



THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

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AUGUST 1994

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Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Club or the Editor.

club notes

Wessex People:

The Club notes with regret the deaths of Ian Rolland, diving in Huatla, of Alan Box, exploring in Matienzo and of Dick Glover after a long illness.

Get Well Soon to Keith Sanderson who suffered a broken pelvis in a 6m fall in the Piaggia Bella (northern Italy) at the end of July. Returned to the surface from 1000m down by a team of 47 rescuers in a 42 hour rescue, Keith is now back in the UK and, we are told, on the mend.

New Members

A warm welcome to:

Paula Rich, Whitestown Farm, Cheddar Crossroads, Compton Martin, Bristol, BS18 6LD;

Andrew Bliss, 179 City Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG3 5SL

Hazel Barton, Department of Microbiology, 4200 E. 9th Avenue, Denver, CO 80262, USA

Andy Kay, La Chessenie, 24390 Cherveix-Cubas, France

Changes of address:

A.D. Morse, 7 Windsor Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2LN

Graham Prole, Flat B, 49 Mount Park Road, Ealing, London, W5 2RS

Keith Savory, Little Stoke House, Wells Road, Rodney Stoke, Somerset, BS27 3XB

Niki Adlam, Brook Cottage, Upper Lydbrook, Gloucestershire GL17 9LQ

J.M. Rawlings, 5 Redland Terrace, Redland, Bristol.

Committee Notes

Following discussions at the 1993 AGM, the committee have been investigating the status of the **footpath across the Wessex's property** at Upper Pitts. According to the Council's definitive map there is no right of way across Wessex property and it might be advantageous to erect notices to this effect. However, the styles and markers for the footpaths close to the property have recently been re-furbished and the problem of hordes of walkers

tramping across our property seem to have subsided as a result so the Committee have decided to monitor the situation a while longer before going to the expense of erecting notices.

A general reduction in hut bookings in the second quarter of the year, along with reduced revenue from Army parties at Upper Pitts has forced a **rise in hut fees**. The new rates (effective from 1 August) are £3.00 per night to guests, £2.00 per night for members. This is pretty much in line with other huts around the country.

A booking form for the **Annual Dinner** is contained within this *Journal* as an insert. Since this year is the 60th anniversary of the Club we hope to see many older members and their friends in October. If any members know of older club members whose membership has lapsed (or people who used to be associated with the Club but were never actually members) and who might like the opportunity to attend the Dinner, please feel free to send them a copy of the booking form or contact Aubrey Newport with an address to send a booking form to.

In order that Members have the time to make the most of the opportunity to renew old acquaintances at the dinner, this year's **Annual General Meeting** is being held at 10:30 in the morning instead of the more normal afternoon session. Following the AGM there will be a display of old Journals and diaries in the Library at the Hut, and there will also be a display at the dinner itself. Anyone with any ideas or donations of material for these displays should contact either Mike York or Maurice Hewins.

A busy weekend in mid August saw the complete replacement of the old **fire escape** at Upper Pitts with the 'new' one purchased from Gloucester County Cricket Ground in Bristol. Judging from the effort it took to pull the old fire escape down, it wasn't in as imminent danger of collapse as was previously thought, but the new steps are even more sturdy and are likely to outlast even the younger members of the team which erected them.

Other work at Upper Pitts has seen the recent completion (at least to an operable state) of the **Ladies Preference Shower** (in the side room off the main changing room). This has been on the minutes for at least as long as I have been on the Committee but the idea that we should hold a barrel in the room to celebrate was quashed when we worked out that there wouldn't be space for all the BEC members who would be bound to attend!

The **Bosch drill** was recently repaired after the main

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caving notes

A considerable stir was caused earlier in the year when it became clear that Bristol Water were prepared to sell the land that includes the entrances to **GB and Charterhouse Caves**. Initially it was thought that the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation would get first refusal on the land, or that the Mendip caving clubs might have to set up an organisation (trust or limited company) to purchase the land on behalf of the Charterhouse Caving Committee. After the initial fuss died away it became clear that there are other bidders apart from the Trust and while there is an obligation on Bristol Water to consider the conservation interest in any sale, this may not be the over-riding factor. Following a meeting of the CCC, a working party was set up to make recommendations on the way forward, and they are currently in negotiations with Somerset Trust on a deal which would allow the Trust to buy the land and CCC to lease the underground access rights back on a long lease, although this is only one of several options which will maintain long term access to the caves by cavers. Richard Witcombe has agreed to prepare a report on the situation for discussion at the AGM.

Apart from being the 60th anniversary year for the Wessex, 1994 is also the 100th anniversary of **Wells Museum** and of the inscription in Cave of the Falling Waters in **Lamb Leer**. The cave is closely associated with the Wessex and the MNRC who both originally explored it when it became open to cavers in the 1930's. To commemorate the anniversaries, the Museum is putting on a special display at the museum entitled 'Images of the Wild' throughout September and October. On the Friday before the Dinner (14 October), Dave Irwin will be giving two lectures at the Museum. The first will be on the history of the Museum and on the founder, Herbert Balch; the second will concentrate on Lamb Leer itself over the period 1880 - 1900. For further details please contact the Museum on 0749 675337. It is hoped that the cave

can be opened for members of the MNRC and Wessex (and their guests) over the weekend of the Dinner.

The **British Cave Rescue Council Conference**, held in the Eastwater field over the weekend 9-11 July was a resounding success. Activities ranged from underground sessions on first aid, communications, sump rescue, Hymac digging and the use of explosives to the **Wessex Challenge** on Saturday night. Seven teams took part in four heats over a genuinely awesome course dreamed up by Bob Scammel and Les Williams with help from Max

Midlen, Mark Helmore and Graham Bromley. Most people who saw the course in advance of the race itself were convinced it was going to kill someone, but in the event the worst that became of anyone was a soaking and a few bruises. Quite who won I'm not sure since I was in the process of having 25 gallons of soapy water tipped over my head at the crucial moment as the BEC finished the course and its organisers. Edited video highlights of the event, subtitled 'Full Moon over Eastwater' (ask Rob Harper if you don't understand why) are available price £5.00 by contacting Les. Over all the Rescue conference was a credit to MRO and everyone who took part in organising it – especially Dany Bradshaw who co-ordinated the whole event. How did you organise the weather, Darn?

At the 1994 AGM of the **National Caving Association**, held in March,

the first important steps were taken to revise the constitution following the two year long deliberations of the Special Committee on Structure. Changes voted in include:

- Direct club membership of the Association: clubs will continue to be members of (and pay subscriptions to) their regional council but will now have direct club representation on the National Council of the Association.

- Elections of convenors of the Association's various

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Club Leaders

The Wessex leaders approved by the Clubs which control access to the following caves are:

Dan-Yr -Ogof: Pete Hann, Rich Websell, Ian Jepson, Chris Milne, Malcolm Foyle.

OFD1 leaders are: Ian Jepson, Carl Pickstone and Don Thompson.

Charterhouse Cave: Mark Helmore and Nigel Graham.

St Cuthberts Swallet: Alison Moody is the only approved leader at present. Paul Lambert, Mark Helmore, Les Williams and Andy Summerskill have all put their names forward as potential new leaders but no one is yet approved by the BEC and until they are the BEC will not be accepting further nominations from the Wessex.

