



FOREWORD

This issue of the Journal contains a formidable list of the names of members whose current subscriptions are outstanding, so if your name is included, would you please forward your sub to the Hon. Treasurer as soon as possible.

For some time now your committee has been of the opinion that the date of the end of the Club year (July 31st) is the chief reason why so many members fail to pay their subscriptions promptly and it would be interesting to have the views of the members in general on the subject of the Club year. The actual date was chosen and fixed at the request of the London Group in the hope that by changing the date of the A.G.M. from November to early October this would encourage more members living away from Mendip to attend as the extra hours of daylight would make long journeys easier.

The report on the Cave Preservation Society's meeting was written by a non-committee member of the Club and in connection with the subject of cave preservation, Professor Tratman has pointed out that the destruction of formations in caves is far from being a "new" crime and in fact there is ample evidence that prehistoric man started it and his descendants have all been guilty in a greater or lesser degree when visiting and exploring caves, but it should be emphasized that it is the duty of all good cavers to help preserve formations from damage or destruction.

Peter Harvey, the Gear Curator, reports that he recently found one of the ropes of a new ladder had been broken. It is the duty of members to report any damage to tackle at once and we would again point out that members wishing to borrow tackle must always book same.

Denis Warburton, one of our Birmingham members, has presented the Club with 36 post card size prints of some of his caving photographs and has also promised to let us have other prints in the future. It is hoped that this generous example will encourage other members to do likewise. It is known that there exists a fine series showing the erection of the Hillgrove Hut under very 'Arctic' conditions, and we look forward to receiving a set for the Club album.

It has been decided that if it can be obtained at a reasonable price the Club will purchase a small wooden hut (about 10' x 6') for use as a gear and store room, so if any members know of the existence of any such hut the Hon. Secretary will be pleased to hear from them.

The fire insurance for the Hillgrove Hut has now been obtained and members will find a supply of coke, for use in the stove, on site.

HON. SEC: F.W. Frost, 22 Wolseley Road, Bishopston, Bristol 7.  
Phone: Bristol 44221.

HON. ASST. SEC: D. Thomson, 4 St. Joseph Rd. Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

HON. TREAS: G. Williams, 1 Redhill Drive, Fishponds, Bristol.

HON. SEC. LONDON GROUP: Mrs. J.H.D. Hooper, 92 Station Crescent, Ashford,  
Middx. Phone: Ashford, Middx. 2168

HON. LIBRARIAN & GEAR CURATOR: P.I.W. Harvey, 33 Brighton Rd., Redland,  
Bristol 6.

## UNPAID SUBSCRIPTIONS 1952/53

"Rule 8" states:

"That the subscription for ordinary members shall be 7/6 per annum, due on 31st July each year.

"Any member whose subscription has become more than three months overdue shall be named in the next circular, and if within one month the subscription has not been paid the members name shall be removed from the list of members. The subscription of a member joining near the end of the financial year may be deemed, at the discretion of the committee, to cover the subscription for the following year."

The following is a list of names of those members whose subscriptions are outstanding for the club year 1952/53.

G. Applegate	J. Lewins
Beecham Cliff Speleo. Soc.	I. Mackintosh
D.J.W. Bernard	C.C. Maitland
A.J. Bradshaw	E.J. Mason
A.K. Bradshaw	Mr. & Mrs. F.Mead
T.R. Brook	W.R. Midwinter
A.H. Buchan	Mrs. H. Murrell
G.E. Carpenter	A.F. Palmer
P.R. Cooke	A.J. Parsons
W.J. Cooke	Miss J. Phillips
G.R. Cortvriend	P.A. Rahtz
J.M. Davis	F. Rhodes
P.B. Dolphin	J.R. Roberts
R.F. Earle	L. Sancha
G. Falconer	M.R. Sheldon
Mr. & Mrs. Gloyn	J.A. Stafford
F.C. Hucker	T.H. Stanbury
E.J. Humphrey	G.D. Tidman
K.W. Humphries	T. Tupman
D. Hutchings	E.J. Waddon
W.P. Jeans	C.P. Weaver
H. Jelly	R.J. Whiting
M.C. Jewel	L. Williams

The committee would be grateful if these members would forward their subscriptions to the Hon. Treasurer as soon as possible. The subscriptions are - 7/6 full, 10/- family, 1/6 affiliation.

If any member feels that a sub is not due from him, or does not wish to continue his membership, would he please write to the Hon. Sec?

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

MR. & MRS. J.W.H. WOOF, 23 Duntroon Street, Hurlstone Park, Sydney, N.S.W.,  
Australia.  
D. READ, c/o Mr. & Mrs. Read, 79 Kingswood Road, Gillingham, Kent.

