



WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Journal No. 106, Vol. 9.

May 1966

CLUB NEWS

Club Digs

New caves are wanted on Mendip and so those who are getting into trim for the surface digging season ahead will find the following of interest:-

1. Fairman's Folly has been earmarked as the main Club Dig. This dig (NGR ST 551 528) is situated in the NE corner of the second field along the Red Quarr road from the Miner's Arms cross roads. The field is on conglomerate of variable depth over north dipping limestones. The shake hole concerned was dug by Sheila Fairman some years ago and a rift was reached from which a draught is reputed to have come. However, shortage of explosives prevented the removal of obstructing boulders. Anyone interested will be welcome. NOTE: This dig is almost within sight of the chimneys of the Hunters. Organiser:- A.J. Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.
2. Bos Swallet is being dug by members of the Sidcot School Speleological Society on our behalf. Rather akin to our own protracted association with Cow Hole, the Sidcot lads have an old score to settle with Bos Swallet, dating from their initial discovery in 1945. Whilst wishing them success in reopening this swallet, and in pushing the old terminal choke, it is hoped that members who visit Burrington will pay a call to the site and lend a hand. If you are interested please contact Mark Morland, at Sidcot, as he is the present secretary of the Society.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Club:-

Elected 30.2.66. G. Pilkington, 45 Hargreaves St., Nelson, Lancs.

Elected 3.4.66. Miss. J.L. Chalker, 7 Saville Row, Bath, Somerset.

Cave Research Group

At a recent ballot for two clubs to represent the south on the 1966 C.R.G. Committee, the Wessex were elected with the Chelsea Speleological Society. Alan Surrall has, and will be, attending meetings on our behalf, and has made his mark already by being nominated to a consultant role on sub-committees reviewing all aspects of cave survey, and the wider aspects of lectures and the like sponsored by the C.R.G.

The C.R.G. Southern Meeting this year is being organised by us in Wells, on the weekend of June 18th and 19th. We hope that this weekend will be well supported, especially by our own members of course. The following provisional programme of lectures has been announced for this meeting:-

“Speleogenesis in the Cantabro-Astoric Mountain Chain (Spain)” by M.J. Walker

“The Wall-Fungus found in many South Wales Caves” by Dr. M.A. Williams.

British Speleological Association 1966. Conference.

The conference this year is of particular interest to us on Mendip, as it is being held at Bristol University from September 9th to 12th. Details are available from Mr. E. Mason, Rose Cottage, Little Longstone, Derbyshire, and local arrangements are in the capable hands of Ian Standing, 10 Byron Place, Bristol 9. The Wessex will be making a contribution as a club and so, if you feel that you have some useful material that could be displayed in the Exhibition, please contact Bob Gannicott (52 West Town Lane, Bristol 4) as soon as you can. It would be nice to think that our effort could make a constructive impact on the conference, especially seeing that it is taking place in what is, after all, largely our home territory.

Caving in Yorkshire

No doubt newcomers on the Club Trip to Yorkshire last Easter will have had their appetites whetted by the grandeur of Pennine Potholes. Old hands too, in this motorway age, seem to find the prospect of a weekend in the north more feasible. Both will know that of late more and more of the fells are being subject to rigid access controls for a variety of reasons. For anyone contemplating trips from the south it is essential to plan early to avoid frustration and disappointment. Members are urged strongly to think well ahead if they intend going north in future.

A copy of "Permission to Explore Northern Caves and Potholes" will prove invaluable in making preparations. This booklet is published by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs, and is available from their Chairman: J.R. Sutcliffe, 16 Ryelands Grove, Heaton, Bradford 9, at the modest price of 2/- (post free). Arrangements are very much in a state of flux in some of the caving districts, and amendment lists to the booklet are frequently necessary, so make sure your information is up to date!

Caving in Ireland

Members who contemplate a caving holiday in Ireland this summer should note the following information:-

1. In view of the lack of cave rescue arrangements in the face of the mounting popularity of caving in Ireland, the Cave Rescue Organisation are more than ever anxious to know of parties visiting the different caving regions there. Whilst your own ventures may prove accident free, others may be less fortunate. In such an unhappy situation a lot of precious time and fuss could be avoided if the strength and whereabouts of visiting parties were known at any time. Please get in touch with John Childs, 26 St. James Drive, Harrogate, Yorks., as soon as your plans are known.
2. We all know that popularity can bring its seamy side-as well. It is with regret, therefore, that we learn that the thoughtless and irresponsible behaviour of certain unknown vandals has occasioned the owner to close down Poulmagollum (Slieve Elva, County Clare) to all parties. Frustrating as this may be, you are requested not to trouble the owner, Mr. Cosgrove, at Cahir Bullog. This is a salutary lesson to all cavers that the hospitality shown us by most farmers must not be abused, at any time or anywhere!

Nife Cells

A limited number of used Nife sets are now available for disposal and are offered for sale at 25/- each from either:- R.J. Staynings, Men-a-Vaur, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4. Tel: Whitchurch 3689, or from the Club Headquarters at Hillgrove. They are available in the same condition as received from the National Coal Board and consequently cannot be guaranteed in any way by the Wessex Cave Club.

Large orders should be collected from the above address (preferably by previous arrangement) and to encourage this the Club is offering a discount of a free lamp with every 12 purchased.

