska's tours again

Maurice Hewins

The sun was rising over Stock Hill as we staggered down Eastwater Lane at the convenient hour of 5.30am. With our gear safely loaded into our luxury Axevale coach, we sped off towards the scenic grandeur of North Wales. Driver Ken allowed us ample time to sample the regional cuisine at the M5 services before we settled into our comfortable seats to admire the passing beauties of the Birmingham conurbation. Soon we were heading west via Shrewsbury and Welshpool to Dolgellau.

Here, under the towering heights of Cader Idris, we met the rest of the party who had travelled by car. Your esteemed editor was there, as well as the ever genial Brian Pitman. The latter was keen to host his English friends in his native principality. We were also joined by our local expert and guide, Graham Hall, whose infectious enthusiasm ensured us a fascinating and informative weekend.



The serious part of the trip began after lunch amid the grey landscape at Ffestiniog. Graham gave a brief introduction to the Cwmorthin slate mine and handed out some surveys. These showed that the labyrinth below would be no place to get lost.

Once into caving kit, we walked up the track past a still, clear lake to the mine. The entrance is an adit at the head of a small steep valley. Above were poised a mass of shattered rock and piles of slate of doubtful stability. As soon as the stragglers arrived we followed Graham underground.

The slate beds worked at Cwmorthin dip down beneath the lake and the mine follows the bedding in a series of horizontal levels running out from an inclined tramway. Worked out chambers run off the levels, interspersed with pillars left to support the roof. Remains of railway track, de-railed trucks and fallen cranes date

from before the war when quarrying ceased.

After descending two levels by the incline, the party stopped by a large up-ended skip while photos were taken and Graham explained the old method of working. Then a few people turned back before the rest plunged on down. On one level we waded knee deep through ice cold water and came to a building with winding gear and a little hut once used for meal breaks; apparently the men filled in time by reciting poetry. The photographers stopped here to play while the more energetic completed a round trip down to the water table. They roped down a steep 60ft slope and returned by an inclined shaft. The highlight of the trip was the climb out up a 100ft exposed stairway used by the miners. Sod's Law decreed that the top six rungs were missing, leaving only their resting supports. We emerged into brilliant sunshine after 2½ hours.

The one cock up of the tour occurred when the cars failed to rendezvous with the coach to ferry the luggage to the youth hostel. However the two barrels of Butcombe were safely cooling in the nearby river.

The accommodation was excellent and a meal was soon served by the warden, a formidable lady who seemed to know all about cavers. It later transpired that Graham regularly uses the hostel for his student groups. After dinner, the beer was tapped and he gave a polished slide show and talk on the geology and mining history of the Harlech Dome.

The next morning we travelled via Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge to the old lead mine at Cwmystwyth. A somewhat depleted party got underground about mid-day. We entered the Kingside Adit by crawling through the skeleton of an upturned skip and splashed through 2ft of water for the first 100 yards. A party of 7, including Aubrey. Max and Brian Hansford laddered the 80ft Kingside shaft. The rails continued below the water table, Aubrey reported.

Graham, who had brought his wife and young son with him, soon led off to explore the upper levels. A sturdy wooden ladder opened into an impressive series of heavily timbered slopes. The massive props were still apparently in good condition. There was time to take photographs and collect some minerals (mainly galena) before the coach left around 2.30. We drove back via mid Wales and the Severn Bridge, reaching Priddy by 7.30.

I think we all agreed it was a very good club event. All the party, whose ages ranged from 15 to 60, did a trip within their own capabilities.

Thanks are due to Brian Prewer for loan of lamps and helmets, to the lady hostel warden, and Ken the coach driver. Most of all, we are indebted to Dave Morrison, the Managing Director of Tuska's Tours, for all his careful preparations.

# Mendip Rescue Organization Report 1991

Report by the Hon Secretary & Treasurer for the Year to 31st December 1991

May I start by personally thanking all caving friends for their unstinting support and understanding over the year, and since. When you fall into deep and unfathomable holes that you had not even looked for, helping hands and companionship become very special and irreplaceable. After thirty-three years as a MRO Warden, perhaps I can be allowed to record tributes to our nearest and dearest who condone and contribute to those who go caving and help at rescues. Being without them brings back all the memories. Past moments matter more than plans; principles and practices serve as better guides.