White Pit: No leader necessary, but keys held by Aubrey Newport, Graham Bromley and Dave Morrison

Pen Park Hole: Graham Bromley and Mark Helmore

Mendip Rescue Organisation Report 1993

Report by the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer for the year to 31st December 1993

Thanks to the efforts of wardens and the support of Mendip cavers, a lot was achieved in 1993. The record is now best seen by referring to the occasional **Newsletters** produced by MRO. Number 5 (November, 1993) also looks ahead with events up to the summer of 1994 and the British Cave Rescue Council Conference on Mendip on 8-10th July. Dany Bradshaw is the BCRC Conference Secretary responsible for organising the event.

Something to improve our performances on rescues has been organised for clubs and cavers almost monthly; First Aid sessions, hauling practices, equipment demonstrations and so on. And they pay off! A life was certainly saved last November by Vince Simmonds's prompt action to resuscitate a patient who suddenly stopped breathing during the haul out. Vince, like many of us, had attended First Aid lectures with hands-on demonstrations kindly organised for us by Paul Fry of the St. John's Ambulance Service in Wells and MRO's own resuscitation sessions with dummies at the Hunters' Lodge Inn. He knew what to do. It is not a matter of once learnt never forgotten either; for these procedures need regular practise. Much the same applies to the use of rescue equipment, of course.

MRO posts details of training and events in the Hunters' and circulates **Newsletters** to current club rescue team contacts, where known. Then it's up to cavers and their clubs, for costs alone clearly prohibit MRO giving a personal service. On Mendip, the organisation of cave rescue relies solely upon donations for income, and MRO is not a club of paid-up members. And donations have dwindled during the recession as the accompanying accounts show. The dissemination of information initiated by MRO effectively parallels that used on actual call-outs. It is passed down the line to those who matter. Each step in the chain, or cascade, depends upon every person concerned taking responsibility to inform the next one.

Breakdowns in flows of vital information occur when people become out-of-touch with MRO. Obviously, only enough of those interested and readily available will be called upon at any time. During emergencies, especially, valuable time clearly cannot be wasted chasing-up cavers who we rarely see or are unavailable anyway. Whilst call-outs and information start with wardens, therefore, they only work well if clubs keep up the good work by maintaining a rescue

service among the currently active caving community.

On Mendip, we are reassured that so many willing and able volunteers can be called upon whenever necessary. Indeed, count up the number of separate individuals who helped out on rescues locally during the year from the following incident reports. Over eighty names appear, to say nothing of those on call in case needed. Rescue practices were also well attended. In March, a pioneer, even historic, deep sump rescue simulation was undertaken from Wookey Twenty. This involved a large and welcome gathering of Somerset Section Cave Diving Group members working together, and a separate report on the exercise prepared by Dany Bradshaw has been submitted to the CDG. During the summer, a day's hauling practice was held at Split Rock Quarry. This attracted many clubs, and the follow-up at St. Cuthbert's Swallet in the Autumn had over fifty participants underground. MRO is grateful to the BEC for agreeing to this useful event. Attendance at indoor training meets has also been rewarding, which makes all the organisational effort worthwhile. And the now annual Stomp was, again, literally a roaring success!

The following accounts reflect a priority to improve rescuers' First Aid capability and medical care of patients, using existing equipment. There is, however, a continuing need to keep communications systems working effectively and, so, it has already been agreed that surplus funds in our general Deposit Account should be dedicated to a new Molefone, when available. The special account in memory of Bob Drake helps to fund a major event for Mendip cavers, such as Dr. John Frankland's address.

Whilst the more historic than practical links of CRO's with the old Mountain Rescue Committee (now Council) still works well in some regions, their close tie-up nationally with the British Cave Rescue Council seems to be less advantageous to caving nowadays than it was formerly. Shared problems are not necessarily halved in these days of increased administration and legislation, to say nothing of more meetings to discuss the same Issues. Because mountain rescuers deal with a diverse and growing range of out door activities and sports in uplands, they are faced more with the general public and all that this entails. As cave rescuers, however, we focus upon more specialist enthusiasts, in the main. Save for Pete Hann, perhaps, MRO does not have a problem with bikers in caves. Nor, I suspect, has paragliding down

itches much of a future underground.

My predecessor, Dr. Oliver Lloyd, once argued that the then new 'death cult' of abseiling and prussicking would never catch on in caving! So, although more of a mind to believe anything these days, I foresee a time when it would be wise for BCRC to stand more alone on behalf of cavers than be unnecessarily overextended with problems unlikely to concern us in particular. Quite apart from cavers alone helping fellow cavers in rescue work, CRO's have different operational needs: our equipment, stretchers in particular, must often be made-to-measure; its portage underground relies upon basic manpower, and hauling patients to safety uses much the same skills. The way in is invariably the way out, too, with few if any short cuts to take. I reflect, too, that little has really changed in cave rescue work over the years, save for the availability of better designed and

made caving gear, medical aids and communications in particular.

Without tempting providence, it is also worth noting that, unlike the mountain world, the annual frequency of cave rescue incidents has stayed remarkably consistent for a long time. The facts speak for themselves. We must beware of being misled into thinking otherwise because of new glossies such as **Rescue**, the so-called Technical Rescue Magazine first launched in October-November 1993, good though it appears to be. Vested interests often light and fuel unnecessary fires. The carefully researched **Cave Rescue** report following the study of both Mountain and Cave rescue in England and Wales for the Sports Council, by Judith Annett of Kit Campbell Associates (December, 1993), seems likely to have a bigger impact upon the future rescue scene: hopefully for the better. Time will tell.

Eleven call-outs took place during the year, and seven of them necessitated rescuers going underground. Four of these were as serious as any on record, of which three were the result of injuries sustained from falls. It has come to MRO's attention that some cavers are risking to jump down short climbs, and even encouraging inexperienced people to follow suit! Neither practise is safe, and certainly not the latter.

Apart from a rash piece of mid-summer madness in the Box Mines, Wiltshire, which nearly caused the deaths of two youths with fewer brain cells than matches, all other calls took place within the first and final thirds of the year. There is really no annually recurring pattern of incidents as some have claimed, however. Rather, the seasonal totals over the years tend to show that late autumn is the highest risk period whilst summer is the least accident prone time. No doubt the theorists can advance reasons.

The following table lists all eleven incidents with summaries respectively recording; the day, date, cave, persons involved, cause and numbers of rescuers going underground, within brackets. MRO has consistently used the same system over the past forty years since reforming after the Second World War. At some time, the writer hopes to write-up details of this long term data.

For people unfamiliar with cave rescues, it is worth emphasising that those actually going underground to assist must be backed up by at least as many on the surface in support roles and on stand-by in case needed. It is also important to realise that various skills and jobs are needed since only a few deal

directly with the patient. First Aid, therefore, is obviously vital yet only one of many crucial attributes needed by cave rescuers. Each person plays a part and, so, it is important that any training undertaken is appropriately flexible. It follows that no one is expected to be competent to carry out every task. Volunteers do best in what they are good at and want to do. Those available at the time matter most during emergencies, and the composition of rescue parties is always different. Being able to work with others is especially important.

Well run rescues use the available people to the best advantage. Whilst there is no substitute for actual experience over the years, the current generation of cavers must be suitably involved in rescue work. It is hoped that the lessons provided in the following incident reports will be of some help to all concerned. MRO believes that full and factual accounts are a good way to inform and influence cavers about what happens to cause accidents. They also enable them to appreciate the many jobs that need doing on rescues.

Saturday 23rd January Swildon's Hole

Brian Prewer was contacted by the Police from their Taunton Control at 2.00 p.m. It was reported that a novice caver had fallen off the Twenty Foot Pot ladder and sustained bad back injuries. Further details were obtained from the informant at the nearby Priddy Green call box. Four members of the Bastard Squad Caving Club from Crawley, West Sussex, had descended the cave at about 8.00 a.m. Two were on their first caving trip.

