

CLUB NEWS

New Members

The following have been elected to full membership. All are welcomed, and their addresses will be found in the Membership List at the end of this Journal.

5.7.64. C.M. Bateman
 J.A. Benham
 Miss J.B.J. Clark
 M.R. Desborough
 P.A. Rahtz (re-elected)

Annual General Meeting and Dinner Saturday 24th October - Advance Notice

The A.G.M. will again be held at Priddy Village Hall, this year at 3.0 p.m. The Dinner, as last year, will be at the Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar, at 7.30 for 8.0 p.m. Tickets will be available shortly from Jim Hanwell, "Chaumbey", Wookey Hole Lane, Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset, price 15/- each inclusive of coffee and gratuities - cheques and P.O's made payable to "Wessex Cave Club" please.

Nominations for Officers and Committee and motions for discussion at the A.G.M. must reach the Secretary before 3rd October. Further details will be circulated to all members early in October, together with the minutes of the previous meeting, reports and balance sheet for the present year.

Lamb Leer

Mr. Burdge, the tenant farmer at Lamb Leer, has had occasion to complain to the Somerset County Estate Office about the behaviour of cavers. In consequence of this arrangements regarding access are having to be more strictly enforced.

1) A blood chit must be signed by every member of the party on each visit, regardless of whether they have previously signed one. Any number of people may sign on one chit, provided the leader signs over a 6d. stamp. In future no gate fee will be charged to non-Wessex members.

2) Parties must call at Beaconsfield Farm, prior to each visit, and offer Mr. Burdge 1/- per head (goodwill). Keys to the quarry, which is now locked, may be borrowed on request for changing and car parking. They must, of course, be returned immediately after use. (Beaconsfield Farm is approximately one mile from Lamb Leer on the West Harptree road. Take the 3rd turning on the right, an unsurfaced track, halfway down the hill - Telephone 277 West Harptree).

3) Use the gates for access; on no account leave them open or climb over walls. Replace and lock the grating whilst in the cave to ensure that unauthorised parties do not descend. Leave no litter or spent carbide in the vicinity.

Failure to observe these elementary rules may result in the Licence being withdrawn and the cave being closed, or even more stringent rules being imposed by the Land Agents and the Waldegrave Estate.

All requests for keys should be sent to the Assistant Secretary as before. Remember to collect a fee for use of Club tackle from all non-members, except those staying at Hillgrove or Eastwater - 1s.6d. each.

Priddy Green Dig

The old concrete cover over the Priddy Green sink dig, which had been steadily breaking up, has been replaced by a heavy cast iron manhole cover. Anyone wishing to dig or inspect the dig should ask Mr. Main for the special lifting keys if they wish to keep finger nails intact.

Committee Vacancy

A vacancy exists on the Committee following the departure of Dave Causer for the States in the middle of July. The vacancy will be filled by the Committee (see Rule 5).

We all wish Dave and Katherine a successful and happy stay in the U.S.A. and would like to take this opportunity of putting on record our appreciation of the work done by Dave for the Club as Assistant Secretary and Committee Member over the past four years. We look forward to his eventual return.

Journal Back Numbers

The following Journals are available from surplus printing at 1s.6d. each, post free, from R.J. Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol. Supplies of some (particularly No.80) are limited, so if you are interested write soon enclosing your remittance.

Vol. VI Nos. 78, 79, 80 and 82.

Vol. VII Nos. 83-92 inclusive (complete)

Index to Vol. VII also available, price 6d.

CLUB MEETS

29th August Longwood Swallet Meet at Lower Farm 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Roy Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Rd., Hengrove, Bristol 4.

12th/13th September Steep Holm An invitation to spend a weekend on a deserted island - still room for you and your 8 gramophone records!

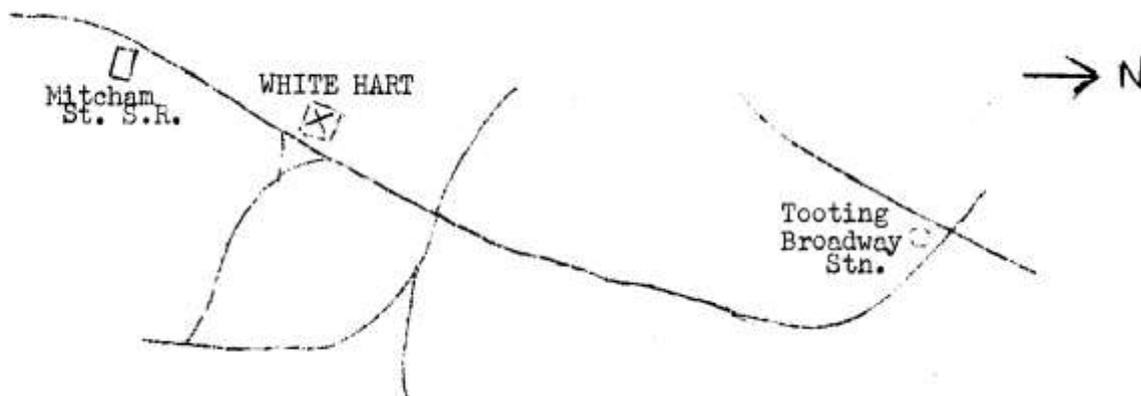
Names to: Roy Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.

26th/27th September Hillgrove Weekend The Hut Warden requests the help of as many members as possible who can spare a few hours over the weekend to assist with routine maintenance jobs inside and outside the Club Hut. On Saturday evening John Hooper will talk on "Cine Photography in Caves" illustrated by film shot in the caves and mines of Devon, 7.0 p.m. at the Globe Inn, Priest Row, Wells.

3rd/4th October Visit to the Devon Caves.

Details from the Leader: Donald Thomson, "Pinkacre", Leigh-on-Mendip, Nr. Bath.

On Saturday evening 3rd October members in the London area are invited to a Film Evening to be held in the Clubroom of "The White Hart", Mitcham (opposite Mitcham Cricket Green) commencing at 7.30 p.m. The nearest railway station is Mitcham (S. Region). Nearest tube station Tooting Broadway, then take an 80, 80a or 88 bus which passes the door, (see sketch map). Films to be shown are "Descent of Swildons to Sump I", "Club Irish Trip" and others made by the Farnham Group.



10th October Sandford Caves.

Leader: Tim Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks. Meet at the Quarry 3.0 p.m.

24th October A.G.M. Priddy Village Hall 3.0 p.m.

Dinner 7.30 for 8.0 Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar.

OTHER CAVING EVENTS OF INTEREST

September 5th, 6th and 7th

British Speleological Association are holding their National Speleological Conference and International Exhibition at Settle High School, Giggleswick. The Conference will include lectures, films, and excursions to local caves. Also a photo-salon of prints and colour transparencies. Further details and programme available from the Conference Secretary: J.C. Gilber, 33 Broomgrove Road, Sheffield 10.

October 3rd and 4th

Derbyshire Caving Association are holding their Third Congress of Speleology in Buxton. Exhibition, lectures, films and informal club talks are planned. Full details on Club noticeboard at Hillgrove or on application to the Congress Secretary; S. Murphy, Hadfield Laboratory, Department of Metallurgy, The University, Sheffield 1.