Cash with orders in all cases please.

New Headquarters

Now that the Club is the owner of a piece of land at Eastwater Farm, we can start work on our proposed new headquarters. The Hut Warden has drawn up the following programme of site works which will have to be completed before work can start on the actual building:-

1. Take down wall at entrance and rebuild piers.
2. Construct cattle grid.
3. Strip off area of drive and car park.
4. Dig trenches for land-drainage and water main.
5. Put in land-drains and water main.
6. Hardcore and roll drive and car park.
7. Construct fencing.

Could anyone interested in helping with the above please contact the Hut Warden, Nick Hart, at Hillgrove.

In addition, we will need the following tools:-

Pickaxes, shovels, hose pipe, crow bar.

Spirit levels, ladder.

Trowels.

Hammers, saws, screwdrivers, lump hammers, sledge hammers.

Wheelbarrows.

Jumble Sale

In order to raise funds for the forthcoming New Headquarters Project, the Club will hold a Jumble Sale at the Wells Y.M.C.A., on Saturday 4th June at 2.45 p.m.

Would you please bring or send as much varied "jumble" as you can to Mrs. Judy Hanwell (at Hon. Sec's address). Offers to help at stalls should be sent to Mrs. Barbara Surrall, the Hon. Treasurer. Please help us make this a financial success.

Address List

In the next Journal, No.107, a complete Membership List of the Club will be published for the current year 1965-66. If you have moved recently and have not notified the Club, the Hon. Sec. or Hon. Treasurer will be pleased to hear of your new address.

CLUB MEETS

Saturday May 21st Stoke Lane Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Leslie Teasdale, 32 Tonfield Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Saturday May 28th Lamb Leer Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Dave Westlake, "Wayside", Rectory Road, Staplegrove, Taunton.

Saturday June 4th Jumble Sale 2.45 p.n. at Y.M.C.A., Chamberlain St., Wells.

See Club News for details.

Weekend June 11th/12th South Wales O.F.D., & Dan-yr-Ogof and perhaps Pant Mawr.

Leader: Rodney Hobbis, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol.

Saturday June 11th Stone Mines Meet Bath Bus Station 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Will Edwards, 91 Rookery Rd., Knowle, Bristol 4.

Wednesday June 15th Redcliffe Caves, Bristol Meet at the City Engineer's Redcliffe Wharf Depot near the Bascule Bridge, at 6.45 p.m.

Names please to Geoff Tudgay, Top Flat, 1 St. Edward's Road, Clifton Wood, Bristol 8.

Saturday June 18th St. Cuthberts Meet at the Belfry 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Nick Hart, 80 Ridgeway Road, Long Ashton, Bristol.

Saturday July 2nd Stone Mines Another chance for anyone who missed the first trip.

Details as above.

Saturday July 9th Eastwater Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Denis Warburton, 20 Beverley Court Road, Quinton, Birmingham 32.

Saturday/Sunday July 16th/17th Hillgrove Weekend Hut maintenance, etc.

Weekend September 10th/11th Visit to Sea Caves on the south coast in the Portland area.

More details from Alan Surrall, 216 Evesham Rd, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.

Early October It is hoped to arrange a further trip to Aggy Aggy.

There will be a digging camp at 'Fairmans Folly' at Whitsuntide; details from Alan Surrall (address above). All are welcome.

Hon. Secretary: J.D. Hanwell, "Chaumbey", 50 Wells Road, Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset.
(General Club Policy)

Hon. Asst. Secretary: L.M. Teasdale, 32 Tonfield Road, Sutton, Surrey.
(Membership applications, cave keys, C.C.C. Permits)

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. B. Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.
(Subscriptions, Accounts)

Editor: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.
(Journal Material)

Librarian: Dr. D.M.M. Thomson, "Pinkacre", Leigh-on-Mendip, Nr. Bath, Som.
(Lending Library & Hillgrove Reference Library)

Hut Bookings: P.W. Duck, 13 Goodymoor Avenue, Wells, Somerset. Tel: Wells 2501
(Hillgrove & Eastwater Bookings, Mendip tackle bookings)

Activities Secretary: C.R. Hobbs, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol. Tel: Long Ashton 2127
(Offers to lead trips, requests for trips).

Sales Officer: R.J. Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.
(Club Publications, badges, ties, lamp sets)

Survey Scheme: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.
(Enquiries and sales of cave surveys)

EASTER IN YORKSHIRE - 1966

Phil Davies

Some sixteen members and nine or ten guests converged on Selside, near Horton-in-Ribblesdale, from places as far apart as Edinburgh and Poole. Most people arrived on the Thursday night to find the Three Peaks still white with the remains of the 14" of snow which had fallen during the blizzard a week earlier, and which had wrought such heavy losses to the sheep and early lambs.

Since Pen-y-Ghent moor is out of bounds to cavers after 1st April, because of grouse breeding, it is possible that accommodation at Selside on the flanks of Park Fell and Simon Fell is more convenient for caving than Horton, which is four miles down the valley. Certainly the Burnley Hut (although haunted) made a welcome change for the campers who have now become resigned to the bad weather experienced over the last few years on our annual pilgrimage to the Dales. This year was no exception. The few who stayed at the Crown found the food much improved, the hotel warmer, but the atmosphere somewhat icy and the cost higher.