On reaching Sump One, three of the party went through leaving Peter Lofthouse behind. He was one of the beginners, in his late twenties, very tall and weighed over 18 stone. His solitary wait left him very cold. After reuniting, the party began their return up the streamway, reaching the Twenty Foot at about 1.00 p.m., some five hours after going down the cave. Peter Lofthouse was exhausted and failed to climb the pitch. On his second attempt, he fell off the ladder, and the life-liner who was using a 'shunt' failed to hold him. Although barely 2 to 3 metres off the ground, he hit the floor heavily on his back and seems to have been severely bruised by a belay belt attachment. Badly shaken, he was assisted upright, but further attempts to climb the pitch were abandoned. He became demoralised and runners were despatched to raise the call-out.

A strong rescue party was assembled at the Belfry and diverted from a trip down St. Cuthbert's Swallet by Stewart McManus. Mike Wilson, Chris Harvey, Jeremy Henly, D. Herbert and K. Hissey went underground at about 2.10 p.m. with First Aid, Comforts and the Molefone. They were backed-up by Tim Large and Martin Grass ten minutes later with hauling ropes. Dr Tony Boycott and Chris Smart followed with medical supplies at 2.30 p.m. Alan Butcher, Pete Burgess, Les Williams, M. Clark and G. Lyall went down the cave at 2.40 p.m. with the main hauling gear and Mager stretcher. The 'baby bouncer' was requested and sent down the cave at 3.05 p.m. with Rob Harper and Dave Yeandle. By this time the size, weight and incapacity of the patient became known. There was great concern over the extent of his back injuries. A long and hard, but careful, haul seemed in prospect. Dave Morrison manned the cave entrance, Brian Prewer set up surface communications with the underground party and Stewart McManus took over as Controller. Others were alerted.

To compound the situation, Laurie Kay, aged 28 and one of the two experienced cavers in the original party, fell off the Ten Foot climb near the entrance on her way out. She had been reluctant to leave her injured colleague, and had herself become very exhausted and demoralised. Her back was also hurt and she complained of considerable pain. She was immediately attended by Rob Harper and Dave Yeandle, secured into the Paraguard stretcher, then hauled out with help from Murray Knapp, Mike Thomas and Ian Caldwell to an awaiting ambulance. It left for Bristol Royal Infirmary at 3.30 p.m.

Meanwhile, the original patient had given up trying to help himself in any way. The physically demanding haul out thus required relief parties to take over at key points in the cave, especially the more constricted Upper Series. The Short Dry Way route is used on rescues. Fred Davies, Phil Romford, Alan Turner,

John Attwood, Ian Caldwell, M. James, A. Smith, R. Humphrey, S. Rolls, S. Hooton, P. Weston and G. Garvosso went down the cave to assist at 4.50 p.m. Kirsty Turner and Jim Hanwell ferried additional kit to the cave, including digging gear to open-up Binnie's Link as much as possible.

After reaching the top of Jacob's Ladder, the first attempt to pass the bulky patient through the cleared out Binnie's Link failed. The alternative possibility through the Kennys' Dig had to be abandoned at the top of the tortuous Mud Slide. The only way out had to be forced through Binnie's Link. Fortunately, the Mager stretcher is well designed to cope with such eventualities. Its toughest test yet was achieved at a cost of £40's worth of damage to the sheet but none to the patient, save indignity. He was out of the cave and off in the ambulance to BRI at 7.30 p.m., after over eleven hours underground on an eventful first caving trip. It was almost certainly his last!

MRO heard the following day that both patients had left the hospital for home a few hours later, and had not suffered serious injuries despite all the signs at the time. Indeed, a couple of rescuers appear to have sustained worse back strains as a result of their exertions, and had to take time off work. Since then, however, we have not heard a word from this club. One begins to wonder whether there really is more to names than meets the eye!

Sunday 14th February Swildon's Hole

The Police at Taunton Control called Brian Prewer at 7.30 p.m. to say that a caver had become exhausted and unable to get out the cave. They said that the informant, James Rumble, had reported the person concerned to be 'only twenty feet inside the cave': however, he had left the phone and so it was not possible to confirm immediately what the problem was. On meeting the informant a little later on the Green, it was learnt that the exhausted caver was at the bottom of the Twenty Foot Pot and unable to climb the ladder. As the previous incident showed, this can be turn into something much more serious.

Six Scout Leaders from Reading entered the cave at about 3.30 p.m. and reached Sump One nearly two hours later. On returning to the Twenty Foot, Conrad Boyer had become exhausted and was unable to climb the ladder. The others seemed too tired to help him; so three, including James Rumble, left the cave to call for assistance. They wasted time by going to Upper Pitts rather than using the Priddy Green call box. On finding no one there, they rang the Police from the hut before returning to the Green; hence the confusing message could not be initially confirmed, which is always a frustrating start to a call-out.

Brian Prewer alerted Alan Butcher and Tony Jarratt in Priddy; the latter being with Chris Harvey and Marcel Dijkstra, a Dutch caver. All four went down the cave to assist straightaway and, using the tackle already available to the scouts, managed to haul Conrad Boyer up the pitch with little difficulty. Richard West established Surface Control Jim Hanwell, Phil Romford, Chris Hawkes and Tim and Jos Large stood-by in case needed. Brian Prewer and Dany Bradshaw, who had followed with full MRO hauling gear met all concerned making their way out at the Eight Foot climb below the old Forty Foot Pot. Although very tired, the patient did not require any medical attention and, with appropriate moral support, was able to help himself out the cave by 8.40 p.m.

In the event, it must also be noted that three with cave rescue experience plus an overseas visitor achieved what five in the original party had been unable to do for themselves. This alone justifies MRO's longstanding offer to assist clubs who wish to undertake rescue practices and training in appropriate patient hauling techniques. The latter are very different to the usual methods used to climb pitches, and invariably much more basic; an approach which surprises many wooed by today's high technology 'fix' for most situations.

Sunday 21st March Swildon's Hole

Brian Prewer received a call from the Police Control at Taunton at 4.45 p.m. to report an overdue party. A Mr. Coobham from Crawley, near London, was concerned that five cavers from the Three Bridges Scout Group had not surfaced from a 'round trip' as expected. They had gone down the cave at 9.30 a.m. and, so, had been underground for over seven hours. The informant himself had turned back at the entrance. He was met on Priddy Green for further details.

Alex Gee and Andrew Dennis were on the spot and offered to start a search; particularly all routes in the Upper Series first before going on to Tratman's Temple and Vicarage Landing. Dany Bradshaw, Bob Cork, Tony Jarratt, Stewart McManus, Richard West, and Tim and Jos Large were contacted to prepare for any rescue situation. Dany informed Martin Grass.

The initial search party met the overdue scouts at the entrance, just emerging after a trip of almost eight hours. They had been unable to bail out the final duck and, so, were forced to return via Paradise Regained. This inevitably delayed them, of course.

Tuesday 23rd March Eastwater Cavern

Mrs. Dorothy Gibbons took the trouble to visit Brian Prewer at his home in Priddy because she was concerned for the safety of two cavers who had entered the cave at 3 p.m., well over five hours earlier in the day. She did not know which routes they intended to follow, but had been asked to raise the alarm if they had not reported back by about 8 p.m. Sometime later, the girlfriend of one of the cavers rang the farm because she was also concerned that they had exceeded their ETA. Both cavers were experienced, well equipped and knew the cave. Michael Quartermain and Tony Simmons were in their mid-forties and lived in Glastonbury.