MRO's long established principle is that those who go caving must help themselves when in trouble. No one else can or should. So, we provide an organisation for cavers, not a club or team to join. Appropriate up-to-date equipment is obtained and its uses demonstrated. Practices are encouraged. Special training and exercises are run by those with the necessary experience and expertise. Everything is funded through donations, mainly from cavers themselves. We have only sought outside grants for particularly expensive and hopefully little used items of equipment. Each generation of cavers has provided for its own training and support, not least because rescue needs and the available technology are always advancing. The responsibility becomes theirs and not something for others to provide and, eventually, control. Sharing current good practice is

the way to gain experience. Courses and certificates create a different climate, attractive mainly to those who wish to be in charge and, maybe, have their way. Our effectiveness is up to us.

During the year, Wardens have organised varied activities to meet the above objectives. They have also taken part in many meetings with other rescue bodies and those who work with us during actual incidents, especially the Police and Fire Service. We are particularly grateful to the Police for up-dating our radio communications and providing pagers to back-up the call-out system. The Fire Service has also been in close touch and a useful training video has been made to show how we work together when needs be. The BBC has also been interested in documenting cave rescue work, and a reconstruction of an actual incident was staged and filmed at the end of the year. It will be screened on television sometime during the Summer of 1992 in a BBC 1 series entitled "999".

The audited accounts which follow tell their own story and emphasise the need for continuing support. The log of actual incidents during 1991 has been compiled from reports prepared by those involved. They are the lessons from which we learn most.

Jim Hanwell  
Hon Secretary & Treasurer  
Wookey Hole  
February 1992

## MENDIP RESCUE ORGANIZATION

### Cave Rescues and Incidents for the Year ending 31st December 1991

Sun 6th Jan	Eastwater Cavern	1	Stuck, floods, light f.	(4)
Sun 3rd Feb	Eastwater Cavern	1	Fall, back injuries	(7)
Wed 27th Feb	Longwood Swallet	1	Fall, dislocated shoulder	(8)
Sat 13th Apl	Wookey Hole Canal	1	Heifer, early morning dip	
Thu 18th Apl	Eastwater Cavern	1	Stuck	(4)
Sat 31st Aug	Alert	?	Overdue party	
Thu 3rd Oct	Swildon's Hole	1	Fall, back injuries	(7)
Sat 2nd Nov	Swildon's Hole	?	Overdue party	
Sat 23rd Nov	Eastwater Cavern	2	Overdue party	
Thu 19th Dec	Sandy Hole, Portland	2	Lost	(2)

Another relatively quiet year for call-outs on Mendip. The table above records nine official calls through the Police and includes one unofficial surface incident where cavers on the spot helped to recover a heifer in trouble. Figures in brackets to the right give the numbers of cavers specifically going underground on cave rescues. It is important to remind everyone that insurance cover only applies to such cavers on official call-outs, and so those concerned must be named at the time in our reports.

Eastwater incidents are prominent for once: the four calls concerned represent almost 17% of all on record to this cave in the past for years.

Swildons, on the other hand, adds little to its total over the same period, and to have a year's gap after the previous call-out there is something of a record in itself. The dry streamway and poor air quality in the cave over another long drought summer did not seem to deter visitors, but made trips less demanding.

Whilst actual rescues show what goes wrong, it also helps to consider good practice. Some challenging systems keep a clean sheet for long spells. In the year when the St Cuthbert's Swallet Report was published, for instance, it is worth noting its remarkable trouble-free record. Since being discovered in 1953, there have only been 7 rescue incidents there needing MRO; the last one occurring on 5th May 1985 (rather than 31st January as given in the Report, page 79).

A contingent of Mendip cavers went to assist Gwent CRO in helping Sarah MacDonald out of Daren Cilau over the last weekend in the year after she had dislocated her shoulder whilst climbing at the far end of the cave. It was good to see her safe and well in the Hunters' Lodge Inn on New Year's Eve.

The following incident reports are based upon information compiled by wardens at the time, and details gleaned later from those involved.