October 30th & 31st and November 1st

University of Keele, Dept. of Extramural Studies, in association with the Cave Research Group, are holding a weekend course on caves, entitled "Origin and Development of Caves in British Limestone" at the Wedgwood Memorial College, Barlaston, Staffordshire. Application to the Director of Extramural Studies, The University, Keele, Staffs. Further details and application forms on Hillgrove noticeboard.

OBITUARY

Ian A. Dear

I was saddened to read in the press of the death of Ian Dear under such very tragic circumstances. The loss is even greater when one remembers he was such an outstanding example of a "back room boy" whose work was much admired and appreciated by his colleagues at the Admiralty.

Although most of his caving activities centred around the Bristol Exploration Club he was, for a short while, a member of the committee of the Wessex Cave Club, and he made every effort to attend most of the Club's functions, particularly the Annual Dinners.

With his death caving and Mendip have lost an unusual and interesting personality.

F.W. Frost

Hon. Secretary: P. Davies, "Morley", Silver St., Nailsea, Bristol. Phone: Nailsea 9.

Hon. Asst.Secretary: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. B.M. Willis, 3 Derwent Lodge, St. Philip's Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey.

Editor: C.J. Hawkes, 147 Evington Lane, Leicester.

Hut Bookings: P.N. Riches, Priory Cottage, Chewton Mendip, Bath, Som. Phone: Chewton Mendip 357

Activities Secretary: C.R. Hobbs, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol. Phone: Long Ashton 2127

EASTER IN YORKSHIRE

Phil Davies & Rod. Hobbis

The Club once again held its annual Easter Meet at Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Half the party were encamped on the banks of Brants Gill the less hardy stayed at the Crown, where we were made most comfortable by Mrs Newhouse, who took our irregular hours in her stride and for whom nothing was too much trouble.

The weather was unusually kind to us, being reasonably dry, if somewhat cold at times. Pen-y-ghent was sprinkled with snow most nights but the heavy rain kept off, which was a good thing since our plans included some pots which are made much more difficult in wet weather.

By mid-day on Good Friday the party numbered 22, some limbered up with a through trip, Brow Gill - Calf Holes; others, new to Yorkshire Pots and multiple pitches, showed their initiative by bottoming Sell Gill. Meanwhile a mountain of gear was deposited in the "shooting" hut at the end of the Pen-y-ghent track in readiness for the big trip the next day. (The key had very kindly been loaned to us by Mr. Perfect of Brackenbottom, who is the Gamekeeper on Horton Moor.)

An early start by seven members on Saturday was crowned with a successful descent of Pen-y-ghent Pot. It took eleven hours - in and out thanks to a lot of teamwork, masterful planning and preparations. Meanwhile most of the others plus a few friends found that the resulting large party did not fit easily into Marble Steps Pot, thus the pitches became somewhat congested.

Sunday was our other big day when Bar Pot and Disappointment Pot, part of the Gaping Gill system, were tackled. Half the party were unlucky not to find the elusive connecting passage and had to return via Bar Pot. The other half of the party comprising Noel Macsharry, Alan Wicks, Lao Holland, his friend Susan, and Rod Hobbis, headed down Stream Entrance Pot by mistake. Their initial doubts were confirmed when they reached the second pitch, which should have been 25ft. deep. Alan climbed down 20ft. of a 40ft. ladder and failed to see the bottom (it turned out to be 85ft. deep!) The party- returned to the surface and found the right entrance.

Disappointment Pot has seven pitches. The entrance does not need tackle and is followed immediately by the second pitch 15ft deep. From this a narrow winding passage leads to Syphon Pool which at the time was a foot or so deep in rather doubtful looking foam. Beyond this obstacle are two 25ft. pitches followed by a high and narrow stream passage ending after a considerable distance in a 25ft. pitch. This drops into a large chamber descending in a series of steps to the last pitch 50ft. deep. While tackling this they were caught up by a Chelsea party making an exchange with Bar Pot. A long crawl with a very short length of 'walkable' passage connects Disappointment with Bar Pot.

At the 100ft. pitch in Bar Pot they met the other half of the Chelsea cavers and arranged with them the partial withdrawal of our tackle from Disappointment. When this was accomplished the party ascended the 100ft. and 45ft. pitches out of Bar Pot; by this time it was approx. 11p.m. and they reached the bottom of Trow Gill sometime after 12 o'clock.

Meanwhile the rest of the Club members at the Crown had decided to investigate if the Disappointment party had not put in an appearance by mid-night. At ten minutes to twelve, the Police from Settle rang asking us to send out a recce party to see that all was well. This party was changing at Clapdale Farm when the news got through that everyone was safely out. Our thanks are due to members of the U.B.S.S. and Kendal C.C. who turned out in case help was needed. They were gathered at the Crown with us for a party which never really got going because of the tragic news from Lancaster Hole earlier that evening. We did however see some excellent slides shown by some K.C.C. members of their recent Pyrenean expedition, and we were sober enough to make a rapid response to the Cave Rescue Organisation call out, via the Police.

On Monday most people made tracks for home but some had to revisit Disappointment Pot to retrieve the tackle that had been partially recovered by the Chelsea S.S. We were lucky not to have some of our ladders stolen by "cowboys" that afternoon from Disappointment and were instrumental in helping another party out of Bar Pot who had actually suffered this fate.

Judging by the number of cave hours the Easter meet can only be considered as having been a great success.

PEN-Y-GHENT POT (1)

P.M. Giles.

The entrance to Pen-y-ghent Pot, like many other fine systems, is remarkably unimpressive and easily missed. It consists of a shaft sunk amid boulders, some very rich in fossils, at the end of a watercourse on Glass Moss, on the West side of Pen-y-ghent Hill. (2) In normal weather this watercourse is dry for the last few yards; the stream sinking at one of several points further up the shallow valley in which it meanders. In very wet conditions, however, the stream pours down the entrance shaft and is no doubt responsible for removing the original wooden shuttering from the shaft and leaving just a bare metal frame which although appearing to have very little contact with the surrounding boulders, seems quite sound.

If for nothing else, Pen-y-ghent Pot is famed for its long low crawl and its long and not so low canal. This latter feature is met just a short distance from the entrance and is followed immediately by the crawl. Much has been made of this section of the cave, and perhaps not without some justification especially on the return journey, but treated with a little determination the obstacles are by no means insuperable.

The entrance shaft is 2ft. square and 5ft. deep, and after a short vertical squeeze at the bottom through jammed boulders leads to a small chamber where the stream joins the system. A low narrow passage leads off from this chamber and after 50ft. a small hole at floor level in the left hand wall gives way to an 8ft. drop. The stream finds its own way down this drop and it is met again at the bottom in the Canal passage, which runs parallel with, but in the reverse direction to, the short passage above.

The Canal is a low 3-5ft. wide roughly rectangular passage in which the water varies in depth between one and two feet. Progress is effected either by a straight hands and knees crawl or an ape-like amble using one knee and one foot with a steady hand on the wall. During the early days of Pen-y-ghent Pot progress in this section was handicapped by eroded shale ledges which crossed the passage below the water and which collapsed under the weight of the explorer, causing a sudden sharp drop. The Canal ends at a cross-rift 240ft. from the 8ft. drop and here it is possible for two people to stand up straight in ankle deep water in a 6-7ft. wide streamway.

