

FOREWORD

For some time now members appear to have taken little interest in swallet digging, but this period of hibernation seems to have come to an end. Two members are working in the main swallet at Hillgrove and Noel Cleave has begun to re-dig Barrow Rake, but estimates that it will take about six days work to reach the point where the previous diggers left off.

During the last few months several members have left this country to take up either temporary or permanent residence abroad, one to New Zealand and three others to Canada. Unfortunately for the Club, Jim Swithenbank is one of this trio, and we have therefore lost our Gear Curator. Harry Stanbury has promised to help with gear construction, and has been elected as (nominal) Gear Curator. Oliver C. Lloyd has decided, that owing to the pressure of other work, he can no longer assist with the preparation of copy for the Journal. As members know, O.C.L. is now very active with the U.B.S.S., and the Club as such, has seen little of him for at least a year. We are very grateful to him for his assistance in the past.

As is often the case, we have to flog the willing horse, and in spite of having less spare time than almost any member, Harry Stanbury has given the Hon. Secretary valuable help with the last two issues of the Journal. It can also be mentioned that he, Tony Preston and the writer, (together with Luke Devenish and his 'mechanical aid') have been working on the construction of the hut extension, and Robert Woolley and Barrie Harvey, together with some 'casual labour', have been preparing the new foundations.

There is no doubt that the scattered nature of our membership prevents many from giving us their help, and in any case the very nature of the work precludes the use of large gangs, the law of diminishing returns would work very much against us.

We welcome the following new members

D.M. LEE, Sunnyside, Wrington, Nr. Bristol.

D.R. WILSON, 26 Drake Rd., Ashton Gate, Bristol

AFFILIATION

EAST TOWN CAVING CLUB, East Town, Clifton College, Bristol 8.

Congratulations to

Lt. R.E. Lawder on his promotion to Captain, R.E.M.E.

Lt. T.R. Shaw on his promotion to Lt. Com. R.N.

Members may be interested to learn that Dr. E.K. Tratman has been elected a Vice President of the Axbridge society.

We have received several changes of address, but as it is our plan to publish the full membership list in the next issue, we thought the changes could be left until then. In any case the Hon. Secretary's card index is with Malcolm Withey who is engaged in addressing the envelopes for this issue.

G.B. Guest Day

May 24th - 26th. (Whitsun)

Headquarters

An examination of our records would suggest that very few of member's guests do any caving requiring the use of tackle, when staying at Hillgrove. The amount of money collected for tackle fee appears to be very small in relation to the numberer of non-members using the hut. In the committee's view members and others are overlooking the payment of tackle fees, so it has been decided to increase the overnight visitor's fee from 2/6 to 3/6 a night, but this will include the charge for the use of tackle. Non-members not staying at the hut will continue to pay the existing charge of 1/6 head for each trip. This new charge for visitors will come into force on JUNE 1st. 1958.

The carbide is being used up at an alarming rate, but the income from this is even smaller than tackle fees. It may be recollected that members and others only paid about 15/- for the previous cwt of carbide, although this cost the Club about £3, and it would appear that much the same thing is happening again. It will be quite obvious that some people cannot be trusted to act in an honest manner, and in the view of the committee, we cannot continue to act as a milch cow. In any case we hear that members can obtain carbide of good quality at 5d a pound, so there is no point in replacing the present supply when it is gone.

The third point is even more serious than the above. A couple of years ago, acting on a suggestion of Phil Davies, the Club purchased £2 worth of carbide lamp spares which were left at Hillgrove so that members could keep their lamps in working order. A list of the cost of each item was given, and as a member took a spare part or parts, he was expected to leave the cost. Phil kept his eyes on things, and as certain items were taken, so he purchased new stock. This scheme worked perfectly for about two years, and so it came as a great shock to find all

spares gone (except a couple of battered items) and 1/4 in the box. Inquiries have shown that at one time not only did the box contain more spares but also enough cash to make it worth while to use this for getting change for hut fees. We must therefore come to the conclusion that someone is still stealing money from the hut. It looks as if we will have to give up the carbide lamp spare scheme unless we can trust members to play the game.