Friday started misty, drizzling and damp; nevertheless one party got underground. Tim Gilbert led a party of N.U.C.C. friends down Washfold, those with electrics battled with the water on the 130' first pitch and made the bottom, but because the rest of the party were using carbide it was decided to call it a day. In pulling out a rope was unfortunately lost, it was presumed to have been carried down the big pitch by the stream. We were, however, planning to revisit the pot and had hopes of recovering it next day. Meanwhile everyone else walked. Some on the west slopes of Ingleborough, taking in the entrances of Great Douk, Little Douk, Middle Washfold, Sunset and Meregill, ending the tour off with a very worthwhile 6d. spent at Weathercote, which is somewhat tame in dry weather but spectacular in flood, the end of the chamber being lashed by a 70' waterfall and filled with heavy swirling spray. The other walkers visited the better known entrances on the west flank of Pen-y-ghent, and then retired to Ingleton where they followed Tim Atkinson on a walk to the Greta and Beezley Falls to see a geological unconformity.

Heavy rain on Friday night made the already wet caves even wetter for our major trips planned for the Saturday. Tim Atkinson and Mike Wooding joined a Happy Wanderers team in an attempt on Hammer Pot. They passed all the tight stuff and most of the pitches, but were prevented from seeing the Outfall Master Cave by sump conditions in Sludge Crawl. Mike and Lao Holland, with friends, Gerald Hand, Paul McDonald, John Gallagher and Tim Reynolds (with his arm in plaster) made a descent of Magnetometer Pot, although the Styx had not sumped everyone got tolerably wet and the less experienced rather chilly and somewhat lost.

Our second attempt at Washfold ended about 100' down the big pitch where the ladder (in spite of using the farthest rawlbolt as a belay) became too intimate with the stream to allow a safe descent to be made. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of the roar of water whistle signals could easily be heard both from the lifeline position back in the chamber and from the ladder. Those

who had hoped to bottom the pot were Garry Pilkington, Bob Gannicott, John Alder, Derek Tringham and myself. We found no sign of the lost rope in the upper passages.

Sunday was drier, the weather steadily improved all day till by the afternoon the sun put in its brief appearance for the holiday before going into retirement again. Tim Gilbert made another, this time successful, attempt to bottom Washfold with two of our Burnley Hosts, but much to everyone's disappointment there was no sign of the missing rope. Garry Pilkington led a party consisting of John Alder, Derek Tringham, Gerald Hand, Paul McDonald, John Gallagher and myself to Ireby Cavern which developed into a thoroughly enjoyable pot after we had disentangled ourselves from the two other parties retiring from the cave in disorder as we made our entry. Plentiful cold water on the pitches, a great variety of stream passage and finally a large Master Cave with the traditional sump, made the pot, about 1 mile in all, one of my favourite trips to date. The less energetic and the less experienced revisited the old standby, Selgill and enjoyed a leisurely trip to the bottom and the sight of water roaring down the wet entrance pitch 150' high; for some of them it was their first taste of ladder pitches.

Monday was cold and windy, most people walked. Tim Reynolds, Tim Atkinson and Lao Holland being the most energetic covering the ground (18 miles as the crow flies) between the 3 peaks, their time need not be recorded since they were walking for pleasure and had no ambitions on the record, which now stands at about 2½ hours. A party of three visited Borrins Moor Cave and Upper Long Churn; nothing to those wearing a goon suit or wet suit, but to be treated with respect by a five year old in woollens on a cold day.

Most people started the long journey homewards on Tuesday morning, the weather had not improved; snow still lingered in gullies and sink holes on the fells and picked out the straight lines of the walls rising into the mist. Our thanks for the hospitality of Burnley Caving Club must be recorded, in particular to our host (recently elected to Wessex) Garry Pilkington for his enthusiasm, local knowledge and efforts to make our stay comfortable and pleasant and for keeping the ghost and poltergeist safely at bay.

CAVER ON THE COUCH

Timothy Gilbert

Visit a mental hospital and you may see a patient on all fours, even crawling, on the floor. Another may be playing with mud, or splashing in water. Visit a nursery and you'll see the sane. They may even be clambering in tubes. Then go down a cave.....

Yes, the resemblance may be incidental, but there could hardly be an activity in which less skill is required than caving. Admittedly one can economise effort with experience on ladders and crawls, but it is not uncommon for novices of only average fitness to complete “super-severe” systems. The conversation down below is not quite baby talk, but none would claim it reached a high intellectual level. The Fire Service could provide plenty of evidence that children love trying to enter impossible places. Is the specifically infantile behaviour involved one of the attractions of speleology? For an abundance of explanations of such abnormal behaviour let's turn to Freud.

A child's growth is marked by increasing restrictions on its instinctive activity. He must not bite his mother's nipples, he must only urinate at the proper time and he must not have intercourse with his sister, and so on. The normal person diverts the energy of his instincts into socially acceptable channels, a process which Freud called displacement, or sublimation.

The neurotic, however, fails in this task. He may be unable to control his instinctive tendencies and becomes a psychopath, a criminal seemingly without a conscience, for whom punishment has no effect. Another may be the opposite, in having too strong a conscience, and feel excessive guilt and anxiety about his aggressive or sexual desires.