Brian alerted wardens and local cavers at the Hunters' Lodge by 8.40 p.m., and Tony Jarratt went to collect diggers from a nearby site. Jim Hanwell was contacted shortly afterwards. He was expecting a visit from Dany Bradshaw within a few minutes, and it was agreed that a search party ought to go down the cave as soon as possible. Rescuers would be stood-by and the Police informed that an incident was underway.

Brian Prewer, Jim Hanwell, Dany Bradshaw and Tony Jarratt met in Eastwater Lane just before 9 p.m. Brian set up the surface Molefone, Jim established a Control by the gate into the field whilst Dany and Tony entered the cave at 9.38 p.m. with the underground Molefone and comforts. It was agreed that the 'Old Cave' would be searched before considering the possibility of an incident in the West End Series; Dany followed the popular Traverse route whilst Tony used the less frequented Boulder Chamber route. The missing cavers were not in either section, and this ominous news was reported to the surface from the bottom of Baker's Chimney at 9.55 p.m. Tony proceeded to check out the Twin Verticals and Dolphin Pot routes beyond whilst Dany manned the Molefone.

A message was radioed from underground at 10.05 p.m. that the missing cavers had been found. Tony Simmons had fallen about ten feet whilst climbing up the Dolphin Chimney on the way out from a trip to the bottom of the 'Old Cave'. He had badly broken the lower part of his left arm, sustaining a bad Colles fracture of the wrist and deeply lacerated fingers with exposed tendons as a result of the impact. This had happened about five hours earlier, and he had been in great pain ever since though in a remarkably confident state in the circumstances. Michael Quartermain felt unable to leave his injured friend alone whilst going out to seek help; rather, he preferred to comfort him as best he could, so risking

that help would come from the surface once their ETA had elapsed. This decision, made more with understandable emotion than reason, perhaps, undoubtedly prolonged the call-out by at least four hours, however!

A full scale call-out of rescuers and equipment followed immediately through Brenda Prewer. It was felt that the patient would still be able to do much to help himself, once his injuries were immobilised and pain relief administered. Bob Cork and Stewart McManus entered the cave with full medical supplies and heat packs at 10.30 p.m. Meanwhile, Dany Bradshaw and Tony Jarratt gave the patient First Aid. Graham Johnson and Estelle Sanford arrived and offered to help if needed, but were suffering from 'flu' and had only just returned from a Darren Cilau epic. Andy Sparrow, Richard Blake and Steve Redwood went down the cave with hauling gear at 10.50 p.m.

Tim and Jos Large went underground with John Attwood and Phil Romford at 11 p.m. with Hot Air, more comforts and a canteen. Lil Romford took over providing hot drinks, making several trips to and from the Belfry until the Eastwater Hut was opened on site. This snug base proved to be an invaluable refuge and 'waiting room' for the girlfriend of the injured caver who turned up soon afterwards. The rest had to content themselves with bitterly freezing conditions outside, although at least it was a cloudless night.

Reports were received from underground that Dany Bradshaw and Bob Cork had attended to the patient's injuries, splinted the arm and given both Temgesic and Entonox. More of the latter would be needed and the Ambulance Service was requested to bring spare cylinders. Hauling began just before 11.30 p.m. Richard West and Chris Harvey arrived to assist in ferrying gear to the cave. Fred Davies took spare Entonox cylinders supplied by the ambulance down the cave at 11.45 p.m. The patient was reported as being at the top of the Dolphin Chimney by midnight, and that it would be at least another two hours before he was out the cave. He was bound to experience difficulties in the more constricted passages, and so the Mager stretcher was requested.

Dr. Tony Boycott and Rob Harper were asked to assist. They went down the cave at 1 a.m. with the Mager stretcher, assisted by Alan Butcher and Bob Lewis, a caver staying at the Shepton Mallet Caving Club Hut. By now, there were sixteen rescuers underground. The haul out proceeded well and the patient reached the awaiting ambulance at 2.20 a.m. Alan Quartermain stayed with his friend throughout the ordeal, and both were underground for almost ten hours. It appears that Tony Simmons fell whilst trying to readjust the position of his tackle bag on climbing up and bridging in the Dolphin Chimney. Such can be

the price of a momentary lapse in concentration.

Friday 9th April Swildon's Hole

Brian Prewer received a call from the Police at 1.30 a.m. that a party of cavers from Newport, in Gwent, had not returned home as expected following a visit to the cave the previous day. The informant's telephone number given was wrong and, so, it was impossible to obtain further details about the group and their trip.

Brian found no unknown vehicles parked on both village greens. Meanwhile, Gwent Police contacted Taunton to report that those concerned had returned home safely, at last. The incident was over by 1.45 a.m.

Friday 16th April East Twin Swallet

Nineteen members of a Church Youth Group from Chesham, Bucks, visited Burrington Combe for the day in minibuses. They split up into various parties to explore different caves during their visit, going underground at about 11 a.m. The leader, Richard Luxton, arranged that all would meet up after about two hours, at 1 p.m. He was unsure whether those concerned had actually gone down the caves intended, however, since they had not been seen after dispersing in the combe.

When one of the parties, comprising of four teenagers, failed to make the ETA, they were uncertain as to whether they had gone down either Lionel's Hole or East Twin Swallet. Neither cave was known well enough for those concerned on the surface to be convinced that the missing cavers were really still underground. MRO was alerted through the Police at 4.45 p.m. from the Burrington Combe Cafe.

Brian Prewer received the call and raised a search party comprising Dany Bradshaw, Tony Jarratt, Fred Davies, Andy Sparrow and Richard Blake. Jim Hanwell and Richard West were asked to organise the rescue whilst Brian ferried appropriate gear to the combe in case needed. All met at the East Twin lay-by just after 5 p.m. Andy Sparrow conducted an initial search of Lionel's 'Old Cave' to the First Duck. He entered the system at 5.20 p.m. and returned at 5.45 p.m. to report that no one was in the cave; also, that the water in the duck was clear, indicating that it had been undisturbed for several hours.

Andy Sparrow then set out to search East Twin Swallet at 5.50 p.m. whilst Fred Davies went to Spar Pot. Tony Jarratt and Richard Blake stood by with

rescue equipment at the entrance. At 6 p.m., it was reported that the missing party had been found. Although having been down East Twin previously, Paul Reynolds (aged 19), Rachel Sanderson (aged 18), Jeanette Allen (aged 17) and James Howgego (aged 15) had become totally lost and unable to find the way back through the squeeze leading to the Boulder Chamber. They had decided to await rescue in the chamber, and stayed put for almost five hours. All were wearing dry grots and had good electric lights. Although dispirited, they remained in good shape, were extremely grateful to get out safely and very apologetic for the trouble caused.

Saturday 1st May Sidcot Swallet

At 12.25 p.m., Brian Prewer was contacted by the Police and asked to ring a Mr. Robson at the Burrington Combe Cafe. He had reported that a caver was stuck and unable to get back through the squeeze at the Lobster Pot. The informant was a climber, but had been requested by Brian Smith, leader of a party of Owlsmoor Group Scouts, Berkshire, to raise the alarm on their behalf. Such relayed messages are invariably vague, of course. On being contacted by MRO, Mr. Robson thought that the stuck caver had injured his chest on trying to force the squeeze.

Brian Prewer immediately contacted the Belfry and asked 'Jingles' Williams and John King to go to the cave in order to help and get full details. They reached the cave just before 1 p.m. and were joined there by Andy Legg. Meanwhile, others were alerted of the situation and made their way to Burrington with rescue gear. Dany Bradshaw, Brian Prewer, Martin Grass, Richard West, Howard and Debbie Limbert formed a hauling party. On arrival at the cave, however, the stuck caver had been helped out of his predicament by those on the spot.