The committee has issued instructions that members should be reminded that no visitors may stay at the hut without previous permission, and that when requesting permission the names of any visitors must be given. Details of the cave to be visited should be given when applying for the tackle key, and in all cases the Hon. Secretary should be contacted direct. Windows are still being left open, and all are reminded that these should be checked before leaving the hut. The hut must be left clean and tidy, and no dirty clothes taken into the main room for drying. Details of members staying must be entered in the log and fee books.

Hon. Secretary

Hon. Secretary. F. Frost, 22 Wolseley Rd, Bishopston, Bristol 7.
Bristol 44221.

Hon. Treasurer. G. Williams, Cedarwood, Cadbury Camp Lane, Clapton-in-Gordano, Som.

Cave Rescue

Dr. B.A. Crook did a particularly good job of work at Goatchurch during the Easter holidays. A lad broke his leg in the cave, and using plaster, Dr. Crook set the limb at the scene of the accident, and so enabled the boy to travel under his own steam, so to speak. We believe that Dr. Crook arrived at the cave while the M.R.O. Wardens were still "organizing". Not too bad for a fourteen day old grandfather?

To the Secretary of the Wessex Cave Club

Dear Frank,

Cave Diving in Swildons Hole Four.

The Cave Diving Group and the Westminster Speleological Society are jointly planning to carry out cave diving operations in the sumps of Swildons Four over the two weekends September 6/7th and 13/14th. Two divers will be taking part and considerable planning will be needed in order to carry the equipment through the cave without intolerable congestion and delays. This will probably necessitate a number of smallish parties under individual leaders who know the place well. The precise planning still remains to be worked out (by Oliver C. Lloyd, Len Dawes and myself) but we believe that if enough parties can be mustered then the individual loads to be carried need be no larger than for any other serious caving trip.

The equipment will be carried down the cave and examined for damage during the first weekend and the diving party will then be able to travel light (on the way in at any rate). We believe that both dives may be carried out in clear water if we plan correctly and this will improve our prospects of success. We believe that the passage even of many feet down the streamway as far as Tratman's Temple will not muddy the water in Swildons Four appreciably, but we regard it as essential that nobody passes this point. One of us (LD) would be very glad to hear from any members who are willing to assist us (L. Dawes, 113 Brooklands Avenue, Sidcup, Kent. Tel. Fooks Cray 5272).

Mr. Maine has given us his permission and if precedent is followed then the cave will be barred to other cavers on the Saturday 6th September and

over the entire weekend 12/13/14th September. We hope that you will cooperate with us and bring this to the notice of your members. We are circulating this information fairly widely and thereby hope that the inconvenience caused to other parties will be reduced to a minimum.

G.C. Wells. 19.4.58.
C/o 15 Cavendish Crescent N.,
The Park, Nottingham.

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Mr. Frost,

On recent trips into Eastwater I have been disturbed to find that someone has been doing a certain amount of "feather-bedding" in parts of the cave. I refer, for instance, to the removal of the boulder which used to be nicely jammed in the top of the Dolphin Chimney. Now this boulder used to be quite an enemy of mine, especially when struggling to get out of the cave after an arduous trip and it used to receive a generous quota of special language. But while it was my enemy I respected it and enjoyed its presence (in retrospect!) and I mourn its passing.

Likewise, it is always good fun and good training, too - deciding where safely to belay a rope or ladder at the top of any pitch and this aspect is being steadily destroyed by the appearance of metal eyes where they are not strictly necessary.

Please don't misunderstand me - I am all for removing potential real danger from our caves - but let's not make the going easier just for comforts sake. Any trip now I am fearing to find

an iron handrail across the second Bold Step or chains hanging down every one of the Fourteen Pots!

Yours sincerely,
N.A.N. Gillard.

(Editor's Note. Mr. Gillard has raised a most important point. If the 'make it easy' and/or the 'make it safe' brigade carry their work to the logical conclusion we will find ourselves with caves from which every possible hazard has been removed. We know that a lot of this work has been done in the sacred name of 'rescue operations', but are far from convinced that all the Rawbolts are strictly necessary. Not long ago it was suggested that the old 'overhead railway' in Lamb Leer be replaced, as some cavers did not like 'verticals'!!!!)

CLIMBING DOWN OTHER PEOPLE'S LADDERS.

or, "there's one born every minute."

This Journal has already recorded the unhappy plight of a small party who descended Swildons only to discover that the ladders had been removed while they were below. We have been seeing things which make us wonder how long it will be before this little story will be told again.