Freud noticed a number of different ways, called defence mechanisms, in which these anxieties could be relieved. The patient might exclude any anxiety arousing thoughts from his consciousness by repression. His analyses of patients' dreams showed how they built up complex symbolism to disguise these forbidden thoughts. (It is harder for dreamers nowadays who know all about phallic and vaginal symbols). Another defence is regression, behaving in a more childish way, retreating to a stage of development at which the anxiety would be less. The hospital cases were doing this, but it need not be so extreme. The relatively normal person may become more childish under stress, “going home to mother”, after a marital tiff, for example.

The essence of all defence mechanisms is that they don't work. The object of the anxiety may be avoided, but it can only be overcome by being realistically faced. These devices just shelter the person from unpleasant reality.

All this suggests that cavers unconsciously suffer from guilt about their aggressive or sexual drives and regress to childish behaviour. Consequently caving would just be making them worse. But how could this be proved without clinical study? Such a person normally disguises his basic personality, even to himself. (The main aim of psychoanalysis is to make the patient aware of these underlying processes). One could suggest a completely opposite explanation:- Possibly most people feel inhibited about indulging in such a childish activity as caving and only those less inhibited than normal would become enthusiasts, just as at a party the more withdrawn and anxious guest might regard some game as too silly and childish. If it were a case of one theory fitting all cavers then a personality test of introversion and extroversion should decide the issue, but obviously there are many different explanations for many different cavers. The "playing with mud" aspect suggests another of Freud's ideas. He believed the infant went through a series of stages during which parental treatment vitally affected later personality. First is an oral phase, then an anal phase, when interest centres on excretion. Freud thought that if the mother very strictly controlled toilet training, this might lead to a "constipated" personality, mean and narrow, whereas praise of the child's efforts at elimination might lead to creativity and an outgoing personality. I won't go into detail or go on to the genital stage, as there is no strong evidence in favour of the theory and it obscures the value of Freud's more feasible propositions. Also its application is unclear. Does the caver crawl in mud because of his liberal treatment on the pot or as a reaction to his strict training? (or neither, you are no doubt thinking). The possibility of an opposite reaction complicates any explanation.

Anyway, for some reason cavers seem to have a greater need than normal to indulge in infantile behaviour. If they just crawled about on their garden they might be put away, but they can do it in caves, although still regarded as mad, and no one stops them. Well, are they mad?

It is difficult to say how one qualifies as a neurotic. It is not so much behaving unconventionally ("they said Marconi was mad", etc.) as acting in a way which is liable to disrupt one's personality and make one abnormal in an ever widening range of activities. I don't know if caving speeds this process, but certainly the longer they've been at it the madder they seem. On the other hand there are even claims that caving is therapeutic. "Better to get his thrills underground than from beating up old ladies" say Youth Clubs, and they clutter up the caves with potential delinquents.

The very limited number of theories presented here (nothing on the danger, the darkness, the symbolism) may all be wrong, but don't think the reasons you give yourself are the whole story. Just to say it's exciting is no explanation. Why is caving seen as exciting by one person and downright idiotic by another? Your real motives may be as deep and dark as the caves.

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

Extracts from the Report of the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer for the year ending

31st January 1966

CAVE RESCUES AND INCIDENTS

Sidcot Swallet, Sunday 21st February 1965

Alert by Weston-Super-Mare Police at 1.45 a.m. A party had entered the cave at 7.30 p.m. on 20.2.65 and a chap had got stuck in the squeeze below the water chamber. On becoming hysterical and unco-operative one of his mates had gone to the Mendip Gate Cafe. He had not read the notice properly, and instead of ringing the Wells Police dialled 999 and so got through to Weston. The latter did not contact Wells, as they should have done.

Mr. Kenney rang Dr. Tratman, who reported that there were no U.B.S.S. members up at the hut, and then began to rustle up a party, but before they turned out the Weston Police rang again to say that the news that a rescue party had been alerted was sufficient to encourage the subject to extricate himself. The stand down was given in time. Mr. Kenney pointed out to Inspector Buttle of Wells that the Weston Police appeared not to know the procedure, and he undertook to ring the Divisional Superintendent at Weston to sort things out.

Sidcot Swallet, Monday 7th June 1965

Call out at 6.45 p.m. via Dr. Tratman. Dr. Crook called for volunteers at the Belfry, Wessex and Shepton Huts. A man of 18 called Alan Munn of 123 Rodburn Road, Manor Farm, Westbury-on-Trym, a twelve stone six-footer, had managed to get through the squeeze into the final chamber and was unable to get out again. He was accompanied by a "ferret".

Mr. P. Bird and Mr. B. Keevil arrived at the cave at 8 p.m. and soon after went down. They told the "ferret" of the alternative route back to the Water Chamber, created a few years ago by the removal of a boulder. This route is tight but vertical. Food and benzedrine were passed down to the subject. He was then led to the new vertical and extracted as follows. He climbed on to the back of his companion, raised both arms and was pulled out by these, while relaxing his body to take less room. He hurt an old knee injury in the process, but the rescuers did not relent enough to allow the rescue to fail. It is fortunate that Mr. Bird had tried this route himself, as he is of the same build as the subject.