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### **Sunday 6th January, Eastwater Cavern**

Pete Hann called upon Brian Prewer for assistance to help two cavers out of the entrance climb following a heavy storm and flash flood during the late afternoon. It was then 6.30 p.m. The Police were informed and a support party raised comprising Stewart McManus and Graham Johnson. In the event, Pete Hann and Max Midlen were able to assist the trapped pair out safely just before 7 p.m..

Graham Davies and a friend had entered the cave before the storm but found the Boulder Ruckle in flood on returning. Graham's carbide lamp had failed and he could not negotiate the Entrance Squeeze without light. His friend managed to get out to raise the alarm at Upper Pitts.

### **Sunday 3rd February, Eastwater Cavern**

Brian Prewer was alerted by Yeovil Police at 2.50 p.m. They had a message from a Mr J. Eaton at Upper Pitts that a caver had reported that a girl had fallen down the Dolphin Pot and injured her lower back. She was unable to move and in pain. Whilst the informant who had first hand knowledge of what had happened was being found and asked to return with further details, a strong rescue party was raised.

Tony Jarratt, Stewart McManus, Fred Davies, Bob Cork and Dany Bradshaw were contacted and several BEC cavers located at the Wellsway Inn. Dr. Tony Boycott was requested: but, en route from Bristol, he was involved in a car crash, sustained cracked ribs and ended up in hospital himself! Dr. Peter Glanvill in Chard was also advised of the incident and stood by.

Dany accompanied J. Eaton underground at 3.30 p.m. with first aid and comforts boxes. They would assess the patient's injuries and send back news of what needed to be done. Eaton returned to the surface at 4.20 p.m. and reported that the girl concerned was not seriously injured and could do a lot to help herself. A ladder would be needed on Baker's Chimney. Her name was Helen Pearce and she had been caving with a group of Venture Scouts from the Itchen South District Activity Team in Hampshire. They had intended going as far as the Dolphin Pot, but she had fallen about 10 feet down this pitch whilst being "held" on a top rope and stitch plate. It was her first trip down Eastwater, but she had caved before down Goatchurch Cavern and

Swildons Hole. All were reasonably dressed, shod and equipped.

Jim Hanwell happened to hear a Bristol Radio News Report at 4 p.m. which said that a girl had fallen at the Dolphin Pot who was a member of the Wessex Cave Club. Such imprecise and inaccurate news can mislead people and hinder us when released so early in a potentially lengthy rescue, but we do not know of its source on this occasion. In fact, Helen Pearce got away lightly with a severely bruised coccyx.

Bob Cork and Richard Neville Dove entered the cave at 4.25 p.m. and laddered Baker's Chimney. The patient did much to help herself and was brought out through the Boulder Chamber route rather than across the Traverse. She surfaced at 5.30 p.m. and felt able to return home before having her injuries checked out. In a letter of appreciation received soon afterwards, Helen ends with: "Thanks a Million".

### **Wednesday 27th February, Longwood Swallet**

Yeovil Police contacted Brenda Prewer at 9.05 p.m. with a message that someone had fallen in the cave and probably had a dislocated arm. The call had come from Fountain Cottage, Priddy, rather than Longwood Grange. It was subsequently found that Bruce Jones, aged 31, from Bristol had fallen on the Swing Pitch in the August Hole Series and dislocated a shoulder that had been previously weakened by torn muscles. Fortunately, the dislocation had reduced without too much trouble soon after the fall, and the patient had managed to help himself out as far as the squeezes below the Entrance Chimney. He could not manage the awkward climb out, however.

Meanwhile, the caver who had gone ahead to call MRO saw no lights on at Longwood Grange and assumed (wrongly) that no one was in. He then hurried to nearby Manor Farm, Charterhouse. On failing to find anyone at home here, he drove all the way to Priddy and requested help from Pete and Alison Moody. They responded immediately, of course, by calling the Police and going themselves to the cave with the informant.

Nigel Taylor and Dany Bradshaw were alerted and went straight to Longwood, whilst Richard West and Phil Romford gathered rescue equipment and located Dr. Tony Boycott. They were joined by John Beauchamp and his wife, Alison, who is a Casualty Nurse. Eric Dunford and Brian Prewer were diverted from digging at Priddy to man radio communications;

always difficult from within the Longwood valley.