The transition from Canal to Crawl in terms of passage dimensions is gradual; the cross-rift being a convenient feature to mark the change. Towards the end of the Canal the roof dips slowly down to an almost horizontal floor, and this trend carries on to the top of the first pitch, 630ft. from the cross-rift. As the roof becomes lower so the streamway grows wider to a maximum of about 15ft. in the lowest stretch.

At first the Crawl is a hands and knees affair, but after 420 ft. it develops into a flat out crawl with the water around the 6 to 8 inch mark and stretching right across the passage.

The roof of the crawl is mainly flat and, on average, about 2ft. high. The floor is, generally smooth - with occasional gravel and stony deposits - and gently undulates from side to side; unlike its equivalent in Swinsto Cave with all its heavy scalloping. Judging by the debris lodged in the roof and walls of this part of the system, the stream backs up in very wet conditions to form a long and impassable sump.

About 30ft. from the head of the first pitch, the noise of which can be heard long before it is reached, the passage narrows and the floor drops away, leaving a low shelf on the left hand side a few inches below the roof as a reminder of where the crawl once joined the First Pitch. On this shelf are a few projections and small stalagmites and these may be used to belay the ladder for the First Pitch which is an 18ft. drop into a small chamber. Further around to the left at the top of this pitch another stream enters the system and both meet about half way down making the lower part of the pitch fairly wet.

At this point the system undergoes a major change of direction (3) and it swings through approx. 90°. From the entrance the system travels South to the First Pitch but from this latter point to the Second Pitch the resultant of several minor swings is generally West.

From the pool at the bottom of the First Pitch, which is 4ft. deep in the middle and roughly 10ft. long, the going is much easier and walking is possible, albeit uncomfortable, in a passage 5ft. high, wide, with a shelf on the left hand side. (7). After about 150ft. a short hands and knees crawl occurs where the bottom of the shelf merges into the floor but the passage soon resumes its earlier dimensions. Along this section of the cave the floor is scalloped and practically horizontal, and here and there the stream is briefly arrested by shallow pools. (4).

700ft. further on from the crawl, the stream cascades into a deep pool which is easily negotiated by traversing around the right-hand side on numerous underwater projections at knee depth. The roof above the pool rises considerably higher than in the preceding passage, but resumes its 5ft. normal height at the end. Soon after the pool the floor drops away to meet the head of the Second Pitch (15ft.), the belay for which is a flake 25ft. back up the passage on the right-hand side at roof level.

The Second Pitch marks the end of the bedding plane in which the system has so far been developed, and the start of a rift about 700ft. long which contains Pitches 3 to 9 inclusive, and which constitutes the second leg of the system. The main feature of the Rift Passage, apart from its awkwardness, is the Main Chamber which is met shortly after the Second Pitch and embodies the 3rd and 4th pitches. At the bottom of the Second Pitch the rift is narrow and descends steeply to a point where the stream divides; part going straight on through a low crawl to the Main Chamber, and part veering off to the left in a bedding plane under the left hand wall to the top of the 3rd Pitch. The Third Pitch is not actually in the Main Chamber, but is in a deep and narrow fissure in the side, which runs out into the Main Chamber at a natural platform 60ft. down. From this natural platform the Fourth Pitch completes the descent of the Main Chamber.

The belay for the Third Pitch (5) was once a stout wooden beam, but this has now gone and instead an 8ft, long rope or wire tether can be passed around several jammed boulders in the bedding plane at the top. Since the stream also flows through these boulders some kind of dam made from sacking or old clothes is necessary for a fairly comfortable descent. It should be noted that old clothes brought in may be washed away by the next flood, therefore fresh dam making material is required with each trip.

Forty feet down the fissure is a chockstone large enough for two people to stand on and which may be used to belay the ladder for the Fourth Pitch (75ft.). Alternative belays do exist on the platform below in the form of a squat rock pillar on the corner, and a not very obvious projection on the left hand wall of the fissure (facing Main Chamber). Double lifelines should be rigged on both 3rd and 4th pitches.

The Main Chamber is very impressive. It is a typical pot-hole about 170ft. high and about 20ft. in diameter. A brisk draught catches the falling water, and consequently the chamber is full of spray and can be quite cold. Once on the floor, however, the stream reassembles under piles of boulders and hurries off into the Rift Passage on the North side of the Main Chamber. This exit from the Main Chamber is a short crawl under some large boulders into a high rift 2-3ft. wide.

The Fifth Pitch (25ft.) is met immediately after a large jammed block 100ft. beyond the Main Chamber. It is possible to crawl under this block but the best take off for the 5th Pitch is from the top - an 8ft. climb. The rift continues high from the bottom of the 5th pitch and slightly wider in smooth rock with a knee deep trench in the floor. After 50ft. a short climb is met and this is followed soon after by the 6th pitch (15ft.)

It is not necessary to descend the 6th pitch (6) as by traversing over it and following the rift the 7th Pitch can be reached. The Sixth Pitch, which can be climbed using a rope, drops down into a very low, wide bedding plane in which the stream flows, this is a flat-out crawl for about 50ft. and is most unpleasant.

The Seventh Pitch is located 60ft. from the top of the Sixth Pitch at the end of a low dry ox-bow which runs parallel with the top of a fissure down which the stream falls. The ox-bow, which is on the left of the stream is separated from the fissure by a thin wall of rock, and is about 12ft. long. The drop at the end is about 30ft. vertical at first, and then curving away downstream against a smooth rock breakwater which divides the old watercourse from the new. The belay for this pitch is a short one to the top of the breakwater.

The Rift Passage continues high and narrow from the Seventh Pitch (Split Pot), but is partially blocked by chockstones under which it is necessary to crawl to reach the Eight Pitch, 60ft. further on. The Eighth Pitch is a 20ft. drop down the right hand wall of a 30ft. long, 10ft. wide enlargement of the rift. The belay is a short one to an obvious flake at the top of the pitch.

In the floor of this enlargement of the rift is a wedge shaped fissure running in the direction of the rift and opening out at the far end into the Ninth Pitch. The stream runs along and over the right hand lip of this fissure, exhausting itself before the ladder pitch. Although the Ninth Pitch may be free climbed a ladder belayed to the top of a large flake on the opposite side of the fissure is more than useful as hand and foot holds are small, and scarce at the top.

Below the Ninth Pitch the Rift Passage narrows considerably for its last 100 or so feet to form the "Cascades". This feature is a series of short waterfalls in a passage 1½-2ft. wide in very smooth yellow rock. All falls are 5-6ft except one which is about a 12ft. drop. At this large fall the walls have no holds at all, and going is pure back and knees work, a rope would be useful on the return journey.

A 6ft. fall into a deep pool in a chamber very similar to the lower of the Double Pots in Swildons, marks the end of the Cascades, and this chamber, (Pool Chamber) marks the end of the Rift Passage. Although all the drops in the Rift Passage are short and mainly dry, they have awkward take offs and somehow it never seems to end.

At Pool Chamber the system changes direction once more (3) and swings through 90°, anticlockwise this time, to the West to commence the third leg of the system which extends to the terminal sump.