## NEW MEMBERS:

J.S.HARRISON, "Galen House", Bovingdon, Herts.  
MISS E.V. WALLER, 42 Harlcourt Road, Wantage, Berks.  
J.M. BURNETT, 26 South Rd., Twickenham, Middx.  
C. GURNETT, 519 Rodney, Dolphin Square, London, S.W.1.  
G.W. STOCKER, Cloverdale, Wick, Lympsham, Nr. Weston-Super-Mare, Som.  
A.D. THOMSON, Green Acres, Rookery Farm, Green Ore, Nr. Wells, Som.  
R.A. WARREN, 20 Hazledene Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Som.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, FEB. 14TH Wookey Hole Cave. Upper Series. The size of the party is limited to 10, and preference will be given to those members who have not visited the cave. Luke Devenish will be leading the trip, but names should be sent to the Hon. Secretary immediately (Phone: Bristol 44221). The trip will be in the evening and should take from one to two hours.

SUNDAY, FEB. 15th Eastwater Cavern (Via Dolphin Pot Route) Meet at Eastwater hut at 11 a.m. Party limited to 6. Names to D.A. Willis, 18 Church Road, Hanham.

SUNDAY, FEB. 22ND Swildons Hole. Scavenging party. An attempt will be made to clean up parts of the cave and Dr. O.C. Lloyd, Withey House, Witney Close West, Bristol 9, will be pleased to hear from members who are willing to come along and give a hand with this very necessary work.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st G.B. Cavern. Meet, ready to descend, at entrance to cave, 2.30 p.m. This is a U.B.S.S. Guest Day and not a Club trip. Names to Hon. Sec. at least 10 days in advance.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29th Swildons Hole (to Sump). Meet at Maine's farm, Priddy Green, 2.30 p.m. (Change in barn, upstairs). Party limited to 6. Names to D.A. Willis (as above) one week in advance.

EASTER (APRIL 3rd - 6th) The club will be running the usual trip to Yorkshire, and the Hon. Secretary would like to receive the names of members who are interested in the event as soon as possible. If members are in a position to assist with transport, would they please mention this, giving dates of their outward and return journeys. It is particularly requested that members make individual application for inclusion in the party.

SUNDAY APRIL 12TH August Hole & Longwood Swallet (Upper Passages only). Scavenging party, with object of removing accumulated litter from upper series of both caves. David Willis will be pleased to see members who are willing to give a hand with this work - meet at Lower Farm at 2.30 p.m. (Collecting sacks -will be provided).

### PAST EVENTS

SWILDONS HOLE, JAN. 10TH This trip was postponed to MARCH 29TH, due to lack of support.

COMMITTEE, NOTE: It would greatly assist the Committee in the planning of future events if members would send their requests and suggestions (including convenient times and dates) to:- M.P. GLENISTER, 16 GRAHAM ROAD, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, SOM. Marking envelopes WESSEX CAVE CLUB., who has kindly offered to co-ordinate arrangements and assess the demand for trips.

### FAIRY CAVE & PIXIE HOLE

The Manager of Fairy Cave Quarry welcomes cavers, but owing to a number of petty thefts in the Quarry, would appreciate it if cavers visiting Fairy Cave or Pixie Hole would first communicate with him at Oakhill 266.

### WHITE SPOT CAVE

Will visitors to the Cheddar Gorge caves please note that "White Spot or Echo Cave" is now gated. This has been done by the Mendip Nature Research Committee as a result of conditions imposed with the permission to dig, and not with the object of keeping cavers out. All those wishing to visit this cave contact the Secretary of M.N.R.C., Mr. C.H. Kenney, 5 Vicars Close, Wells, Somerset.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations and best wishes to Harry Holloway on his recent marriage.

## CAVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

A meeting was held on the 3rd January at the University of Bristol to discuss the formation of a West Country Regional Committee of the Cave Preservation Society (C.P.S.). It had been called at short notice by Mr. L.W.E. Devenish and Major D.C. McKeand, so that a report might be made to the C.P.S. Council meeting on the 10th. There were nevertheless 22 people present, including Mr. A.J.S. McMillan, who had been invited by Mr. Devenish to take the chair. They were not delegates but attended in their individual capacities.

Mr. Devenish pointed out how important cave preservation was. He felt that the clubs did far less than they should to preserve the amenities and natural features of our caves and hoped that the formation of the C.P.S. would overcome some of this lethargy; and that by educating young cavers they would be led to take greater care to protect that which all wished to enjoy.

Maj. McKeand described the C.P.S. It was a body formed at Leeds last summer for the protection of the natural features of caves and for reasonable access to them by cavers. It hoped to achieve those objects by educative propaganda, by the use of suitable notices, by tracer tape where necessary, and by publishing a journal called "Cave Preservation". It consisted of individual members who paid a subscription of 10/6d. a year. There was no provision for club affiliation, but the C.P.S. hoped to work through Regional Committees, upon which clubs would be represented (preferably by their secretaries) in proportion to the numbers of their members who were also members of the C.P.S.

Mr. P.I.W. Harvey moved and Mr. F. Frost seconded: "That the formation of a West Country Regional Committee of the C.P.S. is not acceptable to this meeting." Mr. Harvey did not see that the C.P.S. could help. It was exceedingly difficult to prevent damage to caves, and in the long run it was only the owner of the cave who could prosecute or do anything effective.