The patient was given Temgesic painkillers, put in the "Baby Bouncer" and then hauled up the Entrance Chimney. He was safely out of the cave by 10.48 p.m. What had all the ingredients for a long rescue operation turned into one less than two hours, in the event, because Bruce Jones had done so much to help himself and the call-out quickly raised cavers in readiness.

### **Saturday 13th April, Wookey Hole Canal**

Although an unofficial incident not involving the Police, the following details received from those involved are worth recording for posterity.

On this particular morning, Tony Jarratt was giving top Japanese cave diver, Shinji Sakurai, a lift to Wookey Hole Caves. Upon arrival, he was accosted by a sorely troubled farmer's wife who seemed desperate for a length of rope and a couple of strong men! It seemed that a heifer had leapt a fence and ended up in the canal leat taking water to the mill. Despite the colourful oaths of the farmer and his son, it could not be fished out.

Tony went to the nearby CDG shed to find Mike McDonald and Robin Brown (he of the Milk Marketing Board). They returned with a rope to find the beast being dragged along the canal by its ear. It was kept afloat by a red and white life buoy around the neck as it could not touch bottom. At this point Robin donned his wetsuit and leapt into the, by now, cowsh-tainted water to nobly assist from behind! The animal then turned as if wanting to kiss its saviour in gratitude. Being thwarted, however, it became very upset and bellowed loudly several times in his face.

The decision was then taken to tow both heifer and rescuer back up the canal to a point where they might be lifted out with a tractor fork lift. Meanwhile, the assembled CDG onlookers would snap incriminating photographs for a now scrutible and very bemused Japanese visitor to take home and show what Mendip cavers do at the Shrine of Cave Divers. The ceremony eventually concluded successfully; the heifer celebrating its freedom by performing a series of mighty bounds and dragging farmer and cave divers off through the woods. All were "over the moon".

### **Thursday 18th April, Eastwater Cavern**

Brian Prewer received a call from Yeovil Police ten minutes after midnight. A Vanessa Gill had reported that Richard Whittington was stuck, head down, in the Upper Traverse. She was contacted at the Priddy Green call box for further details.

Tony Jarratt, Stewart McManus and Dany Bradshaw were alerted whilst Brian himself collected equipment from the Store. At the Belfry, he found Graham Johnson and Jim Smart; both of whom agreed to assist straight away. In view of the late hour, he also stood by Fred Davies, Tim Large, Rich West and Pete and Alison Moody in case they might have to be called to assist in the small hours.

Three MCG cavers, Vanessa Gill, J. Crowsley and R. Whittington, went down the cave at 7.30 p.m. the previous day with the intention of exploring the Mud Escalator Series. They had turned round at the start of this series and come back via the Upper Traverse. On entering this head first at a higher level than is usual, Richard became firmly stuck almost upside down, and his companions could not free him. Fortunately, he kept calm and composed until further help arrived.

Tony Jarratt went underground at half-past midnight, followed by a hauling party. The stuck caver was pulled through the squeeze with the help of a single rope and was safely out of the cave by 1.30 a.m.

It is worth noting that, despite being so late and mid-week, from the time Vanessa made the 999-call MRO was alerted within a minute and Tony Jarratt reached the patient to help only 25 minutes later.

### **Saturday 31st August, Alert**

Mrs Woodford of Bournemouth contacted Yeovil Police because her 11-year old son, Justin was a day late in returning from a caving trip on Mendip. She thought that he was with a cave leader called Andy and was staying with the "South Mendip Caving Club".

The Police contacted Brian Prewer with this information just 44 minutes after midnight. On telephoning Mrs Woodford for more details, Briar learnt that the Bournemouth party had travelled to Mendip in a yellow Transit and had been staying at a club hut currently being extended. He deduced that this was the Shepton Mallet Caving Club HQ at the St Cuthbert's Minery, so drove there to check with those in residence. He found that the group in question had been staying at the hut, but had left for Bournemouth some two hours earlier. They had decided to extend their stay in the area by a day; but, no one seems to have advised Mr: Woodford who became naturally worried when her son was 24 hours overdue and another night had set in.

Mrs Woodford and the Police were told that the party was on its way home at 1.06 a.m The expedition leader was Andy Taylor.