The Pool in Pool Chamber is deep in the middle, but shallow around the left hand wall: there being many large projections at about knee depth. A 4ft. high, 10-12ft. wide passage goes off to the left from Pool Chamber and in it the water is mainly waist deep but has one chest deep point. The roof of this passage is flat with deep parallel grooves 4-5 inches apart stretching across it. These grooves, some of which catch foam and debris to indicate recent flooding, seem to have similar but larger counterparts running across the floor and these latter make going slow. The rock in this short passage is generally dark with nicotine yellow streaks in it.

Thirty feet from Pool Chamber the Boulder Chamber is entered. This is a small but high chamber with one solid side with a steep boulder pile enclosing the rest of the chamber on the right. Apart from the Main Chamber, this is the largest space reached since the entrance, and, as it is also dry, (the stream going under some large boulders on the floor) it is a convenient spot to take a rest. In the Boulder Chamber, as with most of the remainder of the system, the rock is very rough and often brittle, and quite black; a striking contrast to the Rift Passage's smoothness. At floor level the Boulder Chamber is about 30ft. long and about 15-20ft. wide and roughly oval in shape.

From the Boulder Chamber the stream is rejoined by climbing down behind the boulders resting against the far wall. At first the roof is low, but the floor of the passage drops quickly away to give a height of 15-20ft. After several small cascades a shallow pool about 12ft. long is met some 50ft. from the Boulder Chamber. From the right hand side of this pool a natural water chute in a highish rift 3-4ft. wide shoots the stream over the Tenth Pitch: the

"Spout and Ladder Pitch" or "Myers Leap". The belay for this pitch is a long one and is formed by a group of projections on the right hand wall above the pool. From the edge of the chute the ladder hanging on the right of the water spout, to the pool in the bell shaped chamber at the bottom of the pitch is exactly 25ft. and, for the most part, clear of the wall. The chamber is circular, somewhat higher than the pitch and about 20ft. wide at its largest diameter.

The stream leaves the Tenth Pitch in a horizontal bedding plane 20ft. wide with a 3ft. high air-space. The water varies between 1 and 3ft. deep, but during flood the passage fills to the roof and is impassable. About 50ft. from the Tenth Pitch a low but wide arch on the right admits the water collected by nearby Hunt Pot. (8) This inlet can be followed up for 700ft. to a sump. (10).

The Hunt Pot stream when it joins the Pen-y-ghent system, adds about twice as much water again to the Pen-y-ghent stream, and beyond the inlet the head room in the Upper Main Stream Passage, as the streamway is called, increases slowly and walking becomes possible. Walking is made difficult, however, by deep narrow parallel grooves running across the passage underwater. As in the passage between Pool and Boulder Chambers, these grooves also extend across the roof.

The last major change of direction of the system (3) occurs 150ft. beyond the Hunt Pot inlet. This is another 90 shift and again anticlockwise, thus bringing the final leg of the system on to a parallel course to the Canal Passage, viz South.

The Upper Main Stream Passage ends about 500ft. from the Inlet, The stream drops over several short cascades and into a large high chamber via a short waterfall and the Eleventh Pitch. The waterfall is an 8ft. climb in a semi pot-hole to the right of the stream immediately above the Eleventh Pitch. Due to the brittle nature of the rock care should be taken while climbing the waterfall and a rope used. The Eleventh Pitch is a 25ft. water chute and the ladder is hung down the left hand side, and belayed to several projections at the top. At the bottom the stream vanishes down several very narrow fissures in the floor to reappear 20ft. or so further on from a long horizontal slit halfway down the Twelfth Pitch, "Niagara Falls Pitch".

The Twelfth Pitch (9) stretches across the entire far side of the Chamber into which the Eleventh Pitch cascades, and viewed from a small platform down behind some boulders at the left hand end, it is a fantastic scene. Almost across the whole width of the pitch, which is about 30ft. the stream gushes from the long slit mentioned above and pours into a high narrow rift running off from the pitch at about 45°. Water seems to be everywhere and the noise of it falling fills the air making normal conversation difficult. Fortunately there is a gap in this deluge (probably ten times plus the volume of the Swildons stream), which is sufficiently wide to allow a fairly comfortable descent most of the way; the last 10ft. being rather damp. This gap is located on the right hand side of the pitch and the ladder is belayed, so as to hang through this gap, to the right hand end of a large block at the top of the pitch.

The pitch itself is 35ft. but a 40ft. ladder is useful as finding the end may be difficult in all the spray and water at the bottom.

The immediate going at the bottom is easy and the rift soon widens out to form a chamber 20ft. long and 15ft. wide. The floor of the chamber is rocky and the stream cuts under somewhat and away into a parallel passage on the right. This is the Lower Main Stream Passage and it is 600ft. long and ends at the terminal sump. It is similar to the Upper Main Stream Passage but not as large. The floor is, once more, made up of ridges and hollows and these make going slow. Generally the water is about knee deep but at several points it momentarily becomes waist-deep. The passage has a gentle gradient with a little cascade near the end.

At the sump the roof rises to about 20ft. in a cross rift 15-20ft. long and 5-6ft. wide. Here the water is very deep with no sign of a way on despite several tentative dives without equipment. The sump is 527ft. below the entrance making Pen-y-ghent the deepest pot in the country.

Except for one or two very short ox-bows the system has only one dry series (11) and this occurs a few yards before the top of the Eleventh Pitch of an ox-bow on the right. In it are several blind pot-holes between 20 and 40 ft. deep and about 500ft. of low cave passage.