Three weeks ago we visited Swildons Four as guests of a Westminster Speleo party and we all made use of Westminster tackle. Returning to the surface in advance of the others we found about six cavers (including WCC) gaily climbing down the ladders. Upon enquiry we discovered that they had no liaison with the Westminster party and in

fact seemed to have very little idea about anything ("Oh it's all right we are only going as far as the sump").

To the iron disciplinarian I suppose that the solution to this problem is a simple one. All ladders will be inscribed with a large and legible notice (preferably in several languages) THIS LADDER IS PRIVATE PROPERTY AND YOU TOUCH IT AT YOUR PERIL. IT WON'T BE HERE WHEN YOU RETURN. However, upon reflection, this plan has its difficulties, not least of which is that the party below might return to find that their ladders had been withdrawn by some gentle mind to whom such a harsh message had conveyed offence.

Joking apart this problem is hardly funny. Perhaps it is one which should be faced.

Oliver Wells.
18.4.58.

P.S. What do the Lawyers say about this?

We cannot answer for the lawyers, particularly the 'tap-room type', but this really could be quoted as an example of the "biter is bit". For years now the Club has suffered in no small degree from just this problem, and almost every weekend during the summer months our tackle has been used by unauthorized parties or individuals. New caving groups are being formed all the time, but few of these have much tackle, and it is not only these small clubs that use our gear. On a number of occasions our ladders have been borrowed by a member supposedly for his own use, but in actual fact to do the official work of other bodies. The committee has most certainly faced the problem, and has come to the conclusion that there is no practical answer to it. As Swildons becomes more and more popular we must expect the problem to become an even greater headache to us.

Editor.

BOOK REVIEW

South Wales Caving Club. 1946 - 1956.

Tenth Anniversary Publication.

56p., plans., bibliog., Obtainable from D.W. Jenkins Dinmore, Dyffryn Rd., Llandrindon Wells, Rads. 7/6. p.f.

It has been said that the S.W.C.C. is a legitimate son of the Wessex Cave Club. Before the war Wessex members worked in Wales along with other 'foreign' groups, notably the Mendip Exploration Society. When activity recommenced in 1946 the new club was formed and cavers worked as members of that while in Wales, no matter what their club loyalties in England.

South Wales was previously a little-worked area and several major discoveries have now been made there. Arthur Hill and Dai Hunt summarize these and also describe the development of the Club. Railton gives a detailed account of the discovery of Tunnel Cave and of exploration there to date. Harvey described Uppet and other similar climbing devices.

Glennie's article on cave fauna is the best of the several he has written on the subject - relating the fauna to its environment.

This duplicated publication is important and well-produced. Is it correct, though, to say (vide p. 19) that the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu survey is more accurate than the one of G.B. Cave?

T.R.S.

NEW GROUND AT WOOKEY HOLE.

This article describes briefly the latest chambers that have been discovered at Wookey Hole by members of the Cave Diving Group and an assessment of the prospects of going further. The new ground is shown in the attached plan (or rather section).

Readers of this Journal will no doubt remember the circumstances of the discovery of the Thirteenth Chamber by Bob Davies using an aqualung. Davies had planned his dive carefully but to his bad luck things went wrong and he lost contact with his supporting divers in muddy water. With his gas supply running low he was obliged to swim upstream over unknown territory searching for an air surface in which to save himself. He was fortunate to discover air in the Thirteenth Chamber and rested there out of the water for three hours before carrying out his carefully planned and brilliantly executed escape bid. At the time he did not pause to observe whether the way ahead lay at low level or at a level closer to the surface and we were left wondering as to the correct method of continuing with the exploration. Matters were not made easier when Bob Davies departed to America, leaving only two divers who were capable and keen enough to carry on with the work.