Carlsward Cavern, Derbyshire. Wed/Thurs. 7th/8th July 1965

At 1.45 a.m. Dr. Lloyd was stood by from Wells at the request of the Matlock Police, with a request to stand-by two cave divers. A boy soldier had dived a 90 foot sump and had not returned. Dr. Lloyd stood by Messrs. Wooding and Drew and Dr. Rogers. At 4.45 a.m. they were stood down. Much correspondence, followed.

Mr. J.K. Needham, Hon. Sec. of the Derbyshire C.R.O. wrote to me explaining the circumstances. This boy soldier, acting under orders, was on an initiative test to get from one entrance of the cave to the other. His party was ill equipped and was carrying candles. When he came to the sump he missed the obvious way out and being an exceptional swimmer plunged in and kept on until he surfaced in a small chamber.

Mr. K. Pearce was asked to do an underwater search for him, but was unsuccessful. Eventually the sump was pumped dry and rescue was effected. Mr. Needham had written to the lad's commanding officer complaining, but wished to take the matter to the highest level and asked for my support.

I knew no top brass, but did happen to know the Admiral of the Home Fleet, Sir John Frewen. So I wrote to him explaining the circumstances. The training system was at fault. I wanted to suggest to the highest authority in the Army that caves should be excluded from initiative tests. This was not the first time such tests had given rise to alarm. The Army (same as the other services) had a number of reputable caving clubs, where such activities were done under proper supervision, which is as it should be. Members of such clubs were concerned that their good name might be dimmed by such incidents. The feeling in cave rescue circles was even stronger.

Sir John replied that it was quite right to feed such proposals into the machine at the top. If that didn't work, nothing would. He happened to know the Adjutant General, General Hewetson, who was responsible for Army training and welfare and he sent him a copy of my letter. On Oct. 1st General Hewetson replied that he had acted. He had sent out a circular to all units to say that pot holing should be looked upon as an interesting and exciting hobby and that it was wrong to regard it as a form of initiative test. It was essential that pot holing expeditions should be carefully planned and supervised. An expedition should never be used in order to discover or test leadership potential.

This is a satisfactory outcome, since it is clear that the Adjutant General took the point perfectly and his word is law.

Swildon's Hole. Monday 19th July 1965

At 1 a.m. the Wells Police alerted Mr. Kenney to say that Mr. P. Allen had rung to report that a party of four cavers, visiting Swildon's 6, last seen at 6 p.m., were overdue. The four were Messrs. R.G. Lewis, C. Coy, E. Glossop and K. Malone. Larger parties had started during Sunday to try to do the long round trip via 6 and Shatter Passage, but as a result of a combination of many minor accidents, mainly to lighting equipment, four of them eventually found themselves, tired after the bad air of the two bailed sumps, and with one light between them in Shatter Chamber. Here three of them awaited rescue, while Mr. Lewis took the light from Mr. Coy and pressed on to Shatter Pot.

At 2.30 a.m. three search parties entered the cave taking the following routes:-

1. Paradise Regained, Blue Pencil, 4, 5, 6 and up N.E. Tributary to the 1st and 2nd sumps, then returning to the head of Blue Pencil to meet the other search parties.
2. Swildons 1 and 2 to Sump 2, Vicarage Passage, Double Trouble to rendezvous at top of Blue Pencil.
3. Shatter Passage and down to 2nd sump, searching side passages, return and make way to top of Blue Pencil.

The recorder at the entrance recorded the names of the 16 cavers who took part, on entry and exit. A telephone party was sent down at 3.40 a.m. to lay a line from the entrance to the 40'. Surface equipment was supplied by the Police. Fountain Cottage was lent to us by the Sandhurst cadets. A support party was arranged to go down the cave at 5.30 a.m., establish a kitchen in Trat's Temple, and await call for aid from the first parties.

Search party No. 3, led by Dr. W.I. Stanton, met Mr. Lewis at Shatter Pot. He surfaced at 4.20 a.m. His three companions were found in Shatter Chamber and reached the surface at 6.30 a.m. A party was sent down to the rendezvous to call away the remaining rescuers, the last of whom surfaced at 7.50 a.m.

The organization went very smoothly and worked well. Messrs. Devenish and Kenney were jointly in charge on the surface, as it is found better to have two Wardens doing this than one.

Swildon's Hole, Sunday 25th July 1965

Torrential rain following a week's wet weather caused flooding and trapped two parties of cavers, one from Plymouth (Messrs. D. Pearce and R. & J. Steere) the other from Hants. (Messrs. A. Barwick, J. Bingham, R. Marking and J. Weston) at the forty foot pot. The call out was made early owing to the vigilance of Messrs. Stanton, Hanwell and Thompson, who went to the cave entrance in the afternoon, found flood waters rising, learnt of the underground parties and anticipated trouble.

The Bristol Waterworks pumps were soon in action, at the rate of 50,000 gallons per hour, but eventually it needed eight of the Fire Brigade Pumps in addition (100,000 gals./hr.) to abate the rising waters. Soon after 6.30 p.m. and while the grating was still awash, Mr. Kenney and four others went in and found two cavers at the head of the 40', sitting on top of the stalagmite barrier. They had climbed before the peak of the flood. A third caver was then found on the 15' ledge clipped on to the ladder. He had been unable to climb any further. He wore no protective clothing and was cold and exhausted. It is probable that any delay in the rescue operations would have cost this man his life.