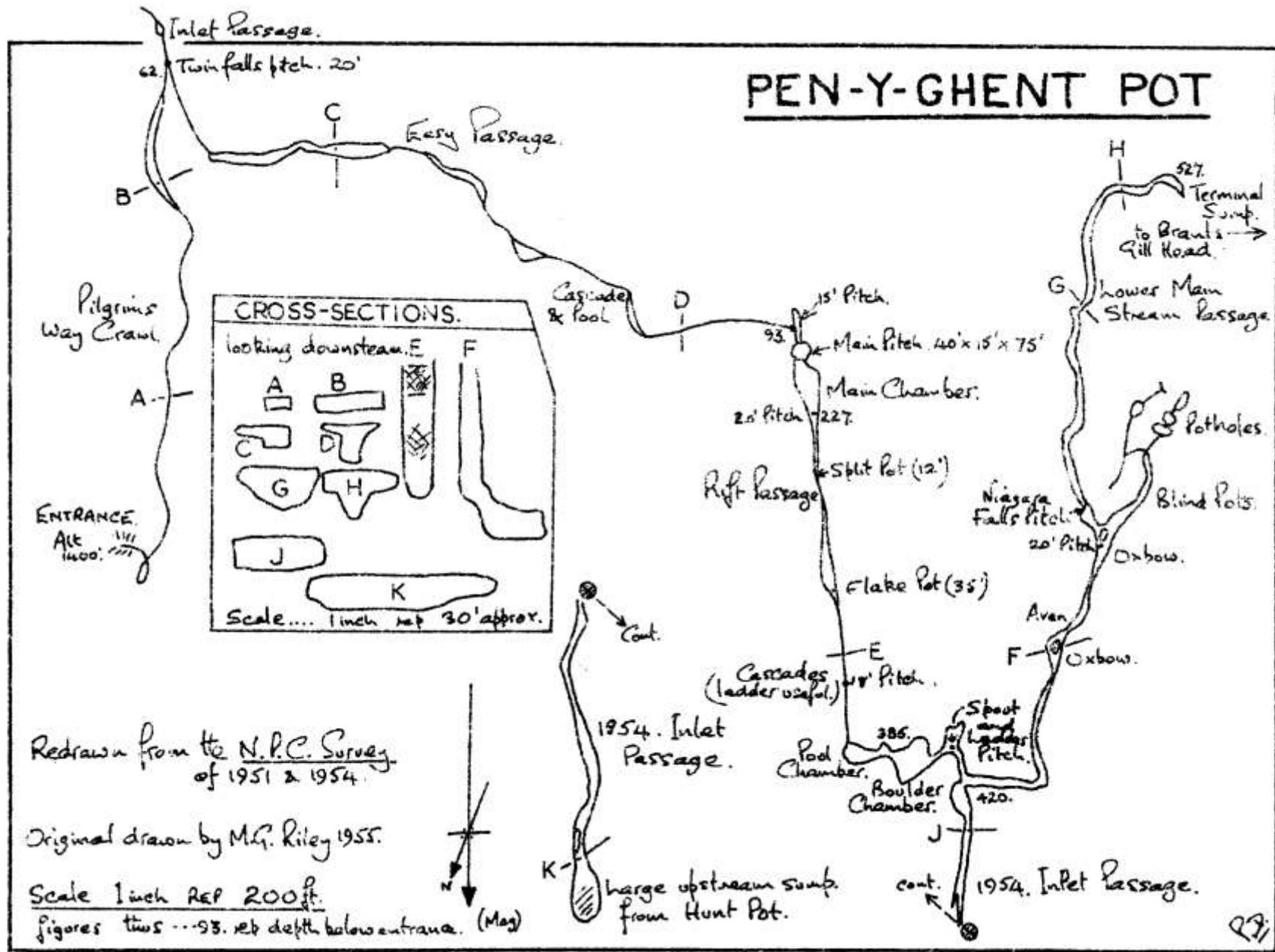
The Northern Pennine Club whose discovery Pen-y-ghent Pot was, (12) have, over recent years, carried out a number of fluorescein tests (14) in the area and established that:

- i) Hunt Pot (8) feeds into Pen-y-ghent Pot via the inlet in the Upper Main Stream Passage.
- ii) Pen-y-ghent Pot (and Hull Pot etc. (13) (20)) resurges:
 - a) In normal weather, at Brants Gill Head, Horton-in-Ribblesdale,(15)
 - b) In flood; at Brants Gill Head and Douk Gill Scar (15) (16), Douk Gill is normally dry,
- iii) Water taken by Pen-y-ghent Pot takes 9 days to reach the resurgence. A distance of approx. one mile.

This latter fact seems to indicate a large amount of saturated cave beyond the terminal sump of Pen-y-ghent Pot.

The Wessex party, which visited the pot on the 28th of March, noticed signs of recent flooding at several points in the system where it might be expected and these have been indicated in the description above. However, in addition to this, a band of foam was observed around the walls of the chamber below the Twelfth Pitch, which marks the beginning of the Lower Main Stream Passage, at a height of over 20ft. This means that the sump had backed up a vertical amount of 30-40ft. from its normal level, and shortened the system by over 600ft. in effect. (17) It would appear, therefore, that prospects of further exploration and discovery in this direction are rather poor.

PEN-Y-GHENT POT



With the equipment now available for caving and pot-holing, Pen-y-ghent Pot poses few problems. Goon and wet-suits make life bearable in places such as the Crawl, the Main Pitch and the Main Stream Passages, while lightweight aluminium ladders and nylon ropes enable one man to carry sufficient tackle for several pitches unaided. In the early days of Pen-y-ghent (18) goon suits were almost unheard of, and wood and rope ladders were standard equipment. To meet the exposure problem (21) and to mitigate the other effects of water three of the N.P.C. did manufacture their own brand of exposure suit, with some success, while exploring and surveying the system though the others used only goose grease. Perhaps the two most uncomfortable places as regards coldness in the system are the Crawl and Main Chamber on the way out. The Crawl demands that both hands be in the water the whole time and grease (19) and gloves soon lose their insulation. In the Main Chamber the draught makes the necessary delay, while everyone climbs the pitch, a very cold one. Four members of the Wessex party were clad in neoprene rubber wet-suits and noticed the cold at these points more than the remaining three "goon suiters", but apart from these occasions there was little to choose between the two protectives.

Always an essential item on a long trip involving a lot of energy is food, particularly food which the body can quickly metabolise, and to this end the W.C.C. party were well provided for by the 'Davies' man-packs. These contained such things as dates, chocolate, glucose tablets etc. while bulk was made up with oatmeal blocks. Self heating stews, soups etc. primus stoves, tea, coffee, flasks etc. were considered to be superfluous and disregarded. As it happened some food came back out after everyone was satisfied.

The main source of lighting used by the team was carbide and sufficient was taken for each man to last for 16 hours. This was augmented by 5 NIFE cells, giving a further 10-12 hours per lamp. Had anything prevented the party's immediate return to the surface there was sufficient light for several days, even at the end of the trip. As it happened the carbide lamps turned out quite successful on even the wet pitches, two members succeeding in descending the Niagara Falls Pitch without losing their flame.

Apart from being very impressed with the wildness of the system during the whole period underground the W.C.C. party noticed little in the way of formations in the cave. There are one or two about the place, but nothing of any particular merit. The most noticeable feature of the system apart from its physical beauty is the noise of water. From the entrance to the sump it doesn't let up and after an 1 1/2 - 2 hour trip the walk back to the Shooting Hut is quite a relief in a way.

The Wessex party consisted of Messrs. Davies, P. Thompson M. Holland M. Pyke B. Hart N. Guttridge B. and Giles P.M. and all found Pen-y-ghent a most sporting trip.

APPENDIX 1

References

1. Description based on the observations of the members of the W.C.C. party and the Pen-y-ghent Report produced by the Northern Pennine Club.
2. Baker: 'Caving' Ch. IV. P. 91.
3. N.P.C. Surveys (1951 and 1954).
4. Two albino trout found swimming here by W.C.C.
5. Also known as Beam Pitch.
6. Knobbly dog used by W.C.C. - made from single wire with aluminium rod handles.
7. Easy Passage.
8. Baker: 'Caving' Illus. f. page 88.
9. C.S.S. Newsletter Vo. 5 P. 111 Illus.
10. Dived 1963 by M. Boon.
11. See N.P.C. Report for full description.
12. Entered after digging November 1949.
13. Baker: 'Caving' Ch. IV. P. 92, 93. Illus. f. pp. 88,90.
14. Myers, N.P.C. Jnl. Vol II No. 3 P. 14.
15. Gemmell, 'Underground Adventure' Ch. 11 P. 135-7.
16. Baker: 'Caving' Ch. IV. p.p. 92-3 Illus. f.p. 92.
17. C.S.S. Newsletter Vol. 5. P. 104. B. Bedford reports existence of sump short distance from 12th pitch. Description of C.S.S. trip.
18. Conversation with J.O. Myers of N.P.C.
19. Sykes: Red Rose Cave and Pot-Hole Club. Jnl. No. 1 May 1962. Description of R.R.C.P.C. trip.
20. Gemmell: 'Underground Adventure'. Ch. 2 P. 18 Illus. f. p. 22. Survey p. 20.
21. C.P.C. Jnl. Vol. 1 No. 3 p.p. 104-113.