We were advised by Graham Balcombe to use mixture breathing apparatus (which lasts much longer than an aqualung) and to operate with boots and not flippers on our feet. Perhaps at this point I should mention that the manufacturers of this type of equipment do not supply it to civilians in the ordinary way because "special maintenance and training is required". However, at Wookey Hole the problem is such that it is

essential to make the extra effort required in mastering this new technique, and the Cave Diving Group believes that divers who have reached Trainer Diver standard using oxygen equipment may safely start training in the use of the more complicated mixture breathing equipment. However, I have digressed from my story –

At Easter 1957 John Buxton and myself made history in a very small way when we carried out what we believe to have been the first recorded use of diving using mixture breathing equipment in a cave. The cave chosen for this was Hurtle Pot in Yorkshire where we already knew there was a bedding plane passage about five feet high which sloped gently down to a depth of about five feet below the water table (J.A. Thompson, aqualung). We followed this bedding plane for a couple of hundred feet to find that it flattened out at about forty-five feet down, but we could not see much because of the dirty water. Judging by the coarse nature of the gravel deposits we thought that the bedding plane carried heavy current when in flood and it is just possible that we were in the watercourse that emerges at God's bridge not far away. However this is conjecture.

At Wookey Hole in September 1957 we carried out a reconnaissance using mixtures and followed Bob Davies' wire until we were standing vertically below the airsurface in Thirteen. We could see his wire disappearing upwards at an angle of about twenty degrees to the vertical but that was about all we could see because the visibility was only about ten or fifteen feet on that occasion. Transferring our attention to the sandy floor we could see from the ripple marks that the current did indeed flow at low level, and we continued under a rock arch and across a sandy floor to enter what we now call the Fourteenth Chamber.

We do not know very much about this chamber except that its floor consists of an unbroken expanse of ripplemarked sand, and that the depth increases from about forty feet just below the Thirteen air surface to about fifty feet on the far side. We noted that the way ahead lay in a low passage measuring perhaps fifteen feet wide by three feet high and sloping down hill, threatening to take us into still deeper waters.

On the occasion of the discovery of Fourteen we laid a permanent handline by means of a very simple device. In my left weight-pocket I carried a lump of lead tied to the end of a thick rubberised cable that trailed behind me and had been paid out from the dry land in Nine as I advanced. At the furthest point reached I deposited this weight on the floor and on the return journey I verified that this line runs dead straight and there are no untoward hazards that can occur to a diver following this line back to Nine (apart from becoming bouyant or suffering from a heart attach or something like that).

In March this year John Buxton and I returned to examine the way ahead and we found that indeed it does go deeper. The slot was less high than we had remembered it, and was only large enough to enter at one point. John remained at the entrance while I went in feet first and steeply downhill over a firm gravel floor and under a low rock roof containing solutional hollows. After a few yards it was obvious that it would be unwise to continue without delaying the line I was laying and I paused to consider how to do this. I then looked at my two depth gauges which were pointing to sixty feet and to sixty-five feet respectively and I realised that I had reached the limit of our depth on 70%

oxygen 30% nitrogen mixture. By this time the mud had risen and the visibility was down to a few inches, so I lay still and waited for the current to clear it away, which it eventually did. Looking downwards I could see into an open expanse of nothingness with lumps of rock projecting downwards from the roof and at a depth of about seventy feet. The floor was not visible but this does not mean very much because I was looking down at an angle and the visibility was certainly no better than twenty feet. It is my guess that the gravel slope that I was lying on probably continues downwards into this Fifteenth Chamber, and if this is the case then it will be safe to continue the exploration using a mixture containing less oxygen, and using some method of belaying the line through the wide part of the slot.