As more pumps came into action on the surface the stream fell enough to allow the rescue party to descend the 40'. The water going over the lip was checked, each time someone neared the top of the ladder, by another man planting his behind in the keyhole. "Goon-suits", food and Nife cells were taken down to the 4 still stranded at the bottom of the drop. A telephone was rigged by Mr. Prewer and Mr. Thompson rigged the hauling line. By now it was known that one of the four had fallen off the ladder when attempting to climb during the flood. Fortunately he had not fallen far and had been checked by a life-line and was only bruised and shocked. The party were brought up the drop by making them climb the ladder, but secured to both the hauling line and a life line. A good pull was given and rapid ascents made.

On the surface the Police "walkie-talkies" were put out of action by interference from the pumps, so Mr. Chapman and party laid a telephone from Priddy Green to the cave entrance. Fire Brigades from Wells, Glastonbury, Street, Shepton Mallet and Cheddar were present, so that when domestic flooding occurred at Cheddar and Wookey Hole there were no pumps available to deal with it. The firemen organised lighting at the entrance and a soup kitchen. They also dammed the stream to form a second pool from which to pump, there not being enough room for all the pumps at the entrance.

About 15 cavers were occupied in underground rescue work and completed their task soon after midnight. It took the surface workers much longer to clear up and the firemen did not get back until 5.45 a.m.

This incident resulted in a sharp and unfavourable reaction from the Press, the Public, the Police and the Fire Brigade. Only the Bristol Waterworks remained unruffled. Justifiable complaints were that the flooding was predictable, that no sensible caver of any experience would have gone down Swildon's on that day, that the action of these cavers had caused a lot of trouble and an expenditure of some £300 of public money. Unjustifiable complaints were that the subjects were young, inexperienced, irresponsible and belonged to no caving club. It is not certain whether they had been adequately warned. Weather forecasts and local opinion were ambiguous. The notice at the cave entrance warns that the cave is liable to flooding, but that is all. The cave was usually not locked and clearly Mr. Main's control over those entering was marginal.

As a result Mr. Main was under some pressure to secure the entrance more thoroughly and to limit the entry. Although the projected block house never got built, the cave has since then usually been kept locked, and Mr. Main has often advised cavers not to descend in bad weather.

Swildon's Hole, Sunday 19th September 1965

Swildon's Hole, Saturday 23rd October 1965

Swildon's Hole, Sunday 28th November 1965

Early in September, a party unknown removed the drainpipe from the head of the 40' pot, so that a man climbing a ladder hung in the usual way gets the full force of the water on his head. These three incidents (and many others of which M.R.O. has no record) did not result in call-outs, but were occasioned by cavers being unable to re-ascend the 40' and having to be assisted.

On 19.9.65 it was a Bristol Grammar School boy, who realised as soon as he had reached the bottom that he was going to be in trouble and so did not venture further. He was assisted by other parties in the cave.

On 23.10.65 it was a party from London who were without a leader, tackle, experience or good manners. Finding a ladder on the 40' they went down it. A U.B.S.S. party on its way out met them at the bottom, advised them to return immediately, helped their first man up and then left. The Londoners' knowledge of life-lining proved rudimentary, so that when the third man (a novice) fell off from half way up, he landed flat in the pool. A party of Bath Scouts, whose tackle was on the pitch then came up on their return and helped the subject to try again. When this proved impossible, two of the Londoners were sent out of the cave to get help and hauling tackle.

Three reasons have been given why MRO was not called out. A bent penny in the phone box; a preference for rustling up a party from the Hunters; a desire "to avoid publicity and police action which might cause the cave to be closed". At all events a mixed party fetched the tackle, entered the cave, rigged the pulley and hauling rope and got the subject up. He was able to get himself out of the cave from there.

On 28.11.65 Mr. Macnab of the Grampians assisted a badly exhausted caver from another party to ascend the 40' pitch.

The Hon. Sec. of M.R.O. considered seriously the third reason given (by the Bath Scouts) as to why they didn't call out M.R.O, on 23.10.65, Clearly it was most undesirable for cavers to refrain from calling on the help they needed for fear of "police action". Moreover in their statement to the Press on 27.7.65 the Police made it perfectly clear that control of entry to the cave was Mr. Main's business and not theirs. Dr. Lloyd therefore wrote to the Chief Constable for confirmation, and received in reply a definite statement that "at no time have the Police done anything to persuade land-owners to close their caves". All they ask is that people who go caving should take reasonable precautions to avoid endangering the lives of others. They are therefore taking an interest in the control exercised by Mr. Main.

GENERAL POLICY

The Mendip Rescue Organisation is an ad hoc body which exists for the purpose of effecting cave rescue. It is run by a Committee of Wardens, who see to the purchase and replacement of equipment, the posting of notices at cave entrances and keep lists of cavers willing and able to help. Their main function is to operate the call-out system, so that a rescue may be undertaken smoothly and expeditiously. The record on the preceding pages shows that this is done and that is why the Organisation receives the support of cavers on Mendip, both as individuals and through their clubs.