Other References.

Simpson Cave Science. Vol. 3. No. 17. p.p 37-42 July 1951
Riley. C.R.G. Newsletter 49/50 p.p. 5-6
Riley. Speleologist Vol. 1. No. 4 p.p. 143-7.
Croll F. B.P.C. Jnl. No. 3. (1961) P.53.

APPENDIX 2

Tackle

<u>Pitch</u>	<u>Depth (ft.)</u>	<u>Ladder (ft.)</u>	<u>Belay (ft.)</u>	<u>Lifeline (ft.)</u>
1	18	20	25	T
2	15	20	25	T
3	60	60	8	120 (D)
4	75	75	10	150 (D)
5	25	20	5	T
6	15	-	-	15
7	30	40	10	T
8	20	20	2	T
9	20	20	2	T
10	25	25	17	T
11	30	25	5	T
12	35	40	25	T

Add two pulley blocks for pitches 3 and 4.

T. indicates a travelling 50ft. lifeline.

D. indicates a double lifeline.

The belay lengths indicated are the lengths of a single wire or rope from the point of the belay to the ladder. In many cases these are better doubled especially on pitches 3, 10 and 12. Short belay lengths made of wire with C-links for attachment are of great value, so also are short lengths of nylon (No.3) and karabiners.

Editor's note.

I wish to apologise for the omission of the surveys relating to the Quaking House Cave, Milverton, article (overleaf on pages 114 and 115) but unfortunately these appeared in the last Journal No. 95, Vol. 8, in error.

QUAKING HOUSE CAVE. Milverton. Som.

The Final Chapter(?)

By: T.C. Bryant, A. Court, de Fledermausfänger
and A.D.Oldham.

There have been, in the past, many references to Quaking House Cave (Ref. 1-10) and the authors feel that it is high time that all the information was collected together, summarised in conjunction with an up-to-date survey and this nasty little cave allowed to return to its former obscurity.

Although known to local people, the first recorded visit was by C.H. Kenney and company in 1951 (1). Bryant (3) mentions a visit by Luke Devenish in 1947 when he made an unpublished sketch of the passages. This was followed by a brief mention that the East Devon Caving Group had made a visit (2). The first complete description and survey was by Bryant (3) and this was quickly followed by "der Fledermausfänger" (4) who discovered an additional passage. All this publicity for a comparatively unknown area attracted the attention of the Mendip Nature Research Committee Speleological Group (Speleo Group for short), which held a field day at the cave. To quote from the Provisional Report (5) "Excavations were carried out in various parts of the cave simultaneously" and "over 40 ft. of (new) passage was added to the cave." The Full Report (6) delineated the Exploration, Geology, Archaeology and Bats of the cave. Previous to the Speleo Group's visit, Bryan Ellis and some Shepton Mallet Caving Club Members inspected the cave (7) and made certain observations (8), some of which the authors have attempted to elucidate and correct. For convenience, Ellis's paragraph notation and the grid numbers of Bryant's survey (9) are used.

a) This paragraph states (in 15 lines) that the passage at 216122 is at least 7" and not 5" high. This was confirmed by the Speleo Group. The reason for the anomaly is quite understandable - the entrance passage at 234106 was being used as a wood store when the Bryants were making their survey and this part of the cave was blocked by firewood which prevented the height from being measured and it had to be estimated from the top of the wood pile!

b) This paragraph refers to the "Lake" at the end of Stal Avenue. The expression was used to distinguish this drop of water from the much smaller ones at 137256 and 145207. In such a cave as Quaking House, where everything is scaled down, "Lake" would seem to be a suitable term for a pool which is 11ft. 10ins. long, 2ft. 9ins. deep and 4ft. 6ins. wide at the widest point. However, Ellis is correct on one point, the passage is only 7ft. 6ins. and not 10ft. wide at the widest point as previously shown on the survey. This error arose because insufficient offsets were recorded by the Bryants when they made their original survey. This part of the cave has been resurveyed and is reproduced at the same scale as the original survey and the outline is shown superimposed on the original version for comparison.

c) Although Ellis only found one bat, twelve were recorded on a recent visit in April, 1964.

d) Ellis is confused by the fact that Bryant calls the East Devon Caving Group a

“Speleological Society.” Here, however, Bryant was only quoting, correctly, his reference (10) also the E.D.C.G. produces a "Bulletin" not a "Newsletter."

e) No comment.

f) Regarding access to the cave, if anyone, who is not already bored to tears, wants to visit this cave, application should now be made in writing to Mrs. P.M. Smith, Auton Dolwells, Milverton, Somerset, giving at least two weeks notice and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

A revised copy of the simplified survey accompanies this article and contains both der Fledermausfänger's and the Speleo Croup's discoveries. On a survey of this size it is not practicable to include grid lines as these tend to obscure the detail. To assist readers, who do not possess the larger sized survey, the position of the grid lines has been indicated in the margin and these lines may be drawn in pencil, if desired.

REFERENCES (or a conclusive (?) bibliography)

- 1) Kenney, C.H. A visit to the Quantocks. W.C.C. Jl. No. 31 (Dec, 1951) p. 15.
- 2) Bull. E.D.C.G. No. 1 (April 1959). (reprinted in British Caver Vol. 32, 1959. P. 15.)
- 3) Bryant, T.C. Quaking House Cave, Milverton, Som, W.C.C, Jl. No. 87 (Nov. 1962). p.p. 131-3 with survey (Bryant, T.C. and Bryant, M.S.)
- 4) Fledermausfänger, der. Quaking House Cave, Milverton, Som. W.C.C. Jl. No. 90 (June 1963). p. 212 with survey.
- 5) Oldham, T, Provisional Report of the Speleo Group's Visit to Quaking House Cave, Milverton, Som. M.N.R.C, Speleo Group Report No. 11 (Nov. 1963). pp. 51-2.
- 6) Oldham, T. et al. Quaking House Cave Exploration and Excavation Report, Geology of Quaking House Cave, Bats at Milverton, Osteological Report on the Remains from Quaking House Cave. M.N.R.C. Speleo Group Report No. 12 (Dec. 1963). p.p. 55-60. (The bulk of which has since been reprinted in M.N.R.C. Jl. Vol. 1 No. 3 (Jan. 1964). pp. 26-9.
- 7) S.M.C.C. Hut Log. Vol. 4 2nd July 1963.
- 8) Ellis, B. Quaking House Cave Milverton, 'Yet Again' W.C.C. Jl. No. 92 (Nov. 1963). pp. 286-7.
- 9) Survey may now be obtained from Tim Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Bucks. at 3/6d. post free.
- 10) Cullingford, C.H.D. (Ed.) British Caving, 2nd Ed, 1962. p. 170,

QUAKING HOUSE CAVE, Milverton.