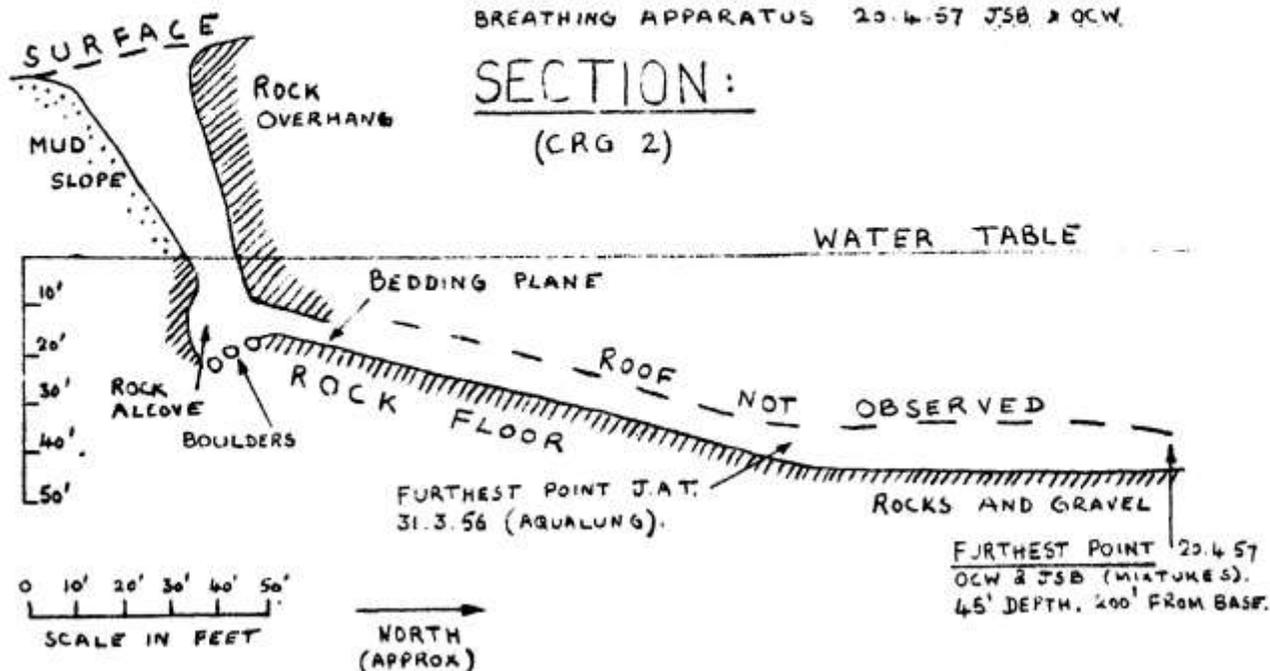
Naturally this greater turn of depth has been a disappointment to us but we believe that we can still continue exploring awhile yet. The techniques are all well known and it is simply a question of applying them. The underwater distance from the Third Chamber is already considerable, however (seven hundred feet) and obviously our plans must primarily be determined by considerations of divers' safety. However, we certainly hope to be able to explore the Fifteenth Chamber and we cannot lay down any maximums in distance or depth until we have seen the lie of the land.

O. Wells.
19.4.58.

HURTLE POT, YORKSHIRE.

FIRST RECORDED CAVE DIVE USING MIXTURE-BREATHING APPARATUS 20.4.57 JSB & OCW.

SECTION: (CRG 2)