### **Thursday 3rd October, Swildons Hole**

Brian Williams from Radstock took his 17-year old daughter, Sarah, on her first caving trip down the streamway to Sump One during the evening. She was wearing boots with hook-fastened laces. They were accompanied by Sarah's girlfriend, who was also a novice, and two other cavers. On climbing the Twenty Foot ladder, Sarah understandably snagged her boot hooks in the wires, struggled and fell off when about 15 feet up. She was not being lifelined! Luckily, she escaped without severe injuries, but was badly bruised and shocked. both girls became very upset and tearful.

One of the party left the cave to raise the alarm through the Police. Richard West received the call at 11.40 p.m. On contacting the informant at the Priddy Green call box, no further details about the extent of the patient's injuries were available, so the worst had to be assumed. Tony Jarratt was dragged out of bed and Dany Bradshaw alerted straightaway. The latter had a couple of caving friends from Yorkshire staying with him, and they kindly assisted too. Brian Johnson and Pete Mullholland were raised at the Belfry and Richard West arrived there to get rescue equipment and take over surface control.

Brian Johnson and Pete Mullholland went down the cave at midnight, closely followed by Tony Jarratt, Dany Bradshaw and Mick Nunwick. The latter were accompanied by Simon Brown. Half-an-hour later, Pete Mullholland surfaced to report that the patient was able to stand with support, but had pain in the lower lumbar and aches higher in her back. She had responded well to the rescuers and all members of her original party were being sent on ahead to make their own way out.

After being hauled up the Twenty Foot, Sarah Williams bucked up and was brought out via the Wet Way. A close check was kept on her back injuries by Dany. She was safely out of the cave by 12.51 a.m. and found to be well enough to go home by waiting ambulance officers.

#### **Saturday 11th November, Swildons Hole**

A Mr Price from Weymouth rang the Police to say that a party led by Gaynum Locke was overdue from a trip to Sump One. Yeovil Police alerted Brian Prewer at 9.30 p.m. It appeared that they had gone down the cave earlier in the day and had been expected back in Weymouth at about 6 p.m. The car they were using was described.

Brian called the Hunters' Lodge Inn and checked both village greens, but did not find the car concerned among all those parked in these areas. Fifteen minutes later, Mr Price telephoned again to say that the party had arrived home safely having been delayed en route to Weymouth.

#### **Saturday 23rd November, Eastwater Cavern**

The Police from Bristol contacted Brian Prewer at 6.20 p.m. and requested MRO to ring Yeovil Control for details about overdue cavers they had been asked to find. Stewart McManus made the call and learnt that a Miss Nicola Hare from Bristol had informed the local police that her boyfriend and a companion had not returned from a trip to Eastwater a short while ago as arranged. Two officers had already gone in search and had found the van used by the cavers concerned still parked in the lane. This search may have delayed the call-out of MRO had the van been in a less obvious place.

Stewart contacted Tony Jarratt, Dany Bradshaw and Phil Romford to form a search party. Others were stood by at the Belfry. Just as the first team was about to go underground, the overdue pair

surfaced. It appears that they had gone as far as the First Vertical to undertake SRT practice; but, they had not taken a watch with them and were unaware of being almost two hours late for their ETA in Bristol. Both were experienced cavers from the Bath area and in their mid-twenties.

#### **Thursday 19th December, Sandy Hole, Portland**

Dorset Police contacted Brian Prewer at 8 p.m. regarding a party presumed missing in this system on the cliff top at Portland. Their vehicle had been located nearby and HM Coast guard were at the scene. Whilst Brian was in the process of alerting experienced cave rescuers in the Weymouth area, the Police phoned again, ten minutes later, to report that two cavers had been found and both were well.

Apparently, the two cavers went into Sandy Hole on Blacknor Point through an entrance known as Sharbutt's Rift. They became lost below a squeeze in a series of low bedding plane crawls and sandy passages with some tiny chambers. The system is some 1,300 feet long. The pair were lost for several hours (reported as 9 hrs in the Dorset Evening Echo). Weymouth Outdoor Education staff were alerted, including Wayne Brown, an experienced Mendip caver. The lost cavers were soon located and escorted out safely.