Professor E.K. Tratman supported the motion. Cave preservation was essential but the C.P.S. could not serve any useful purpose. Who could define "reasonable facilities", or "responsible, well behaved people"? Most of the damage was done by people who were not club members; around Burrington only one third of the cavers were members of clubs. The C.P.S. had been formed with negligible support from the cavers of Great Britain. Of 73 clubs invited, only 32 had replied. Of 1400 questionnaires issued, only 84 had been returned, and these only came from 25 clubs. Of the 2000 members of caving clubs, only 56 had attended the inaugural meeting at Leeds. Even so, resolutions forming the C.P.S. and approving its objects had been passed by very small majorities. The clubs, he said, were already doing all that could

be done, and it was clear that the only effective method of cave protection was controlled entry, a system generally disliked, and one rejected by the C.P.S. at their meeting by the chairman's casting vote. It was also an objection that clubs could only appoint members of the C.P.S. to Regional Committees, and it would only give extra work to harassed secretaries and treasurers.

Mr. P. Bird spoke against the motion. Other societies, such as that for the Preservation of Rural England were very effective and influenced public opinion. The lack of interest shown by cavers in the formation of the C.P.S., referred to by Prof. Tratman, might be overcome when more had heard of it. Tracer tapes could be of use in the G.B. Cavern or Stoke Lane. They could be fixed by large pebbles.

Prof. Tratman described some of the practical difficulties in achieving controlled entry to caves. When Read's Cavern was first discovered some 33 years ago it contained some beautiful formations, and an iron grille was placed over the entrance. After the locks had been renewed several times through having been tampered with, some vandals brought sledge hammers in the night and broke the whole thing up. Similar difficulties were experienced in controlling entry to G.B. Cave, until the owners took active steps.

Police Sgt. K.E.G. Russell said that damage was never reported to the police, but that effective prosecution was not impossible. It was necessary to prove damage and to put a value on it. The damage must be shown to be wilful or malicious. Prosecution need not be instituted by either the police or the owner, but could be done by a "common informer". The prosecutor could apply for an advocate's fee and so be put to no expense. To secure a conviction, however, it would probably be necessary to catch the offenders in the act, and take their names and addresses.

Dr. O.C. Lloyd drew attention to a report in the first number of "Cave Preservation" of a conviction having been secured against a man who wilfully damaged stalactites in the White Scar Cave at Ingleton. Mr. Frost pointed out that White Scar Cave was a show cave, and visitors would be under constant supervision. In the past certain owners of show caves had themselves been guilty of vandalism by destroying and removing formations in caves.

Mr. Frost said that he spoke not only for himself but for a great many members of the Wessex Cave Club, whose views he had heard. This matter of cave preservation had been discussed at their A.G.M. in October. A report from Mr. Hooper suggested to him that the C.P.S. had talked nothing but platitudes. It was not true to say that the clubs were doing nothing about it. The Wessex had already fixed a date for a party to go and clear up some of the

litter in Swildon's. The clubs were quite capable of doing all that was practicable and needed no C.P.S. to tell them what to do or how to do it. He particularly objected to the C.P.S. trying to use club secretaries without admitting club responsibility by affiliation. It was absurd for clubs to be represented only by those who could afford another 10/6d. a year. Club secretaries were not only responsible to these, but to all their members. If the C.P.S. was to be any use it must abolish individual membership and rely entirely on club affiliation.

Mr. D.M.M. Thomson asked what the 10/6d. was for. Was it to pay for night watchmen?

Mr. C.H. Kenney spoke against the motion. Cave preservation work by clubs had been a failure so far. The C.P.S. was the first serious attempt to do something about it. The constitution suggested was clearly not acceptable, but it was not yet fixed and we must therefore make our views known and propose alternatives. What, he asked, would be the consequences of accepting the motion as it stood?

Mr. D.A. Willis supported Mr. Kenney. He also agreed with some of the objections raised by Prof. Tratman, but suggested that his points ought to be made known to the C.P.S. A negative attitude would be no good.

In reply to Mr. Kenney, Dr. B.A. Crook told the meeting that in an attempt to try to stop damage by visitors to the formations in G.B., warning notices were placed in the cave asking people to take special care to avoid damage to formations. This did not have the desired result, as not only were formations damaged, destroyed or stolen, but the notices themselves were torn down and destroyed.

Maj. McKeand said that Mr. Leaky (the primary founder of the C.P.S.) did not want to presume to advise us on Mendip. He quoted from a private letter in which Mr. Leaky said that the C.P.S.'s constitution had not yet been worked out, that he was sick of it, and that it was up to us to improve on what had been done.

Many of those present felt that this rather altered the complexion of matters.