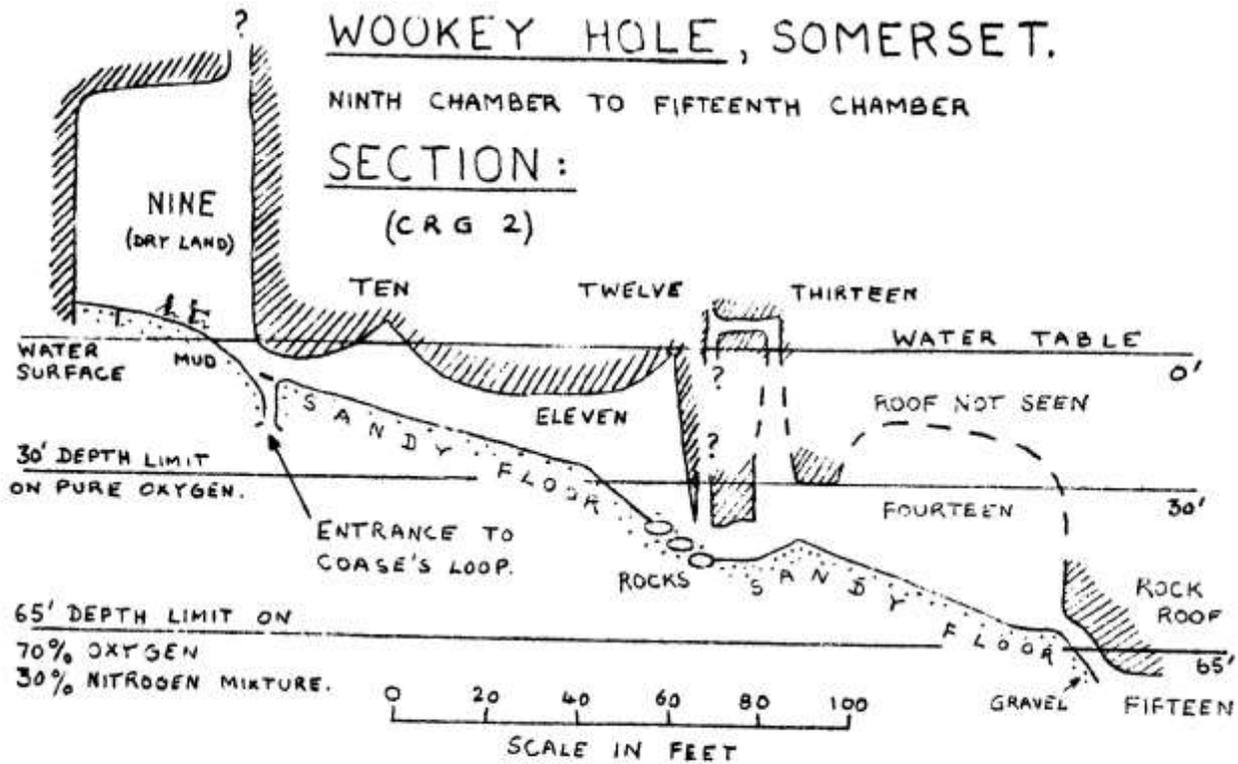


WOOKEY HOLE, SOMERSET.

NINTH CHAMBER TO FIFTEENTH CHAMBER

SECTION:

(CRG 2)



NB. (1) THESE CHAMBERS RUN FROM WEST TO EAST.

(2) THIRTEEN AIRSURFACE IS INCOMPLETELY EXPLORED.

COPYRIGHT CAVE
DIVING GROUP

26.3.58 *Oswell*

CAVING IN PORTUGAL

Part I.

Have you ever stood at the bottom of the '40' in Swildon's waiting for a party of 'weegees' to climb their way out and wistfully dreamed of discovering a complete new series of caves?

Three members of our club decided last year to join this pleasure with that of visiting the Continent. The idea started a long time ago when Mick Woods and Nick Barrington were out walking with some friends, and not unnaturally the conversation turned to caving.

"Where shall we go?"

"There is a belt of good limestone in Portugal." "We'll need some money."

"Let's make it a proper Expedition, get backing from official bodies etc"...

The idea caught on and in a short time the team had swelled to 10 including Bob Picknett.

It was to be a scientific expedition with experts in Geology, Biology, and Physics. The Royal Geographical Society were interested in the prehistoric landscape development North of Lisbon so this became our objective. We were later to receive official recognition.

Money. Opening up an isolated and unexplored cave area meant we had to be self-sufficient and the estimated cost grew and grew... Inspiration struck during a practice survey (closed route) in Chislehurst Caves. These

were roomy and near London, so why not hold an all night jazz dance?

Such a mad idea was bound to be popular.

On February 9th 1957, we opened the door expecting a few hundred people. By midnight, over 1700 had paid admission. The expedition was under way.

A few weeks later we were joined by Lilian. This shapely lady was our 31 seater Bedford coach. (She was a beauty). Her destiny was to take 14 people and 3 tons of equipment over 3000 miles of a tough journey.

We made 200 ft of ultra light weight ladder and to this was slowly added a mountain of food, ropes, scientific gear and other essential equipment. With two weeks to go our final place was filled and the countless paper work was nearing completion (little did we know what was to come after the Expedition). Somehow everything was finished in time and on August 2nd we were off.

At Dover we found that Lilian had been documented as a racing car and the loading of the ferry was held up while this was sorted out.

Over the Channel, we drove around the clock and arrived at Biarritz with the grand total of 4 "blow-outs" to our credit.

In this critical situation, the four geologists were packed off to hitch-hike to Portugal and get on with the basic work, whilst the remainder awaited new tyres. A desperate phonecall to Dunlop in Birmingham did the trick, and after two days of luxurious idling at 'Chambre

d'Amour', we were off again.

Spain was uneventful. At the Portuguese frontier we noticed some hostility and only later did we learn that we were suspected of arm smuggling. 30 Karabiners on our equipment list had been translated as carbines.

We arrived at Mira d'Aire prepared to set our base camp in the wilds. Imagine our surprise when we were officially welcomed by the Mayor and installed on the Village foot-ball pitch with all amenities. Two of the hitch-hickers were there to receive us, and the other two turned up soon after. And now for the caves.