Bryan Ellis comments "In the main this article only emphasises and enlarges upon the comments made in my earlier letter (reference (8)); it agrees with the remainder.

I admit that, in error, I called the E.D.C.G. publication a "Newsletter" instead of a "Bulletin" and apologise for this slip but still feel that this is the most serious error that I made. If nothing else the literature should now be complete.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“Dear Sir,

In your May Journal I feel that Tim Reynolds was less than fair in his criticism of "The Speleo Year Book and Diary 1964".

With regard to the section on CAVING AREAS, the description of South Wales and the Forest of Dean for example is a useful summary of what these areas have to offer. Detailed cave descriptions would have been superfluous as these have already been published in “Caves in Wales and the Marches”. It is certainly not 'a job to follow the description'.

Again, five pages on CAVE RESCUE are not 'a long splurge' - they are an unfortunate necessity. The GLOSSARY is useful to a beginner, and every word, except 'gruffy' is used in South Wales, not only in Mendip as claimed by Mr. Reynolds.

The DIARY is particularly well planned; ½" is quite sufficient for my weekdays, but previously I have always found weekend cave reports running into Monday's space. The extra space for weekends is a good idea, especially when one waxes lyrical over a new discovery! It would have been useful to have each day dated though, Mr. Reynolds is quite right on this score. The A.G.M. list is useful to the many cavers like myself who belong to two clubs and need reminding about important dates.

For detailed descriptions of new discoveries, proposed digs, etc., I found the section of 24 blank pages very useful indeed, although Mr. Reynolds makes no mention of this.

Finally the list of societies - this is a great boon for club secretaries, and Editor Dryden deserves a medal for it. How often have I wanted to write to some other club during my lunch-hour at work only to find that their address is in a bulky file at home. I once found that a Northern Secretary's address on his notepaper was indecipherable, but reference to the 'DIARY' put me right.

Altogether I believe this diary is a worthwhile effort, and well worth the price (incidentally why didn't Mr. R. buy in bulk through his club secretary and save some 12% on the price of 11/6?)

I sincerely hope that Mr. J.K. Dryden will produce another volume next year, and not be discouraged by a little adverse criticism.

Yours sincerely,
Melvyn Davies

(Hon. Secretary, Speleology Section, British Nylon Spinners Sports & Social Club.)"

Another letter in much the same vein as the above was also received. Ed.

"Dear Sir,

I would like to thank Mr. Reynolds for his constructive criticisms on the Speleological Yearbook & Diary in the last edition of this publication. It is a pity however that these did not outweigh the destructive criticisms which were levied in the same letter!

As there are still a few copies of the 1964 edition left, I would be pleased to supply copies on approval (10d. postage please) as I feel in this instance that your members would be more than wise to judge for themselves.

Yours sincerely,

John K. Dryden
(1 Beaufort East, London Road, Bath)"

"Dear Sir,

Following the recent article in the W.C.C. Journal No. 94, Vol. 8, enumerating the "Users' Comments on the Horlicks M.R.O. Packs", I was interested to read Mr. Mulvey's closing remarks that what was really needed was something to provide energy, stave off thirst and fill you up. I believe that I may have a partial solution to this problem. For the past three years the following two recipes have been well tried under cave conditions and I can thoroughly recommend them. The first recipe for Kxxxxl Mint Cake does not make you thirsty, provides energy, and is very economical to produce! 2 lb can be made for about 1/6d., or whatever the current price of sugar happens to be. The second recipe, Crunchy, provides energy and is very filling. Both recipes are very easy to prepare and there is not much to go wrong, in fact the Mint Cake does not even need baking, and could therefore be made at Hillgrove!

Kxxxxl Mint Cake

Equipment required

1 medium sized saucepan; 1 dessertspoon; 18" sandwich tin.

Ingredients

12 oz granulated sugar; 8 dessertspoons of water; a few drops of Peppermint essence.

Method:-

Put the sugar and water in the saucepan and gently heat, stirring all the time to dissolve the sugar. When most of the sugar has dissolved bring the mixture to the boil (the mixture will then clear). Boil for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool, stirring occasionally. As soon as the mixture begins to thicken and go cloudy add the peppermint essence and stir in. Pour the mixture into a tin and allow to partially set. Cut into squares and allow the mixture to set completely.

Crunchy (This is similar, but not quite as hard as the Horlicks Oatmeal Block)

Equipment required

1 medium sized saucepan; 1 dessertspoon; 18" sandwich tin.

Ingredients:-

7 oz Rolled oats; 2 oz margarine or butter; 2 oz sugar;

2 full dessertspoons Golden Syrup.

Method:-

Light the oven and set to 300°. Grease the sandwich tin. Put the margarine, sugar and golden syrup into the saucepan and heat until all are dissolved. Remove from the heat and add the rolled oats a little at a time and stir well. Tip the resulting mixture into the sandwich tin and press, down well. Bake in the oven for about one hour. When partially cooled cut into slices.