Dr. Lloyd said that it was clear that the only effective work could be done by the clubs, that the secretaries were responsible to the whole of their membership and could in no circumstances be asked to act on behalf of a limited number, who could afford an extra half guinea a year to become members of the C.P.S. That the C.P.S., if it were to serve any useful purpose ( and he did not admit that it could) could only do so if it worked through delegates representing the entire club membership, and this could only be done if the C.P.S. relied for its support on club affiliations. He admitted that the

purely negative sense of the motion was inadequate and proposed an amendment (seconded by Mr. Devenish and accepted by the movers of the original motion) that the following words be added to the motion: "unless the C.P.S, bases itself exclusively upon club affiliation and abolishes individual membership."

After a little more discussion this amendment was agreed to by 18 votes to 1. The amended motion, which now read as follows: "That the formation of a West Country Regional Committee of the C.P.S. is not acceptable to this meeting, unless the C.P.S. bases itself exclusively upon club affiliation and abolishes individual membership," was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

A further motion proposed by Prof. Tratman, that "The view of this meeting is that the C.P.S. can serve no useful purpose", was carried by 12 votes to 7.

Maj. McKeand announced that he would forward the resolutions to the C.P.S, and would then cease to act as temporary Regional Secretary.

A vote of thanks was offered to Mr. McMillan for having served as Chairman.

TROGLOPHANES

#### LONDON GROUP OF THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB

A Meeting was held on June 19, 1952, in Imperial College, Kensington. Seven members were present. John Hooper showed a short film of bat work in Devon and discussion followed on various topics including the Cave Preservation Trust and a stalactite which blew bubbles.

A further meeting of the London Group was held on December 9, 1952, at Imperial College. Nine members were present and we had two visitors from the College. John Hooper gave a talk about bats and caves in Devon, illustrated by recent photographs. He showed several natural colour transparencies taken underground. The pictures of bats were in colour and monochrome and many were taken at close range. Portraits of young bats caused considerable amusement and he showed photographs of female Greater horseshoe bats in flight and carrying their young.

WIN HOOPER

## A CAVE "WITCH" OF FAR AWAY

In far Japan, and reached by a long crawl through tiny passages, a clothed figure of a Goddess was seated in a typical small chamber. A fire in an iron basket appeared as the only light, and, presumably, warmth. In the foreground kneeling worshippers were bent in adoration.

The low roof was covered with bulbous stalactites with a nipple to each, from which drank an up-stretching figure of a favoured devotee, while he clasped the "breast" in his hands - sacred drink. Men are arriving crawling flat out, heads on knees, candlestick pushed in front of each.

In the woodland above banners which, doubtless, tell the story, hang above each point in this underworld.

The photograph of the Japanese illustration was sent to me after reading my "Wookey Hole".

I feel sure that among African tribes in the abundant Rift Valley Cave Dwellings, things of this sort must have occurred with savage rites. Doubtless the missionaries would not propagate such stories, for the tribes are living on "thin ice" and men's lives are at stake.

H.E. BALCH  
Hon. President

## PIPER'S HOLE ON TRESKO, ISLES OF SCILLY

During a recent visit to the Isles of Scilly I found myself on Tresco. I had read of a cave on the north shore, or should I say cliffs, so I wandered along the west shore to the ruinous piles of Cromwell's and King Charles' Castles, the former a fine keep beside the water's edge, and the latter a somewhat scattered rampart of stones on the hill-top.

Due north of this, perhaps some four hundred yards away, I came to a huge gorge with a heavy sea pounding on the rocks with terrific force, the spray reaching enormous heights. This gorge was the entrance to Piper's Hole. After watching the thrilling spectacle of the sea for some time I climbed down some awkward granite boulders and entered the small aperture. Clambering down over large boulders for several yards the cave opens out and a fresh water pool 30 foot long and about 3 feet 6 inches deep, is reached. At one time a raft was available for crossing. Shedding most of my garments and with a stout walking stick I ventured into the cold water (and believe me it WAS cold). The water became shallower and I was soon standing on a clean shingle beach.

With the aid of my torch I traversed fifty yards or so under fine arches and high vaulted chambers. At the far end, perhaps a hundred yards from the entrance, the granite was very soft and could be moulded like putty.

The return journey passed without incident.

The real attractions of Tresco are the wonderful sub-tropical gardens where one can wander about at leisure.

C.H. SANDFORD

### THE PENNY MECHANIC

Some time ago I found in an old loft a bound volume of The Penny Mechanic; a magazine of the Arts and Sciences, dated 1837-8. This remarkable publication, in addition to designs for perpetual motion machines, gunpowder engines and chemical experiments beginning - "Throw a small bit or two of phosphorus into a cup containing sulphuric acid", even contains one or two articles connected with caving, viz:-

"SINGULAR DISCOVERY - A singular discovery was made in Blaen-y-nant lead mine, near Mold, Flintshire, a few days ago. The workmen at the end of one of the levels were surprised and obliged to run for their lives in consequence of an immense rush of water suddenly bursting in upon them. After three days the water totally disappeared; and, on cautiously proceeding to the place, they found an opening through which the water had issued, of about four inches diameter.