Rescue calls to sites in Dorset are rare, of course, despite the growing popularity of the many caves on Portland. There are also extensive old stone mines on Purbeck, near Swanage. The last official call-out to the area was on 29th June 1975 when a boulder fell and broke the leg of a caver in nearby Blacknor Hole. A few unrecorded incidents are known to have occurred more recently. MRO provides a rescue cover for Dorset by arrangement with the Association of Chief Police Officers through the BCRC and Mountain Rescue Committee structure nationally.

The Blacknor system, for example, is over 2,600 feet long, with complex crawls along old streamways encountering large cross rifts. Its entrance lies 35 feet down overhanging sea cliffs, and trips can last up to 6 hours. MRO holds detailed descriptions of all caves on Portland, including information on possible rescue needs. Up-to-date lists of locally resident active cavers with rescue experience on Mendip are kept, and others with any necessary specialist equipment could be there in about an hour.

J.D. Hanwell  
Wookey Hole,  
January 1992

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION  
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1991

<u>1990</u>		
£		
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Balance at bank:-		
5,000	Deposit Account	3,600
252	Current Account	408
-----		-----
5,252		4,008
10	Cash with Hon. Treasurer and Equipment Warden	7
-----		-----
£5,262		£4,015
=====		=====
Representing:-		
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>		
4,615	Balance at 1 January 1991	5,262
647	Surplus (Deficit) for year	(1,247)
-----		-----
£5,262		£4,015
=====		=====

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

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, the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the Organisation's funds at 31 December 1991 and the deficit for the year ended on that date.

R Chant, FCA, FTII  
4 Paray Drive  
Wells  
Somerset BA5 3HW

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

<u>1991</u>				
£				
<u>Income</u>				
Donations:-				
1,026	In memory of Bob Drake		50	
417	General Appeal		168	
263	Collection Boxes		222	
130	Rescued Parties		20	
-----			-----	
1,836				460
265	Hire of MRO Nife Cells			186
98	Sales of equipment			-
220	Bank deposit interest			118
470	Mountain Rescue Committee grant for Mager Stretchers			-
-----				-----
2,889				764
=====				=====
<u>Expenditure</u>				
<u>Equipment:-</u>				
877	Radios, Pagers and Molephone	730		
169	General	6		
66	Lighting	-		
185	Hauling tackle	594		
5	Hot Air kit	-		
548	Mager Stretchers	-		
	Sump Rescue	388		
		-----		
			1,718	
28	Medical supplies		13	
90	Insurance of equipment		99	
108	Postage, stationery & duplicating		140	
Donations:-				
15	S.W.E.R.A.	15		
	B.C.R.C.	10		
		-----		
			25	
151	Meetings and information		16	
-----			-----	
2,242				2,011
-----				-----
£647				£(1,247)
=====				=====

# Reviews

## Who was Aveline Anyway?

Historians have long argued over the origins of English place names, usually safe in the knowledge that they can never really be proved wrong. Caving names however are largely of much more recent age. It takes a brave man to set down the definitive stories behind Albert's Eye in Manor Farm Swallet or Zulu's Cavelet at Cloford. This is just what Richard Witcombe has done in "Who was Aveline Anyway?" which is the first in a new series of Wessex Cave Club Occasional Publications. Over 350 names, both well known and obscure have been researched.

Just like our Saxon ancestors, cavers have littered their new discoveries with the names and nicknames of their friends, their deeds and observations. Most readers will readily identify with many of the caves, characters and events involved.

The origins of names such as Wookey Hole and Cuckoo Cleaves are clouded in antiquity, while others commemorate the early pioneers like Balch and Savory and three separate Bakers. However the bulk of the entries concern a lot of good club cavers, as well as sprinkling of their farmer and landowner friends.

The majority of the 18 photographs depict stalwarts like Paul Dolphin and "Digger" Harris. Yet the boyish faces of Phil Davies and "Joe" Candy show that a lot of the digging and pushing was done by very young men. One might say some of the cave names show it! Pipsqak Hole and Nod's Pot were dug by school boys.

Yes, Richard has collected some excellent caving folk lore and produced a neat little book. It's a good nostalgic read.