We were situated in a polje on the top of an extensive limestone plateau some 1600 ft thick. The valley wall on one side rose to a line of jagged cliffs, while the opposite side was more gentle and it was here we were to find the major caves.

The land was arid, and the village obtained its water from an extensive underground lake in the Olha de Agua. This was one of the first caves we visited and consisted of a single large passage descending smoothly to a depth of over 200 ft. At the bottom at least 50ft of lake could be seen and the water was so clear and still that it was hard to distinguish where rock ended and water began (this was typical of the pools in these caves). Our party found this type of caving a bit tame, and on the way out, decided to explore a steep mud slope leading to a fissure in the roof. Nick almost reached the top before losing his footing and sliding all the way down on his posterior - much to the amusement of everyone.

Mindinhu was much more exciting. We were

shown a small hole at the foot of an olive tree giving way to a 25ft drop. Once down, we could see a forest of stalagmites colonnades, some over 8ft tall. This was the only place where we found such large formations. The way on led past a dead dog through a small funnel where a twisting passage doubled back to a sump. It was only on returning that the real passage was found - a low duck behind a stalacmite boss. The party split, four remaining behind to do scientific work, while the rest continued the exploration. A long passage with glittering cascades of flowstone brought us to a 40ft drop.

There the character changed with ducks and pools terminating in a sizeable lake which one of us tired to swim. We emerged well pleased with our first day's work, but sweating. The caves here were so warm - 61 F. - and only a minimum of clothing was necessary.

to be continued

Caving in Norway.

The Norwegian farmer's boy seemed very pleased with his reward of a bar of chocolate for showing us the entrance of Fisktjqrngrotten, and set off downhill through the trees back to his farm. Dick Kirkland and I turned and entered the cave.

Fisktjqrngrotten is set in a cliff, has four entrances and is just over 200 ft. long.

A roomy passage with a sandy floor leads down from the most northerly entrance to a fine chamber 30ft square and about 25 ft high, the floor of which is covered with angular boulders. This first chamber has two entrances in the cliff side and when we entered, the sun was shining through one of these, completely illuminating it. Ducking under a lock arch we entered the second chamber, which is slightly smaller than the previous one. This, too, has an uneven rocky floor and an entrance, (which is rather smaller than the others), from the cliff side.

It is quite a pleasant little cave, but we were rather disappointed, as we had hoped it would lead further into the hillside. Suddenly Dick spotted a meandering passage in the roof in one corner of the second chamber. First, he tired to chimney up to it, but the walls were too far apart, so he induced me to go and give him a shoulder up.

Unfortunately the rock wall is rather shattered and I stood under a shower of small stones, until Dick finally peeled off from about ten feet up. When he had finished saying all he wanted to say on the treachery of shattered rock and the discomfort of landing on angular boulders, I suggested it would be quite

easy to reach the roof, if we used a tree as a maypole.

We set off for camp and returned an hour later with an axe. We decided the best way to get a tree into the cave was through one of the entrances into the second chamber, and then carry it under the arch into the second chamber. Five or ten minutes energetic chopping brought a fine straight birch to the ground, and after trimming off the branches and the top, we set about the problem of getting it underground. The first part was easy - a quick caber toss and the tree went flying through the entrance into the first chamber. Then our troubles began - the next ten minutes were spent stumbling over boulders, whilst we negotiated the tree into the second chamber. Getting it upright took even longer and was more difficult as the tree was very heavy. In one occasion we both fell and dropped the thing, and another time Dick let go, leaving me to do a stumbling waltz round the chamber with the tree until he picked himself up and came to help me.

Finally we got the tree in place and I shinned up it, traversed along a ledge and reached the passage in the roof. I found that the "passage" was nothing more than a small pocket between the wall and the roof. If anyone wants to see this "passage" they are perfectly welcome to use our tree - we didn't bother to bring it out.

DAVE MORRIS.

BELGIUM "The Chalet Grotte" - "Aywaille".

Aywaille is a small town about 20 miles south of Liege, on the edge of the Ardennes. It is near the famous show caves of Remouchamps.

On the outskirts of the town, immediately beside the main road to Harze, lies the entrance to the Chalet Grotte.

To cavers, paying a visit to this cave, it appears to have nothing unusual and no prospects for further discoveries.