"Hearing a sound as of a heavy run of water inside, they enlarged the aperture so as to admit of their passing through, and found that it was the bed of a subterraneous river, which in all probability affords the principal supply to the far-famed St. Winifred's Well at Holywell, from which it is distant about twelve miles.

"The stream being then shallow they explored it about sixty yards down, and were astonished to find several large caverns to the right and left, from the roofs and sides of which were suspended numerous and beautiful specimens of white spar or stalactites. The company are in high spirits, these appearances being considered favourable for a large lodgement of ore.

Shrewsbury Chronicle,  
December 30th 1837."

It would be interesting to hear, via the Journal, from any member who is acquainted with this district.

L.W.M.

## SOME CAVES IN ICELAND

This summer I had the great honour of being chosen by the British Schools Exploring Society to accompany them on a seven week expedition to an uninhabited part of central Iceland. My particular job was topographical surveying and during the forty-three days I was at work my plane table and I gained an intimate knowledge of about a hundred square miles of greatly varied and exciting country.

Our Base Camp was at 1800 feet above sea level and 15 miles East of the famous volcano, Hekla. It was in the midst of a lovely group of mountains of up to 4000 feet in height. There were many beautiful lakes, like hidden jewels, in clusters of mountains and gorges greater than Cheddar, with great yellow screes, and towering red and black pinnacles of rock. Everywhere the scenery was broken by huge fantastically shattered lava flows.

Iceland is geologically a young country. Its rocks are almost entirely igneous or metamorphic in origin and none are older than Tertiary times. Many of the flows and craters seemed to have been formed in historic times and indeed the whole island is still very much 'alive'. I saw many geysers squirting sulphurous steam or boiling mud, and bathed in hot springs emerging, with a great clanking sound, from the foot of a lava field.

Because it is so young there are no limestones in Iceland and therefore no caves in the accepted Mendip sense. But whilst I was there I did discover a few minor cavities which were very interesting.

At the base of a mountain near our Base Camp was a cave on the scale of the cave shelters at Cheddar and Ebbor. It was formed in a tuff agglomerate and seemed to be at the level of saturation of the mountain for at its farthest extension water was running from the rock itself, not from any distinguishable cracks and was obviously cutting back at an extremely rapid rate.

On the top of a great mountain, opposite an ice-cap in the south, I found a couple of amusing potholes and, after shifting some boulders, explored them. They were formed by a combination of cliff-slip and erosion by water. One was merely a forty foot passage between two large entrances, but the other (I called it Ptarmigan Pot after the bird that lived in its entrance) was well worth a detailed exploration. It consisted of a narrow shaft about twenty feet deep with two passages at the bottom. One, the East Passage, was twenty five feet long, very low, and ended in a nest of boulders. The other, the West Passage, was forty feet long, dipping steeply and ending in a mud choke. It was square in cross section with a hard mud floor. In places the roof was formed of jammed boulders, and elsewhere of stalactite-shaped rocks very similar to those in the first passages of Stoke Lane Swallet.

My most exciting cave was not in rock at all, but in ice. It was a great cavern formed in the snout of a neve field, about as high as Rods Pot but a good deal longer and wider. It was beautifully lit by the sun shining palely through the bluish, translucent ice and the perfection of the fluting on its walls put to shame any that I have seen in a limestone cave.

D.FORD

### LONGING FOR LOXTON or TOO TIGHT FOR TWO

I was inspired to write this narrative by the vivid impression left in my mind of the quaint grunting noises and the exasperated gasps of my companions when 'we' - or should I say 'they' - tried to transform themselves into eels in order to reach Morgans Chamber in the New Grottoes, LOXTON.

It all started when two fledglings of the Club decided that they wished to attempt to negotiate the notorious passages of the New Grottoes in LOXTON CAVE. Little did they know that they would come out like plucked chickens.

I took them down the first part of the system, through a tight, sandy rift-chamber which had a wonderfully geometrical right-angle bend at its entrance. The bend was obviously there for the use of portly gentlemen who wished to reduce their figures, for the top surface was covered in razor sharp rock which removed, at the first provocation, great lumps of flesh from the victim's back. How R.C. and M.W. grunted and groaned while they tried to ease their crumpled frames through the diminutive entrance!

Being of a wise and understanding nature, I refrained from laughing aloud and merely chuckled to myself thinking of the two previous times when I had compressed myself, like a bung in a bottle, through the narrow cleft in the solid rock. What bliss it was, hearing someone in the same predicament that I had so often been in! This was only the start of the fun. I knew the nature of the rest of the system, and how the passages gradually decreased in size, while the bends increased. What great anticipation I experienced. I was at the rear of the party and directed M.W. out of the rift chamber by shouting. He wriggled on, R.C. following, feet first down a sandy chute - such fun to go down - ....