Yours sincerely,

A. Court."

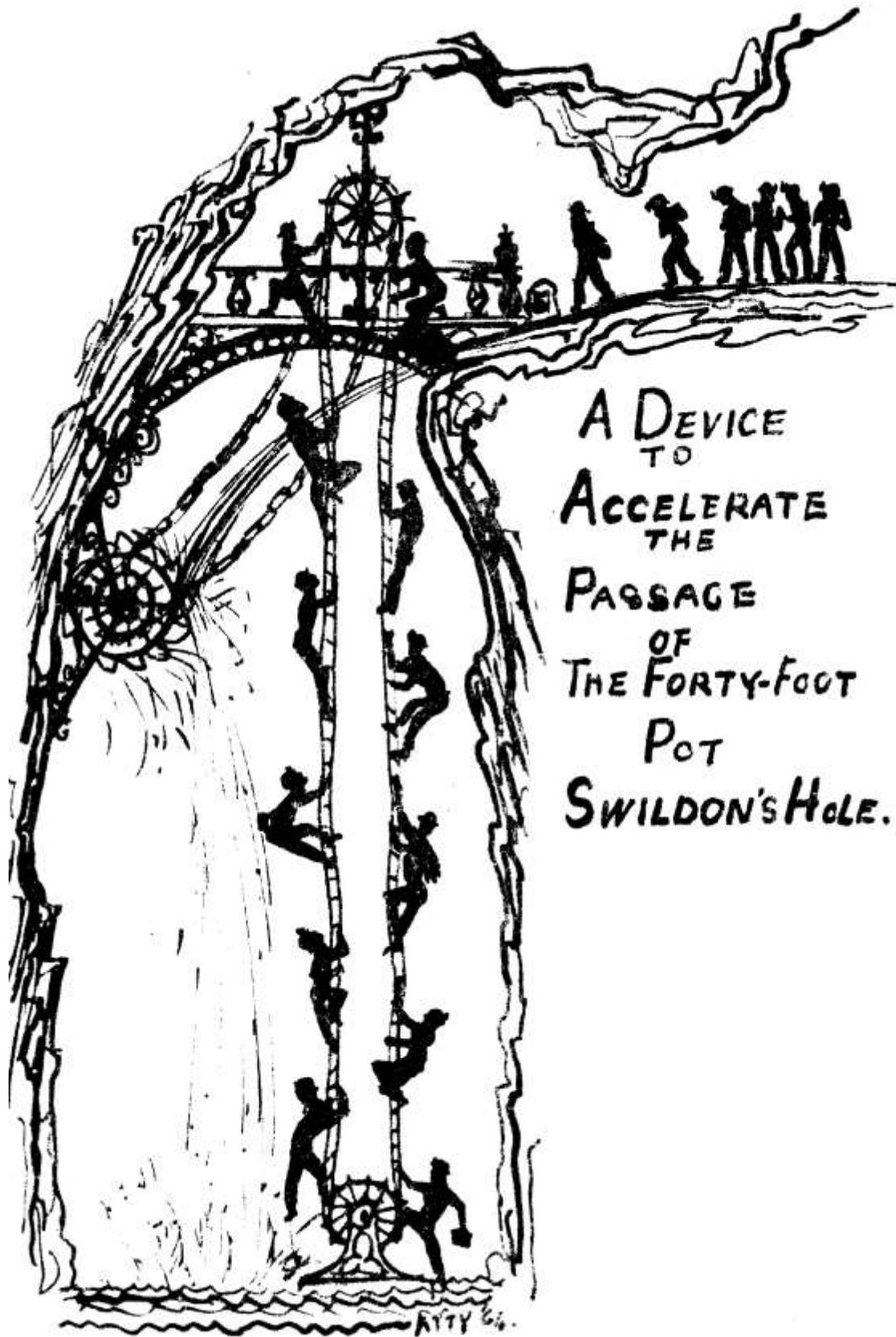
"Dear Sir,

So they want fixed ladders in Swildons! May I be allowed to appeal to all right-minded cavers to resist this pernicious move to the utmost. There must be many cavers, like myself, who hold laddering the forty foot as one of the most sacred rites of Mendip caving. To eliminate it is to ruin one of the most impressive incidents of a beginner's initiation into sound caving. Where else can we older cavers better impress on the neophyte a proper sense of the risks and dangers inherent in the simplest trip? Or have a better opportunity to display all the fine points of Cavership so ably laid down by Robert Lawder in his celebrated treatise?

The excuses are the usual ones - Progress and Safety forsooth!

A wiser move would be to have the Priddy barn for H.Q. There would then be enough cavers on the spot to complete the Priddy Green dig and open up the much needed by-pass to Inner Swildons. This alone would greatly reduce congestion at the Forty Foot and accelerate further exploration. As to the second excuse for fixed ladders - that it would save the M.R.O. from being called out to parties left ladderless, there is a simple remedy - to hang a dial inscribed with the words "These ladders will be withdrawn at ...(time)" the hand of the dial to be moved accordingly.

However, to show that I am no enemy to true progress I submit a sketch suggesting a more dynamic solution of the problem than a mere fixed ladder. It should be well within the technical resources of the Club's engineers and should have the following advantages:



A DEVICE
TO
ACCELERATE
THE
PASSAGE
OF
THE FORTY-FOOT
POT
SWILDON'S HOLE.

1. Parties can ascend and descend simultaneously.
2. Simple to construct and maintain.
3. Speed is increased in direct ratio to the volume of water going down.

Of course it might be more progressive to turn Swildons over to a Development Company and have an Escalator, Coffee Bar and Pintables to soften the arduousness of the journey!!

For obvious reasons I sign myself,

Yours faithfully,

Penumbra Lunatica"

BOOK REVIEWS

CLIMBERS' CLUB GUIDE; SOUTH EAST ENGLAND By E.C. Pyatt

112 pp. 12 figs. biblio. (First published 1956, revised edn. 1963, by the Climbers' Club 12/6d.)

The convenient size (4½" x 6"), flexible plastic cover, rounded corners and good quality paper make this an outstanding example of what a guide book should be like. The publishers (and editors) of caving guide books could well afford to learn from this method of presentation. The climbs are well written up, graded and located by grid references, but of particular interest are the references to "caves". Pages 18, 19 and 102 list over 26 "caves" which occur in the chalk and sandstone of the South East. Many of the "caves" are artificial, including Chislehurst Caves, some dene holes and an old Wealden iron mine.

A.D.O.

EXPLORING AMERICA UNDERGROUND By Charles E. Mohr

"(National Geographic Magazine Vol. 125, No. 6, June 1964, pp 803-37)

A superb series of cave colour photographs, possibly the finest ever published. Every aspect of this field is covered, from cave diving to a full page photograph of a caver on a 140 ft. ladder pitch, all in the most spectacular colouring. However, such a fine series of photographs is rather let down by a mediocre text. The height of vandalism has apparently occurred in an American Show Cave, where a row of Stalactites has been converted into an "organ" which is operated by little hammers. But worse to follow, these stalactites were first tuned by filing the tips This issue can be purchased now for about twelve and sixpence, or in two years time for half a crown in any second-hand bookshop.

A.D.O.

POTHOLING BENEATH THE NORTHERN PENNINES By David Heap (with a Foreword by the Rev. C.H.D. Cullingford)

XVII & 206 pp. 14 figs. 8 surveys and 22 plates, gloss. biblio. & index. (Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul at 35/-)

This is one of the few caving books that stand out amongst the flood of mediocre publications which have been poured forth during the last few years. The book is an interesting and accurate guide to some of the more interesting Yorkshire Potholes. The author, as well as being a historian and an experienced caver, is also an accomplished writer. His descriptions are informative without being verbose and convey, with admirable clarity, the excitement and fascination of pot-holing.

Simulating "Caving and Potholing" this book begins by describing a beginners' trip round the Calf Holes - Browgill Cave System. The main difference between the two accounts is that David Heap's emphasises safety techniques, by using a double lifeline for the last man down. This attitude of prevention, rather than rescue, is reflected throughout the whole of the book. In order that the reader should not underestimate the importance of these points the author makes frequent references in his monologue to various accidents which have occurred and to the simple safety precautions which could have prevented them.

The frequent references to the caves of Mendip and South Wales, and to caves as far away as Greece, disclose the author's intensive interest in other caving areas.

The attractive literary style elevates this book to the same category as those great epics such as Baker's "Caving", and will surely go down in the annals of speleological literature.

A.D.O.

Another comment on the above book:-

The author, an active caver and Chairman of the Kendal Caving Club, follows the style set by Baker, Balch & Gemmell & Myers by describing his own experiences in some of the harder Craven potholes.

No new discoveries are described and all the surveys have been published elsewhere. However, the accounts are very readable and would be of considerable help to anyone planning descents of the potholes described. Tackle lists are given and as usual "individuality" in the choice of belay positions is shown, but the positions to which the lengths apply are described.

Here again the existence of an iron ring belay on the left wall for the wet pitch of Lost Johns' is not mentioned, and the passage upstream from the Dome (Zig-Zag Passage) is said to choke, whereas in 1952 a roof climb effected a connection with the Old Roof Traverse. In Grange Rigg, a by-pass to the 4th pitch and tight crawl below has been discovered (1961), but is not mentioned. In general, however, the book is factually accurate and the detailed "word pictures" certainly transport one into the depths of the caves.

The book is well illustrated, with 22 excellent plates, 14 drawings and 8 surveys. It has a place on every caver's bookshelf, to be read and re-read many times over.

G.S.

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