However a visiting geologist/explorer calculated that there should be some large caverns beyond the present end of the cave.

There are also some small rivulets percolating into the rock above the cave's situation.

Added to this was a local tale to the effect that a prison warder, in search of an escaped prisoner, had been lowered down a pothole in this area and described what he saw as "a large cavern, containing a lake and many beautiful formations".

Unfortunately this happened early in the century, and as the warder stated he did not wish to re-live the experience of being lowered down the pothole again, it seems that the discovery was not followed up. (A recent search of the area could find no trace of the pothole).

The town's Tourist bureau, having been informed of the possibilities, contacted the Liege Section of the Speleo Club de Belgique, who agreed to carry out excavations.

A description of the cave as known to date, shows that it has two levels, joined by a 30 ft chimney.

The upper level, with a separate entrance, has a roomy passage of 40 ft branching into three smaller passages. Two of these lead to impossible squeezes, and the third which looks most interesting is being blasted and dug-out.

Immediately inside the lower series are the remnants of a small watermill. The stream which operated the mill can be followed for only 15ft where the rock lowers to form an impassible sump. The main passage-way is about 400 ft. long and has mud, a foot deep, throughout. There are many offshoots which offer interesting climbing and some squeezes, but none of them lead to anything. At the end of the main passage there is a large circular pool enclosed by rocks. It is beyond this point that the large caverns are thought to be.

In its present form the cave has little to interest the enthusiast. There are only a few formations, which cannot be described as pretty, and the passages which are knee deep in mud, are not attractive or sporting.

However, the local inhabitants are most enthusiastic about the possibilities of having a commercial cave. The Town Clerk has given the service of three County Council workers to explode and clear away rubble etc., wherever requested. Another person has lent the club two rooms to use as a week-end HQ, and a primitive telephone system has been set up between the HQ and the cave. On Sundays many people dressed in new boiler-suits potter around inside the cave entrance, offering their help.

Although there is so much local enthusiasm for "le speleos" and the cave itself, I was surprised to hear that the Liege Section of the Speleo Club de Belgique (who are carrying out the excavations) have only twenty members.

JOHN O'BRIEN.

The following poem-was originally published in "The New Yorker", and is taken from "POEMS 1953". We gratefully acknowledge Mr. Graves kindness in granting permission to reprint his poem in this issue of the Journal.

Editor.

'Wellcome, to the Caves of Arta'

"They are hollowed out in the sea-coast at the municipal terminal of Capdepet at nine kilometer from the town of Arta in the Island of Mallorca, with a suporizing infinity of graceful colums of 21 meter and by downward, which prives the spectator of all animacion and plunges in dumbness. The way going is very picturesque, serpentine between style mountains, till the arrival at the esplanade of the vallee called "The Spider". There are good enlacements of the railroad with the autobuses of excursion, many days of the week, today actually Wednesday and Saturday. Since many centuries renown foreing visitors have explored them and wrote their elegy about, included Nort-American geoglogues." (From a tourist guide).

Such subtile filigranity and nobless of construccion
Here fraternise in harmony, that respiracion stops.
While all admit thier impotence (though autors most formidable)
To sing in words the exellence of Nature's underprops,
Yet stalactite and stalagmite together with dumb language
Make hymnes to God which celebrate the stregnth of water drops.

You, also, are you capable to make precise in idiom
Consideracions magic of ilusions very wide?
Already in the Vestibule of these Grand Caves of Arta
The spirit of the human verb is darked and stupefyed;
So humildy you trespass trough the forest of the colums
And listen to the grandess explicated by the guide.
From darkness into darkness, but at measure now descending
You remark with what esxactitude he designates each bent;
The Saloon of Thousand Banners, or the Tumba of Napoleon
The Grotto of the Rosary, The Club, The Camping Tent,
And at Cavern of the Organs, there are knocking strange formacions
Wich give a noise particular pervoking wonderment
Too far do not adventure, sir For, further as you wander,
The every of the stalactites will make you stop and stay.
Grand peril amencases now, your nostrills aprehending
An odour least delicious of lamentable decay.
Tt is some poor tourists, in the depth of obscure cristal.
Wich deceased of thier emociion on a past excursion day.

ROBERT GRAVES

(All material published in this Journal is copyright .)