Before I continue this caverniculous narrative, I should say that caving ended for me that summers afternoon, just here. I placed my legs on the wall and lay on the sandy floor, very comfortable in my long woollen underwear. So the rest of this report comes to you by the verbal account of M.W. and R.C. themselves, as well as my good old ear-drums. (If I hear a knocking noise in a cave I ask "Do you hear drums?")

M.W. and R.C., having slid down the chute, proceeded to negotiate a tortuous 'rabbit-burrow', the size of the Goatchurch burrow is like the Blackwall Tunnel in comparison. After about twenty minutes they had both become elongated and consequently of a small enough diameter to propel themselves through this 'press'. At the other end of this hollow cigarette M.W. and R.C. found themselves wrapped up in a small chamber which restricted their movement considerably. In fact, M.W. only just managed to position himself in a manner suitable for attempting the 'squeeze' which led off at a most painful angle. M.W. tried for half an hour to propel himself through the guillotine, but came back unsuccessful; then R.C. tried, after removing his ten outer layers, but eventually he had to retire hurt, looking more like a beetroot than homo sapiens.

While this was going on I took two photographs. Between the two I heard such an unearthly wail that it completely unnerved me, and as a result I took two photos on the same exposure. On development they turned out to be the ghosts of R.C. and M.W.

Well, I am glad to say that the whole party returned home without further mishap, and wallowed in a steaming bath for the next four hours to make up for the discomfort experienced early on.

N. BARRINGTON

### EASTWATER CAVERN

Two of our Birmingham members, Denis Warburton and Alan Surrall, assisted by a few other members and friends, have spent the last year working on a new survey of Eastwater to include all of the extensions which have been discovered in recent years. During the course of this work they have made over two dozen visits to the cave and have still a great deal of work to do in the computation and checking of the results. When the survey is completed it is hoped that it will be possible to make it available to those interested.

Among the more interesting points which have been raised by the above work are the following facts:-

- I. That the bell chamber at the bottom of the Dolphin chimney is situated directly above the second vertical pitch of the main route &
- II. At one place near the Boulder chamber there are four different levels of passages super-imposed one above the other.

## HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE

Since the Club visited France in 1948 a surprisingly large number of members have spent their annual holidays in that country, and it was thought that others may be interested to have some particulars of the areas visited, as these may be of assistance to them in planning their own trips. The following districts are all situated in limestone areas:

VERCOR This region was our first love and as such we regard it with special affection. Pont-en-Royans or Chorance would make very good centres, as from here it would be an easy matter to visit the Grands Goulets and Combe Laval with their wonderful gorges. The caves of the district include the Grotte-de-la-Luire, the entrance of which was used as a hospital during the last war. The patients and nurses were murdered by the Germans, and the entrance is now treated as a shrine.

The main cave, which is given as 350m long, lies at the bottom of a 100m gouffre (325 ft). This vertical, we were informed, has been known to fill with water, which then pours out of the mouth of the cave.

Nearer to Choranche are two caves, the Grotte-du-Bournillon and Grotte Tavot, both of which it is possible to explore with little or no tackle. There are, of course, numerous other caves in the district but even apart from its underground interest the Vercor is well worth a visit. Michelin Map No. 77.

TARASCON, ARIEGE. This small town in the Pyrenees is in itself not of any great interest, but it makes a very good centre. Three or four parties of Wessex members have at different times stayed or camped in this district, and a number of caves can be visited and at least partly explored without much tackle. Perhaps the most interesting is the famous cave of Niaux with its fine cave-paintings. The cave is 4 kms from Tarascon and the paintings are situated a long way from the entrance. The guide to Niaux has to be contacted in Tarascon and the fact that the only illumination is given by the guide's lamps adds rather than detracts from the impressiveness of the chamber of the paintings. About 3 kms south of the town on route N.20 is the Grotte-de-Lombrive. We rather gather that this connects with Niaux, on the other side of the hill, but we only went as far as the top of a vertical of quite considerable Depth. There is another cave nearly opposite Lombrive on the other side of the Ariège, in which we spent two or three hours.

To the north of Tarascon will be found Bedcilhac, with so large an entrance that Dev drove into it with his jeep, the wonderful river cave of Labouiche and the Grotte-le-Mas-d'Azil a prehistoric site through which runs a main highway, N.119. Michelin Map No.86.

LES EYZIES. Here will be found a fascinating mixture of show caves and caves of great prehistoric interest. It is possible to Camp by the river Vezere or stay at one of the hotels. We can particularly recommend the Hotel Centre, the charges being 400fr. for a room, 400fr. meal and 120fr. breakfast. The rooms are nice and clean and the food was ample and interesting. 24 kms away is the Grotte de Lascaux with its famous paintings. The state has now taken over the cave and reduced the price of admission to 100fr. making it about the cheapest show cave in France. At Los Eyzies itself there is the Grotte de-Font-de Gaume which also contains paintings. If your interest lies in the direction of prehistory, there is probably no other district in the world which could attract you more, the whole area containing innumerable sites and shelters. One could spend a long time at the Roque St. Cristophe examining the remains of the rock dwellings, and when tired of that there is always the Vezere for a swim. Apart from the usual show cave drivel served up by the guides the helictites of the Grotte-de-Grand Roc make a visit to the cave worth while, and the recently opened cave of Proumeyssac, 4 kms. from Le Bugue, which is itself 12 kms from Les Eyzies, can be compared to a grand Lamb Leer main chamber.