The patient, eleven-year old Brian Smith, was taken to Weston-s-Mare General Hospital, suffering from possible cracked ribs as a result of his exertions in the squeeze. No more has been heard from the party to confirm this, however.

Tuesday 22nd June Box Mines, Wiltshire

The Wiltshire Police at Chippenham called Brian Prewer at 8.48 p.m. An observant local resident walking his dog in Quarry Hill Woods had noted two motorbikes parked near entrances to the mines. They had been there since about mid-day on Monday 21st June. He wisely notified the Police who checked ownership of the bikes and discovered from relatives in Calne that two men in their mid-twenties were missing. They were C. Delahunti and W. Woodman. On being contacted for further information by MRO, the wife of

the latter had little idea where her husband was, but thought that he could have visited a bike breaker's yard in Marlborough. She was unconcerned since he often stayed away for several days at a time without telling her where he was! However, she was sure that he had never been underground, and that neither of the missing men had any knowledge of Box Mines.

Locally resident rescuers were alerted through Bob and Golly Scammell at Bathford. Both met the Police at the top of Quarry Hill at 9.50 p.m. A Police dog had picked up a tell tale scent at the entrance to Jack's Workings, but not at nearby Lady Hamilton's Hole. Derek Hawkins, Nick McCamely, Mike Breakspear and Sam Catalarnie went to investigate the former whilst Bob Scammell, Garry Emery and John Greenslade set out to search the latter. Gary Ashton, Cliff Gardener and Paul De'ath stood-by in kit at the surface and Golly Scammell kept notes.

Both search parties entered the mines at 10.15 p.m. It was agreed that, after an initial investigation lasting one hour, all would return to the surface to report their findings and confer over the next phase of the search. This would enable the routes visited and eliminated to be accurately recorded; an effective way to cover such a maze of tunnels, without committing parties to exhaustive searches when one of them stood a fair chance of finding the missing pair quickly.

On Mendip, meanwhile, potential back-up teams were stood by comprising Stewart McManus, Tim Large, Chris Batstone, Martin Bishop, Alan Butcher, Richard West and Jim Hanwell. Dr. D. Greatorex at Bath was also informed. They awaited news from the Police at the scene as to the outcome of the searches under way.

At about 10.45 p.m., Bob Scammell's party located the missing pair just off the main passage, near the old crane, and not very far from Lady Hamilton's Hole entrance. It appears that they had tried to do a 'through trip' using only a box of matches! When these ran out, they were stranded, of course, and had been trapped in the cave for over 30 hours with no protective clothes, food or drink. One had vainly tried to dig a way upwards through the roof with bare hands in total darkness, and is lucky not to have brought any of it down. Both were very distressed and, in fact, thought they were as good as dead. But, for the observant walker, this could well have been the case since most visits to the mines take place at weekends.

John Greenslade left the cave to inform those on the surface, and all concerned were safely outside just before 11 p.m. The Police kindly made arrangements for the rescue volunteers to have

refreshments in the nearby RAF mess at Rudloe Manor. This was gratefully appreciated and the Commanding Officer thanked for his hospitality in the circumstances. Those standing by on Mendip, equally gratefully, went to bed in wonder of how some people behave. But, as Bob Scammell mentions in his report: 'Who are we to Judge'!

Tuesday 12th October Swildon's Hole

The Police at Weston-s-Mare contacted Brian Prewer at 11.30 p.m. They had been contacted by a Mrs. Cook to say that her son, Andrew, had not kept an earlier appointment at 6 p.m. with her. She thought that he had gone caving somewhere on Mendip with friends from Bristol University. Her description of the car being used was sketchy.

Brian checked Priddy Green, and the park at the New Inn, but found no cars that were not local. He then recalled being told by two cavers earlier in the evening that a party of UBSS had gone down Swildon's Hole at about 5.30 p.m. Playing this hunch, he telephoned Roger Dors at the Hunters' Lodge Inn who was able to confirm that three cavers with UBSS T-shirts had been there later in the evening, and had left at closing time. One answered the description of Andrew Cook given by his mother.

Mrs. Cook was contacted again and reassured that her son was alive and well. She rang back at midnight to say that Andrew had returned home safely. This is a good example of how local knowledge and a modicum of reasoned intuition can solve needless worries which, otherwise, could so easily have led to a general mobilisation of rescuers at a particularly difficult time of day.

Saturday 23rd October G.B. Cave

A small group of experienced cavers from the Somerton area went down the cave during the afternoon. The party was led by Paul Curtis and included Damien Waller, Lynne Niland and Jeni Galligan, in her earlier thirties. Jeni experienced some difficulty in negotiating the awkward traverse and bold step near the top of the Forty Foot climb on the way down the Main Chamber. She decided to jump onto the ledge her leader had already reached. This is much higher than it looks, of course. On landing heavily, she broke her right leg in four places as a result of the impact. Needless to say, she could not be moved from this precarious shelf; but, although in great pain, was more anxious than distressed about her predicament.

The accident happened at about 3 p.m. Two of the

party left the cave immediately to raise the alarm whilst Paul Curtis stayed to comfort the patient. Since her dry clothing had become damp from the spray of the nearby waterfall, she was covered with a polythene sheet to afford some protection. Later, a party of London University cavers already in the cave came to assist. On reaching the road, those sent to call MRO chanced to meet a passer by with a mobile telephone in his car. Because this was used to dial 999, the first notification of the emergency went to a Vodafone network control in Wiltshire, and then to the Southampton Coastguard for some reason. Some fifty minutes elapsed before the Police in Bristol got the message. They immediately called Brian Prewer at 5.05 p.m. Delays of this sort defeat the main advantage of using mobile phones, unless those making the call know exactly where they are and, ideally, in which Police Force Area the incident has occurred. Surprisingly, neither piece of information seems to have been known to informant with the phone! Furthermore, it was not possible for Brian Prewer to contact him for further details. This makes an effective response much more difficult, of course. The only recourse is to assume the worse and get an advance party to the cave as soon as possible with as much kit as they can carry.

Alan Butcher, Alex Gee and Dudley Herbert from the Belfry got to GB at 5.45 p.m. They immediately went underground with medical supplies, including neoprene splints, Temgesic and Entonox pain relief, and were with the patient shortly after 6 p.m. Meanwhile, Richard West established the surface Control at the roadside. Andy Sparrow went down the cave at 5.50 p.m. with the Molefone whilst John Beauchamp and Anthony Butcher set up on the surface above the Main Chamber. Paul Curtin carried in the Hot Air kit just before 6 p.m., Vince Simmonds the Mager drag sheet and Brian Prewer comforts and a Flectalon blanket. Joel Corregan followed with hauling ropes and Tim Francis took the Mager stretcher carrying frame.

At 6.10 p.m., a message was received from underground that the patient was being attended to and given pain relief. She thought that she could do much to help herself once her leg was splinted, and that a full stretcher carry would only slow things down. Given the strong rescue party and the other cavers already in the cave to help out, others on call were stood by at the Belfry. These included Stewart McManus, Martin Grass and Graham Wilton-Jones. Doctors Tony Boycott and Don Thomson were kept informed.

Discussions with Jeni Galligan's friends who had surfaced to make the call-out, indicated that she suffered from asthma, and her inhaler was found in their car. This did not present a problem, however,

and the situation was explained to the ambulance crew that arrived at 6.52 p.m. They had been requested to come early in order to have additional Entonox available, if needed. Meanwhile, those underground found that the patient was unable to assist as much as her initial optimism had led everyone to believe. After about ten minutes of bravely trying, she was put into the drag sheet. Rapid progress was then made up the Main Chamber, under the Bridge and into the lower end of the Gorge by 6.55 p.m.