But there is more to it than that. Everybody who caves on Mendip is considered to be a member of the organisation. All are responsible for making cave rescue possible and are liable to be called upon for help. This can best be done if the individuals have had some experience of rescue work and a minimal knowledge of first aid. To this end the Mendip Rescue Organisation actively encourages the carrying out of rescue practices.

These are best done by a party of 8 tough cavers, who normally cave together and know one another well. Such groups are usually to be found within a single club, and for this reason clubs are encouraged to form such groups. This should be done whether or no the group can be called out as such in an emergency, or whether the cavers come from nearby or from a distance.

The correct drill is for the group that wants a rescue practice to fix a date and time, choose a cave and a subject, provide the team of 8 and let the Hon. Secretary of M.R.O. know in plenty of time. (Two months' notice is usually enough). The Hon. Sec. will then arrange for a Warden to attend the practice in the role of umpire or adviser and to bring the carrying sheet and hauling ropes and demonstrate the correct method of using them. Ladders, life-lines and leadership should be provided by the team.

Practices on these lines have been held by the Wessex, the U.B.S.S., the B.E.C., the Axbridge, the London C.R.O., the Border and the Oxford University Caving Clubs. Others are contemplating following suit. Everyone who has the welfare of his fellow-cavers at heart is asked to try to do likewise.

The absence of the drainpipe on the 40ft. pot in Swildon's has created a hazard which is resulting in many cases of cavers being unable to climb. Some of these result in M.R.O. call outs, others are managed by the cavers on the spot. It is felt that more could be done in the latter way, now that the M.R.O. is keeping a pulley permanently on the iron bar in Suicide's Leap. The parties will need a 100ft. full weight nylon line, which they can usually provide themselves, and the ladders must be hung from new fixtures on the far side of the pot. The iron bar must not be used for ladders. It was put there for rescue purposes, only. Instructions on how to rig the hauling pulley have been posted in Main's Barn and it is intended to leave with Mr. Main a spare hauling rope and carrying sheet. If it is used, then Mr. Main will give a stand-by warning to M.R.O.

CONFERENCE WITH POLICE

At the request of the Chief Constable a meeting was held between Officers of the Somerset Constabulary and Wardens of M.R.O. at Wells Police Station on 15.6.65. The discussion ranged over a number of topics, including call-out, use of manpower, organisation at the scene, situation of caves at risk, letting parents know, and keeping the Press happy. No new doctrine emerged, but it became clear that relations between Police and M.R.O. were good, and that in case of real need the Police could obtain for rescue purposes the use of almost anything within reason: even helicopters and explosives.

A list of caves, with grid references, in which there is a special risk of accident, has been prepared and is available. In the 12 years from 1953 to 1964 there were 14 rescues from Swildon's, 7 from Longwood, 5 from Eastwater, 3 from Goatchurch and 11 from elsewhere, giving an average of 3 1/3 per year (in 1960 the average was 3 per year).

FOURTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATIONS

This took place at Buxton on the 23/24th October 1965, and an account was circulated on 1.11.65. At this Conference M.R.O. demonstrated its new self-contained Sump-Rescue Apparatus. A description of this has been published in the December Newsletter of the Cave Diving Group. This apparatus is designed for use in Swildon's sumps 2 & 3, where the existing sumping apparatus (made in 1960) cannot be used. It needs two trained divers to operate it. It was tried out in the Bristol Lido on 13.7.65 and was found to be satisfactory. Cave rescue via the main streamway is now possible from Swildon's 4 and 6.

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Frequent reports are received from the C.R.O., the Derbyshire C.R.O., the South Wales C.C. and the Devon C.R.O. The London C.R.O. was disbanded in 1965.

FINANCE

Expenditure on equipment during the year was heavy (at £50) mainly on account of the new Sump Rescue Apparatus (£26.10.0d.) but we also bought some new telephones (£6) and these, under the care of Brian Prewer, are said to be very good. Income was mainly on account of the gratitude felt by those who were rescued (£20.) but a substantial amount comes from the caving clubs in the form of voluntary donations, and it is upon these that the Organisation relies; one club sent as much as £10. The excess of expenditure over income for the year (£14.) has been met out of our cash balances.

March 16th. 1966
Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, M.R.O.
Withey House, Withey Close West, Bristol 9.

Oliver C. Lloyd, M.D.

This report has been reprinted as it was written, with the exception of items of "internal M.R.O. interest only", e.g. details of changes in Wardens' telephone numbers, lists of rescue practices held, etc.

Editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Dear Sir,

Without 'becoming involved in the slanging match which appears to have arisen between "Sagacity" and Don Thomson, might I make some comments on the subject of M.R.O.

It would seem to be undeniable that the M.R.O. is non-democratic but to justify this by equalling M.R.O. with the Ambulance Service hardly seems relevant; if parallels must be drawn I would suggest that one with the Tony Party of 2-3 years ago would be more valid. M.R.O. in company with most other Mendip organizations is effectively run by a small autocratic clique - the Mendip Old Boy's Club - apparently a self-perpetuating, non-elective clique. Although this clique may contain the most experienced and competent personnel, rule by such a body overlooks two important points. Firstly: any group of this sort tends to acquire a degree of complacency and insularity, gradually becoming less receptive to new ideas - especially on technical matters. This inevitably means a decline in efficiency - continual, direct, exposure to criticism is essential to keep such an organization at a peak of efficiency. Secondly: it ignores the human factor in that people (and cavers especially) do not enthuse over being told what to do, and having decisions taken for them by an 'Establishment' they have no say in electing - the active cavers who perform the actual rescue are not ipso facto muddlers navvies but volunteers who will suffer as much as any Medical Warden from a Sunday night rescue practice.