One enters it via a shaft in the roof by means of a lift. The guide we had was even worse than usual, but the cave does contain some very fine formations. The petrifying effect of the drip is most interesting, but perhaps the most outstanding formations are those which have taken the shape of a triangle with 2"- 3" sides. I expect these will give the 'experts' something to argue about for a very long time.

75kms to the west is another limestone district. Here will be found the Gouffre de Padirac, which is descended by a lift. When reaching the river visitors continue the journey by boat. 10 kms from Souillac on the road to Rocamadour is Lacave. This is very extensive, with fine formations and I am informed that ultra violet lighting is used in the cave.

HON. SECRETARY

N.B. An article, in greater detail, on the Les Eyzies district will be included in the next issue.

## COW HOLE

The Hon. Secretary originally asked me to attempt to reopen this cave in the Summer of 1951, at which time I was living some 50 miles from Mendip and found it extremely difficult to get there for a weekend, so I decided to wait until the spring of 1952 and my removal to Bristol before commencing operations.

The first job was, of course, to fence the shakehole and on measuring it up I realised what a big job that was to be, for it is not much less than 100 yards in circumference. The posts were obtained from a saw mill at Ubley and the wire from stock at Hillgrove - the job took two weekends and I had the assistance of my wife, Alan Ash and Keith Chambers then and on later weekends.

We were immediately confronted with two big difficulties:-

I. Transport We had none and I would not like to recall the number of times we walked the six miles over from Hillgrove. On one occasion the barbed wire and some digging implements were moved from Hillgrove to the site by the following route: bus to Pensford from Hillgrove and then the Blagdon bus to Ubley sawmill and manual haulage up the mile long, steeply ascending track to the hole. On another occasion a taxi was hired for the journey.

II. Accommodation There is a singular lack of suitable sleeping quarters nearby and two Saturday nights were spent in a most uncomfortable barn together with several million microscopic insects which infested the hay, but fortunately did not bite - instead they walked over one's skin in thousands and produced a peculiar tickling sensation almost enough to make one's flesh creep! Having admitted the "microbes" prior claim to their barn we spent ensuing visits under canvas but suffered somewhat from the fact that the nearest water supply is over half a mile away.

Three weekends were spent actually digging during the summer and we got down about fifteen foot vertically and twenty-five feet linear. Most of the work of excavation was carried out by Alan Ash and Keith Chambers. With the deterioration of the weather we abandoned the exposed site until the coming spring when we intend putting in a number of consecutive weekend's work and to have the job completed in the early summer at the latest.

To my countless critics I would like to say that I agree progress has been markedly slow but hasten to summon the elements to my defence because we certainly did have a number of weekends ruined by abominable weather on an extremely exposed site.

(Continued on Page 19.)

## IN SWILDONIA HIC TUBUS LUKEI EST

or

### SUBTERRANEAN HYDRAULICS

A belief which dies hard is that the semi-scientific dissertations laboriously compiled by this pen are studied, or at any rate absorbed, by more than one per cent of the readers of this Journal. I was shaken from my complacency, not long ago, by the most energetic of my fellow explorers. He remarked that several people, having perused the rough plan of Swildons which appeared in an earlier number, had asked him whether we had noticed the possibility of a connection between the Upper Series and Swildons I at Barnes' Loop! Furthermore, I soon realized that he himself was sadly (or blissfully) hazy about the relevant article in the Journal! (No.26).

I suppose there's no harm in trying, but in this narrative the emphasis will be entirely on the jolly and rewarding sport of cave-creeping, as the Americans put it. It is concerned with a further effort made, during August 1952, to bypass Sump I in Swildons Hole. The aforementioned plan had suggested that an attack on the so-called "Priddy Green Passage" might bring success, since the brooklet from the bottom of the Black Hole sinks into a choke only about fifty feet upstream from the point where it emerges into the main passage of Swildons I. Before the Upper Series was discovered the "P.G. Passage" had been cleared of mud for thirty feet until the roof sank to within an inch of water level. At the time this obstacle had seemed final.

Further reference to the said Plan will show that at a point a hundred and fifty feet upstream of the P.G. Passage, just below the Black Hole, the way divides in a curious manner. The brooklet from the Black Hole flows down the South tunnel, whilst to the West is a precisely similar passage, descending steeply, but dry.

Inevitably there was speculation as to where this dry passage (which was choked after a hundred feet) would join the main Swildons streamway. Howard Kenney maintained that the junction was in the little alcove just beyond Sump I, whereas Luke Devenish, in his mysterious way, held that it would be below water level in the sump itself! We soon realized that if we diverted the brook into the dry passage we might be able both to solve this problem and to drain the P.G. Passage, thus allowing the removal of that tantalising twenty feet of choke. During the winter months we debated ways and means.