At this point, the patient became unreasonably distressed and then suddenly quiet with her eyes staring. Alan Butcher and Vince Simmonds who were closely observing her during the carry spotted that she had stopped breathing; not an easy diagnosis in any circumstances underground, and totally unexpected in view of her injuries and earlier determination. A pulse could not be found. Vince immediately administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and the patient's own breathing was restored after five exhalations. She also responded to questioning, much to the relief of everyone. This dramatic turn for the worse was instantly radioed to the surface at 6.55 p.m., and medical help requested.

After appraising the situation with the ambulance crew, Leading Ambulanceman Roger Tomlinson volunteered to go underground and attend the patient since he had done some caving in the past. He went down the cave with additional medical equipment at 7.05 p.m., escorted and helped by Joel Corregan. Further rescuers were called to the cave to assist. Jonathan Roberts, Richard Blake, Phil Romford, Graham Prole and Julie Hesketh arrived and went underground shortly afterwards. Lil Romford looked after the two members from the original party who are naturally concerned to hear of the patient's setback.

On arrival at the Ten Foot drop in Mud Passage at 7.25 p.m., Roger Tomlinson examined the patient, administered injections and prepared her in case a saline drip proved necessary. Her blood pressure was found to be very low. Stewart McManus, Martin Grass, Graham Wilton-Jones, Chris Smart, Mike McDonald, Bill Tolfree and others helped to ferry further kit across the fields to the cave. They also prepared to be stretcher bearers once the patient reached the entrance. In view of Roger Tomlinson's involvement down the cave, a second ambulance was requested to take Jeni Galligan to Yeovil Hospital without delay, for Roger needed a change of clothes and well deserved respite after such unaccustomed exertions underground. His assistance was much appreciated and saved valuable time.

After this hiatus, the final phase of the haul out proceeded smoothly and the patient was brought to

the surface at 8.40 p.m. Since she had been first reached and attended by MRO, her safe recovery had taken only two and a half hours; but, it was clearly a lifetime for the plucky patient! Jeni has subsequently written-up her own story for the record, and also expressed much gratitude to all who came to her rescue.

That everything ended so well and a life was saved justifies all the training and practising organised by MRO wardens for local cavers. The MCG members, for example, had recently held a rescue hauling practice in G.B. and knew what to do. It is worth reemphasising that the majority of people on a cave rescue are effectively much needed porters and bearers. A knowledge of how to keep such 'trains' of people on the move smoothly can only be gained from actually practising how this is done down caves. Progress and communications in normal caving are quite different and no real substitute what happens on rescues. Although somewhat hesitant to repeat a now much maligned principle, it is truly 'back to basics'!

Saturday 27th November Goatchurch Cavern

Roger Dors received a call from Taunton Police at 8.45 p.m. to enquire on the whereabouts of a party reported to them as being overdue from a trip to the cave. After making all the checks possible in the circumstances, the Police called again soon afterwards to report that the incident was over as the party had been safely located. No further details were known.

*Jim Hanwell,
Hon Secretary and Treasurer MRO,
Wookey Hole,
January 1994*

GB Memories

**Rodney Pearce MB, Ch.B,
MRCS, LRCP, MRCGP.**

Trevor Shaw's article on the original survey of GB prompted Rodney Pearce to contact the Journal with some of his own recollections of the UBSS and caving at that time:

I was educated at St Paul's School, West Kensington as a Foundation Scholar. I got Higher Cert. ('A' Levels), in Botany, Zoology, Chemistry and Physics, and was all set for a scholarship at St Johns, Cambridge - in fact I had a Tutor there, Dr Howarth and went to see him every term. Jerry, however, had other plans and during the Munich crisis we had to dig up "Little Side", the spare Rugby pitch, for trenches.

Little Adolf finally had to make his mind up and the School was evacuated to Wellington College in Bracknell, not too far from London, in 1939. It was essentially a Military College and had excellent laboratory facilities and was also within easy cycling distance of our billets. Initially, I was billeted with the Chief Medical Officer whose wife was an excellent cook. They were a very nice couple; he had played rugby for Guy's so we got on well! He was Chief M.O. of Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum. When at St Paul's I had been Club (House) Captain and got colours for rugby, boxing and shooting. When things got organised I was put in charge of a large private house in Crowthorne containing fifty boys and we were put to clearing woods for growing food. Useful training with a felling axe!

Meanwhile, I learned that at some Universities one could qualify in Medicine in 5 years, after passing 1st M.B., which Higher Cert, more than covered. We had relatives in Bristol, so without consultation with anybody I took myself off there, by bicycle, and enrolled having arranged digs with my grandmother. When it came to the interview and production of documents it transpired that, since I was only seventeen, I could not start in the Anatomy Dept. for a whole year. I quickly learned about female anatomy, on living subjects.

The first thing I did was to go to the Union, in the Victoria Rooms, to look at the notice board to see if there was a climbing club (I had done quite a bit in North Wales and the Lakes and the Glencoe area) and join the Rugby Club. I had no experience of caving, but thought this was the next best thing, so went to a meeting where Jack Duck was giving a lecture on cave survey. There I met Bertie Crook and Mollie Hall and started going out to camp regularly, when not playing rugby. It was slightly better than a highland bothie. The blokes out there were mostly medicals and dentals and a breezy lot. I was not used to this but quickly became converted and once they found that I was a fairly competent climber

and caver I was accepted.

Most of us, about half a dozen, had motor bikes and used to go out in convoy to camp. I suppose we were the precursors of the present-day yobbo tearaways, but we never did any harm. I earned my 250 B.S.A. 'Gold Star' the hard way; fire watching at the Bristol Royal Infirmary for 1/- a night, (5/- at the Grand, where I was blown up against the Guildhall). Our chief was an Austrian, called Schreiber; after a couple of nights the management of the Grand got wise to us and lowered the grill to the bar, but I overcame that with my 4ft fishing rod, selecting catchable bottles with wide necks.

From overheard conversations I suspected that something clandestine was afoot and when Loch Lomond and Buggery Bend were passable Bertie Crook, Charles Barker, Mollie Hall and I got through into the main chamber. The 'Drop' was easily circumvented on the left and I was the first human into the sump, where I found a live frog and a sandstone pebble which had obviously got washed down from the Old Red Sandstone of Blackdown.

We duly celebrated back at camp, after lubrication at the 'Langford'. This was understandable but unwise, since we decided to write up the camp log. Bertie could think, but was incapable of writing and Francis Goddard retired to the bunk and started lighting his farts. I sat on my bunk and tried to take down Bertie's account of the day. Poor Francis had Rubella (German Measles), it later transpired. On re-reading it is obvious that we were very drunk but that original log book is a treasured possession and not to be parted with. It is as referred to in Trevor's paper; on receipt of a request for it, I had it photocopied and the copy is now in the hands of U.B.S.S..

Much of the original survey is attributable to the Geographical Department of the University of Bristol, particularly S.J.Jones ('S.J.'), Senior Lecturer in Geology and Geography and some of his students who helped with the mapping of the surface features, in order to locate the exact position of G.B.. These include one well made, and very personable, young lady who got on my back without invitation in order to take sighting's over a Mendip stone wall. I don't remember S.J. ever going down a cave; he was also the wrong shape. We were loaned an oil-filled prismatic compass (better than my Army one) a metal reinforced cloth tape, an Abney Level and a clinometer. I also acquired an altimeter which was about the size of an alarm clock, to take up to all the then known salient points in the cave. This involved a full solo trip and on the way over Blackdown

I ran into the late lamented Oliver Lloyd who gave me a right rollicking for going down alone; he had been taking down a party of prospective cavers.