Maurice Hewins

*Who was Aveline Anyway? - Mendip's cave names explained. Richard Witcombe; Wessex Cave Club Occasional Publication Series 3 Number 1; Mendip Publishing, 1992; ISBN 0 905903 31 5, A5 95pp Soft-bound £5.00*

**Copies are available to members from the Club at a discount rate.**

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## Below Belize

This is a publication produced by the 1988 Queen Mary College and 1989 British Speleological Expeditions to Belize.

The instant thought upon receipt was that it was just another expedition report, but I am glad to say that I was proven wrong. It is technically "another" expedition report, but it surpasses most

that I have seen in terms of presentation and quality of production.

The report is divided into 11 chapters. Six cover the major geographical areas of exploration and five supporting chapters cover introduction, references etc.

The introductory chapter deals with the crucial question of "Where is Belize?". As a reviewer I'm biased because I know, but if you do not, or know little of the country and its people this chapter will enlighten you, if not tantalise you in wanting to visit the place.

The chapters on the caving areas each include an introduction to the area which describes the basic geography of the area; both human and physical. Each of the major caves visited in the area are described and the description usually supported by a high quality survey. Thorough directions are provided to find these caves as well as some hints on the best way to approach travel through the jungle. The information provided in these chapters make this publication a very authoritative guide to the area.

The concluding chapter describes the fundamentals of the Mayan religion and how it is entwined with caves, which makes for some interesting reading. It is also of interest to read the archaeologists views on what they thought the caves were actually used for by the Mayans. It was sad to read of the constant evidence that both expeditions found of the looting of cave artefacts.

The text is well supported throughout with high quality photo's, maps and surveys, there being a collection of colour photographs in the middle of the report which complement the descriptions of areas and caves well. My only real criticisms are fairly trivial in that some of the maps and descriptions are out of synchronisation which means having to flip through the report to find the relevant map, and that some of the descriptions of how to find the caves were a little long winded and could have been better handled, in my opinion, with a map.

In conclusion I was very impressed by the high quality of this report. The text is readable and, as already commented, well supported with high quality photo's, surveys and maps. I feel that this report should be compulsory reading for anyone with even the vaguest thought of visiting the country, and will certainly be essential to any further expedition planner as a basis for planning their expeditions. All-in-all, my congratulations must go to all those involved in the production of this readable and informative report.

Murray Knapp

*Below Belize, Edited by Nick Marochov and Nick Williams, Published by Clare Jarvis and Nick Williams, 1992, A4 58pp Softbound £3.50, 20 b/w and 18 colour photographs, 4 maps and 18 Cave surveys*

## Notes for contributors

If you have any article, letter, comment, news, photograph, or anything else which you would like to see published in the Journal, please do not hesitate to send it in. Preferably, text should be typed on one side of the paper only, with wide margins and double spaces between the lines, but I'd rather have it scrawled on the back of a cigarette packet than not get it at all.

The main requirement for photographs is that they should not have too much contrast as otherwise they are unrecognizable when printed. Prints in black and white or colour are acceptable, but bear in mind that they will come out as black and white prints when they appear, so if the colour is an important feature the effect may be lost in printing. Please make sure that your prints are clearly labelled, and send the appropriate captions for each figure on a separate sheet.

For those who have access to a word-processor, I may be able to accept contributions on

floppy disc. Please give me a ring so that we can discuss whether or not your software is compatible with mine - at present I can handle contributions in Apple Macintosh format and all formats of MS-DOS IBM disc.

Line drawings, sketch maps and diagrams are all welcome. They should be supplied in the size at which they are to be printed. Make sure that lettering is large and bold.

If you copy drawings or photo's, or quote, from another publication, please make sure you inform me before publication so that I can make arrangements regarding copyright.

Authors may obtain a laser-printed copy of their article for the production of further offprints by contacting me, although I may have to make a small charge for this service.

**Wessex Cave Club**  
**Annual Dinner**  
Saturday 17th October 1992  
**Coxley Vinyard, near Wells**  
7.30 for 8.00pm

Tickets £16.50 including coach from Upper Pitts, available from  
Marion Batten, 17 The Park Towngate, Southowram, Halifax, HX3 9QZ

**Guest Speakers: Ken Dawe and Dr Bob Pyke**

**Formal dress • Raffle**

*AGM, Hunter's Lodge Inn, 2.30pm*