A simple dam was out of the question, since the wet passage was wide and paved with boulders, and the dry passage started at a level one or two feet above the floor. The answer seemed to be to pipe the brook from a pool a few yards upstream.

We discussed the relative merits of hosepipe and guttering, and finally decides on a length of 2½" suction hose (since we knew that Luke had a supply of the same). He was a little reluctant, remarking on its fiendish weight, but the cause of science triumphed in the end. On the following day Colin Vowles and I were to be soon leaving the Arsenal in a Southerly direction, staggering beneath the weight of ten feet of tubing threaded on a rope. Accompanying the party come a lifeline and a collapsible shovel.

Fighting this heterogeneity down to the Black Hole was a test of patience only surpassed on one previous occasion, when we had dragged fifteen feet of rigid steel ladder as far as Sump II, in order to explore roof passages between there and Sump I. The forty foot descent into the Black Hole was already laddered and we arrived at the bottom soon after the tubing, though not with such a resounding thump.

The working conditions were excellent. A few feet down the dry passage was a deserted pothole holding a vast supply of mud, and while one of us dug in the "claypits" the other plugged and puddled the stony brookbed a short way upstream. There was an annoying little tributary which splattered over the dam area from a hole high in one wall, and the clay had to be covered with stones as protection from the splash.

The pipe was duly placed in position (emptying down the wet passage to avoid flooding the claypits) and a magnificent dam a foot high was built around it, faced and capped with limestone slabs. Before the ceremony of diversion, however, it was necessary to change carbide, since the whole dam business had taken about four hours. Following a good example we emptied the partly spent material into the stream, just above the pipe. Seconds later, without any warning,, there was an explosion of astonishing violence. We were both startled and intrigued, for whereas the bang had originated beneath our noses the dam was intact and showed no sign of disturbance. It transpired that enough carbide had been swept into the pipe to form an explosive acetylene-air mixture in the limited space within, and this had accidentally been ignited. We spent a few happy moments trying to produce a repeat performance.

But the gentle reader will be all agog to learn what happened to the brook, which, like certain industries, could now be diverted, de-diverted, re-diverted, and re-de-diverted, almost at the touch of a finger. With fitting solemnity the jet of water was

directed into the "dry" passage, where it set the old waterfalls going and awakened echoes long dead. Colin followed the torrent down its new course, while I scrambled down through the emptying puddles of the old streamway to watch the draining of the P.G. Sump. This is a poky little place. After several minutes the water level began to fall, and things were just starting to get interesting when from somewhere behind me came a prolonged, loud, high-pitched whine, followed by a curious gurgling. "Whatever's Colin up to?" I thought, but enlightenment followed swiftly. From over a mud bank which forms the North wall of the tunnel before the sump burst a flood of muddy water, and in that black moment our queries were answered. The dry passage was an oxbow, and we were as far from our by-pass as before.

I rejoined Colin at the dam, exchanged glum looks, and with one accord decided to make tracks. The water in Sump I was exceedingly murky, and in some indefinable way this served to lower my spirits still further. It was a silent expedition that trudged over the fields to where, however, the hospitality of Luke and Norma Devenish did much to improve matters. It must have seemed a little ungrateful when, to a query of Lukes, we replied in something of the sense of my title, adding that we know two people who weren't going to fetch it out!

Colin and I revisited the scene on a surveying trip four days afterwards. The dam was still operational, but the light splash from the little tributary had wreaked havoc with the clay where it was unprotected by stones. The now Grade Five survey showed that the flooded choke in the P.G. Passage was really about thirty feet long. This, then, is the barrier which decrees that all visitors to Swildons II shall be disguised, perhaps not inappropriately, as pathetic half-drowned rats.

W.I. STANTON

#### COW HOLE (Continued from Page 16)

Other factors which hindered us last year were the fact that most of the assistance came from two London members who had to make the long journey overnight in both directions, and the rapid filling-in by liquid clay which takes place during wet weather. The dig itself has to be very carefully undertaken due to its loose nature.

DAVID WILLIS

## LIST OF LIBRARY BOOKS

Alps and Men.	-	G.R. de Beer.
Au Fond des Gouffres.	-	N. Casteret.
Ancient Castleton Caves.	-	J. Royce.
Climbing in Britain.	-	J.E. Barford.
Cave Hunting.	-	Boyd Dawkins.
Cave Men New and Old.	-	N. Casteret.
Caves & Caverns of Peakland.	-	C. Porteous.
Field Archaeology.	-	R.J.C. Atkinson.
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Somerset.	-	Arthur Mee.
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Ten Years Under the Earth.	-	N. Casteret.
Une Vie de Chauve Souris.	-	N. Casteret.
Underground Adventure.	-	A. Gemmel & J.O. Myers.
Wookey Hole.	-	H.E. Balch.

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