At that period of the war, Leeds University medical students and King's College, London, engineering students were optimistically evacuated to Bristol University believing it, mistakenly, to be less likely to receive Jerry's attentions. However, in the first raid most of the centre of Bristol was destroyed including the Anatomy Department and the Spaelo Museum, and my digs. The whole of Victoria Street was ablaze and movement was very difficult. At the B.R.I. we had no electricity for lifts or the operating theatres, making dealing with casualties difficult. Two hundred and five people were killed and many injured that night.

The evacuee students were of great assistance in the survey although the Leeds medicals migrated elsewhere having no department to utilize; we had to use the Mortuary annexe, ourselves, for dissection. As Trevor Shaw says, our first effort with a hydrogen filled balloon on a thread, taken down in a large biscuit tin, was not very successful since it burst on a stalactite in the roof. Surveying the Gorge was a straightforward leapfrogging operation, which we combined with some photography.

The sump also proved a disappointment, narrowing down very quickly. One of the chief attractions of caving is that one can go to parts of the earth where no other human has been, and when I was the first into the sump I was surprised to find a sandstone pebble there, which must have been washed in by flooding and the skeleton of a rabbit. When visiting the cave soon after the great floods of 1968, I was amazed to see straw in the roof of the main chamber, which must have flooded completely. The geography of the cave had also markedly changed, particularly in the area of the Bridge and the 40ft Drop.

Surveying the Ladder Dig series was after my time, although having seen this large entrance hole without being able to reach it, I got 40ft of steel ladder in 4ft sections to bolt together and got up to it. This was another disappointment since it ended in a choke after a couple of hundred feet. We left the ladder in place and the series has since been dug out. When I was last there one could see daylight up a narrow chimney.

On the other hand the White Passage series was most rewarding. Although access was vertical it was not a 'difficult' climb, since it was virginal and the holds, although wet, were adequate and unworn. Not so those on 'The Rock of Ages' following much use by adventure scouts.

Francis came up and we found an offshoot passage which went on for quite a way ending in a small chamber with a thin secondary stalactite wall from which the debris at the back had been washed out. The drips from the roof made a Rhumba noise to rival Edmundo Ross, hence its name. This series was a sod to survey, being rather constricted.

The first survey had to be completed rather hurriedly because word had got out that there had been a major cave discovery on Mendip and we were besieged by the Press and the B.B.C. After Francis went down with rubella I had to act as 'P.R.' for a time, being then on the Committee. This included writing articles and photography, for 'Nature' and the 'Illustrated London News' and giving a broadcast on the B.B.C. in 'The World Goes By', under Lance Sieveking. I only just made it in time since my motor bike chain came off at 70 mph down the 'Fox & Goose', wrapped itself round the wheel and threw me off.

The 'survey' was eventually completed. There was no 'Quick Way' then, since the East Passage route had not been opened and our access was limited by the viability of Loch Lomond and Buggery Bend, which were often flooded. In those days, since G.B. was a "dry cave" and Nife cells were in their infancy and rather bulky, we were still using acetylene and on one surveying trip Bertie was going through Buggery Bend and Francis and I were waiting at the end when there was a loud boom, followed by some of the foulest language I have ever heard, even in a cave or on a rugby field. We carried our gear in army haversacks and in his exertions, Bertie had dislodged the lid of his carbide tin which fizzled a bit when it got in the water. He naturally looked down at the near disaster to his marriage parts amid much mirth from Francis and myself. We thought that the roof of the main chamber had come down as it looked likely to do so and some falls have indeed occurred.

The 'Ooze' proved a disappointment since it ended very quickly but we managed to get on downwards by climbing up into the second Grotto. I was taking some photographs and in the absence of a decent belay I put a couple of knots in the rope and wedged it between two well stalagmited rocks. When Bertie got up - there is a bit of an overhang - and saw my belay, he was very scathing about my caving technique! We had three large Tilley lanterns originally used for filming by Balcombe and Sheppard in Wookey and we used them for triangulating the height of the Main Chamber.

The original survey of G.B. was a considerable task, since it is quite a big hole, and in doing so one made a lot of friends, many of the survivors of whom one occasionally meets on Mendip or In South Wales. The 'Purists' might say that the use of 'chemicals' is out of order and I will admit I am somewhat liberal with them at times, having to flee the main chamber owing to sulphurous fumes and making it uninhabitable for a week or so. My recent experience of meeting the present caving fraternity is that they remain a very pleasant and cosmopolitan lot, from all walks of life and parts of the country and they are polite and not too critical of the old brigade, and competent.

Long may it remain so.

Who *was* Aveline, anyway?

Steve Ellis

When Richard Witcombe's book was published, I had an entertaining time trying to find names which he had missed. Waterfall Grotto in Sidcot Swallet is a nice example, apparently named after C. A. Waterfall of Sidcot School Speleological Society.

On reading a short biography of Boyd Dawkins, I noticed that Aveline was not mentioned amongst his major influences. I began to wonder, who was Aveline anyway?

The first use of the name "Aveline's Hole" comes in Dawkins' report "On the Caverns of Burrington Combe" in 1864. Before this time it was known as Burrington Cavern, Burrington Combe Cavern, or simply the Cave. In the original report, he does not state where the name came from. In *Cave Hunting* (1874) he says "... a cave was examined which we named "Whitcombe's Hole" but he makes no reference to the naming of Aveline's Hole.

In 1922, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society visited the Combe on a field trip. Dawkins was then their president, and he spoke to a group including Dr H.T.S.Aveline "after whose father this cavern was named". J.A.Davies was also present, and he reported (in Proc UBSS) that Dawkins said he named the cave after his "teacher and colleague" William Talbot Aveline.

Dawkins went to school at Rossall, near Fleetwood in Lancashire. He entered Jesus College, Oxford, to read classics, but his interest in geology was aroused by Prof J.Phillips. His interests in relating geology to history were shared by the historian J.R.Green. He turned his attention to cave research, following the work at Kent's Hole by Pengelly and others. In 1859 he began the excavation of the Hyaena Den at Wookey Hole, with Rev J.Williamson. Dawkins was undoubtedly familiar with the work of Buckland and Rutter at Burrington Cavern. Williamson may have mentioned Beard's excavations there. Whatever first put the idea into his head, Dawkins explored the cave in 1860.

In 1861 he joined the Geological Survey of GB as a trainee field surveyor. He helped with the first mapping of the Weald of Kent. Initially he worked under Frederick Drew's supervision. Drew resigned in 1862 to enter the service of the Maharaja of Kashmir. In the same year Gould, who had been mapping the Hastings - Battle area, also left and Aveline was called in to complete the job. He also took over the training of the young Dawkins. I've found no suggestion that the two men met before this

time.

Aveline was born in 1822 and his family lived at Wrington, not far from Burrington Combe. There seems to be no record of his early life or education. Perhaps his interest in geology was aroused by the local scenery. At 18, with no previous training, he joined the Geological Survey as one of De la Beche's first assistants. He worked for a short time in Somerset before moving on to south Wales. Despite his lack of formal qualifications, his enthusiasm soon made him "not only diligent but extremely accurate and a most competent observer". He surveyed large areas of Wales.

In the 1850s he was described by Ramsey as "a tall, dark, big-booted man who strode with gigantic steps over the hills; whose eyes seemed always directed to the front, but never let anything escape them; who wrote like a schoolboy, but was the ablest field geologist on the staff." He formed a close friendship with Ramsey, who also lacked any formal qualifications, and was 8 years his senior.

He was a man of few words. It is reported that he spent an entire day in the Welsh hills with a junior colleague, only speaking twice. In the morning as they passed a rock crag, he tapped it with his hammer and remarked "Grits". In the evening on the way home he had to chip another block, and again broke silence with "More grits". His taciturnity resulted from a natural reserve, and hid a kindly, modest nature.

In 1867 he became a District Surveyor, in charge of mapping the Lake District. He left few written memoirs, and is chiefly remembered for his excellent maps. At the age of 60 he retired to the family home at Wrington, where he lived the life of a country squire, looking after his farm and family. He found life "so far from any centre of life" increasingly inconvenient and around 1895 he moved to London. He died on the 12th of May 1903.

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club notes

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armature bearing went rusty from being left full of water. Although this was not an expensive operation (about £12.00) it is time consuming and unnecessary. Please could people who use the drill ensure it is dried out promptly after every trip - even if the drill has not actually been taken out of its packaging underground it may still get wet and should be dried out accordingly.

Less successful have been recent attempts to fix the **car park lights** timer. The lights currently only work with use of the over-ride key but a new timer should be installed before long. I blame it on crappy French semiconductors myself.

The **Sales Cupboard** has a distinctly sexagenarian air to it, with anniversary glassware in the form of beer mugs, decanters and whiskey tumblers and other items in addition to tee-shirts and sweatshirts. A catalogue of glassware is on display at Upper Pitts, along with some sample items. Glassware is only available to order but shirts are available from stock at £15.50 (S,M,L), £16.00 (XL) and £17.00 (XXL) for sweat shirts and £7.00 (S,M,L), £7.25 (XL) and £7.75 (XXL) for tee-shirts. A further delivery is due in mid September and a final order for anniversary goods will be placed in December. Please contact Colin Masters (0252 712585) for further details: orders will only be accepted with advance payment.

Unpaid Subscriptions

according to the records, the following members have not yet paid their subscriptions for the club year 1993 - 94.

Karl Baverstock
Tim Benfield
Anthony Bennet
Bev Bleasdale
Sue Bonar
Wayne Brown
Darren Brown
Noel Cleave
Brian Coward
Jame Eaton
Martin Fredrickson
David Gibson

Chris Gile
Peter Guamaccio
Dave Hoggarth
Carmen Jackson
Graham Johnson
Paul Labourne
Jim Moon
Terry Potter
Howard Price
Colin Rankin
Keith Savory
Terry Shipley
Alex Smith
Richard Vaughn
Gregory Villis
Cliff Ward
Andy Ward
Andy Watson
Sarah Willis
Gordon Wright

Please send subscriptions to Duncan Frew, whose address is at the front of the Journal. Please contact Duncan as soon as possible if you believe your name should not be on this list.

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Special Committees will be held by postal ballot, with each member club being able to propose candidates and vote for their choices. Next year, a similar process will allow clubs to directly elect the chief officers (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer).

The proportions of those voting in order to permit changes to be made to the constitution was reduced from 90% to 70%. This removes the effective veto that Regional Councils had on changes to the constitution. To counteract this, there now exists a specific veto for Regional Councils and other specialist members of the Association to prevent them being forced to take actions which they believe to be against their own interests. A timetable for implementing these changes is currently being drawn up and will be circulated shortly.

Maskhill Mine in Derbyshire has recently become even more unstable than hitherto (and that's saying something!). The wooden shuttering at the bottom of the first pitch is now rotting and the 50 ft walled shaft below the 5th pitch has gone so and extra 65ft pitch from the balcony now need tackle. DCA is looking into the possibility of stabilisation work but this will be expensive and take a very long time.

In Wales, work on the **Llangattwg system** has been progressing steadily through the Summer. In July Rick Stanton, diving with support from Duncan Price and John Stevens, succeeded in passing the Gloom Room

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club diary

September

- 4th: Committee meeting
Cambrian Caving Council AGM,
Brynmawr
- 10th: Yorkshire booking: Gingling Hole
- 17 - 18th: BCRA Conference, Shropshire

October

- 1st: Yorkshire booking: Penyghent Pot
BEC Annual Dinner, Street
- 9th: Yorkshire booking: Big Meanie
- 15th: AGM And Annual Dinner - 60th
anniversary celebrations
- 29th: Grampian SG Annual Dinner,
Inchnadamph

November

- 26th: Yorkshire booking: Top Sink -
Lancaster Hole
- 27th: Yorkshire booking: Cow Pot
- 26-27th: DCA Cavers' Workshop.

December

- 4th: Yorkshire booking: Little Hull Pot
- 30th: Yorkshire booking: Lost Johns
- 31st: Yorkshire booking: Notts Pot

July 1995

- 14th: Wessex Gouffre Berger booking

Gouffre Berger '95

The Wessex Cave Club has the cave booked for 10 days beginning on 14 July 1995.

A non-returnable deposit of £50.00 will be required by anyone who wishes to go into the cave - this money will be used to purchase ropes, hangars and other equipment for rigging the cave.

In addition, every person who enters the cave must have BCRA insurance which will be arranged by the Club in a block basis. Anyone who has their own insurance must supply a copy of the policy to the trip co-ordinator before they will be allowed underground. Participants should note that at present the BCRA policy is the only one available in the UK which provides adequate cover for this trip. The cost of the Club's block booking is not yet known and will be extra to the tackle deposit.

Everyone who intends to enter the cave **MUST** be proficient in SRT and have all their own equipment. A list of training meets to allow members to improve competence and fitness will be published in the next *Journal*.

Anyone who wants more information on the trip may like to refer to the Club library. In particular, the reports by the Crew Climbing and Potholing Club (1983), the Army Caving Association (1984) and the Bradford Pothole Club (Vol. 6 No. 9) contain useful information. These journals may not be taken away from Upper Pitts, but copies are likely to be available from Bat Products or other good caving shops.

Club members should note that places for cavers on the trip are limited to 50 and Wessex members will only get priority if they send their deposits by 31 October 1994. After this date, the invitation will be extended to other clubs and individuals on a strict first - come - first - served basis.

Please send deposits to Duncan Frew, whose address is to be found at the front of the *Journal*.

Gouffre Berger '95 Co-ordinator, Pete Hann

caving notes

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sump. This had previously meant a 5 - 6 hour carry through the entrance of Daren Cilau, but with the opening of the Pwyll-y-cym the access has been reduced to a three hour trip via P-Y-C, the Terminal Sump and St David's Sumps. The Gloom Room sump is 230 - 240m long, and the passage beyond heads about 400m on a bearing towards Agen Allwydd. A further 300m of oxbows and roof passages make the total discovered on the 10-hour discovery trip in excess of 400m, with the end getting usefully close to the end of the final sump in Aggy.

The CNCC have recently noted an increase in the

incidence of **carbide dumping** In Dales caves. Spent carbide is highly damaging to the cave environment - not only is it smelly and unsightly it is also fatally poisonous to most cave flora and fauna. Even dumping it in running water is unacceptable since it soon settles out and causes problems for cave divers. If you use carbide, please ensure that you carry a waste carbide container if you believe you are going to be unable to complete your trip without topping up your lamp.

After the tragic death of Paul Lyons in Lyle Caverns (Lost John's Cave) earlier in the year, visitors to the Dales may like to note that there have recently been **rock movements** in the Lancaster Easegill system. A substantial fall has occurred in Showerbath Passage and in the area above Razor Passage, as well as movement in the County pot area. The walls before dismal bypass have some new scrape marks on them as well.