As Don Thomson states a mass meeting of cavers on Priddy Green would achieve nothing, but individual discussions within each of the clubs concerned followed by regular meetings of representatives chosen by each club might help to clear the air. I can see no valid objection to an M.R.O. committee consisting of democratically elected representatives from each club and this would mean that the individual caver could be certain that his suggestions or criticisms would go direct to the Committee for consideration. The A.G.M. should be open to all cavers to attend.

The argument advanced that Wardens must live locally has surely been invalidated in part by the general availability of car-transport. Of the eleven wardens by no stretch of the imagination can it be said that more than 40% are active cavers; there is only one active diver amongst them and as he is also the Secretary of M.R.O. he would presumably have other duties during a rescue which involved diving.

"Sagacity's" comment that the Sump Rescue Apparatus is frequently absent from Mendip is not true - as far as I am aware it has only been away for one weekend since last summer. However, it is a fact that the new apparatus has to date never been tried out in a sump, and only once, by one diver, in open water, thus the efficiency with which a sump rescue could be carried out in the immediate future is open to speculation.

It is depressing to note that the Secretary of M.R.O. regards a dive in Wookey as more important than a practice rescue with the apparatus in Swildons.

Finally, some random thoughts. Should M.R.O. have a van or Land Rover run from Bristol where the majority of cavers are (apart from Saturdays and Sundays) - all other C.R.O.'s have transport? The stock of hemp-ropes used on rescues should surely be replaced by synthetic fibres. A neoprene exposure bag would seem a justifiable acquisition. It is better to have one team per cave in view of the low standard of the average rescue personnel? The organization on the spot of rescues is often carried out by those who no longer cave and are not familiar with the relevant part of the system - can this be remedied?

As Don points out, the first essential of M.R.O. is that it should work, this it does, but it would be unwise to assume it cannot work better. The primary problem in my view is the "them" and "us" attitude which has arisen in regard to M.R.O., if this can be eliminated the M.R.O. will benefit greatly.

Yours faithfully,

D.P. Drew."

"Dear Sir,

It is only fair that I should preface my remarks on Dave Drew's letter with the admission that I have had to resign as one of the medical wardens since I wrote the first letter to the Journal.

However, to take up what Dave says; I had not really thought of this as a slanging match, but if it is, the only way to keep out of it is to hold one's peace. So, welcome, Dave to the slangers. Let's, to start with, leave party politics out of it, for they constitute a monumental irrelevance. The ambulance service is analogous in that it is also a service provided in some measure voluntarily, it is much open to abuse and overuse, and it could always be improved by people who are not personally involved. Membership of the Mendip Old Boys Club has nothing to do with Wardenship of M.R.O. and any warden would be most willing to hand over to anyone thought more likely to be more efficient. I think Dave must suppose (as many others do) that the number of wardens is fixed, but this is not so, and any club which feels it should be represented can put its views to the M.R.O. Committee. I am not aware of any clubs having done so. The Establishment nearly always confines his orders to alerting the next party to enter the cave. What goes on underground has always been decided, at least on the occasions when I have been on rescues, by the party at the site of the accident; surely this is the difference between coercion and co-ordination.

It may well be that an alteration in the method of selecting the M.R.O. Committee or warden list is due. It may well be that the Committee should be larger. The Committee has, in fact, included all the wardens and has had as a basis all the medically qualified cavers and all the cave divers known in the area. If the number of divers is now down to one, may this be the fault, not of the M.R.O., but of internal dissension in C.D.G.? I don't know. It is not true that only one active diver is a warden and that he is Secretary, nor is it true that the Secretary has other duties during a rescue. It is also not true, as Dave appears to imply, that other divers would not turn out during a diving rescue, as they seem to turn out on all rescues.

If, and when a General Meeting is convened, it would of course be open to all cavers to attend. Although I agree there are no overwhelming reasons why the M.R.O. Committee should not consist of democratically elected representatives, there are nevertheless at least three difficulties that would have to be ironed out first. When the M.R.O. was first formed, the wardens were chosen for their ability to muster a group of active and responsible cavers. It was not strictly speaking a committee so much as a meeting of wardens who were organised broadly on a club basis so as to have access to the greatest possible numbers of cavers. The first difficulty is that we, the Wessex, or we, the M.R.O., have no right to tell them how to choose, even if we are convinced that democracy is the right answer. Second, if every club with an interest on Mendip had a right to elect a representative it would result in a committee of perhaps thirty people, and the output of a committee is well known to be inversely proportional to its size. None of us would like to initiate the task of selecting clubs for exclusion. Third, it might be difficult for an elected committee, already large, to co-opt useful specialists on a casual basis. However, none of these difficulties are insuperable. Finally, one point is not at all clear; is a democratically elected Committee visualized as consisting of wardens or not- I hope it is never suggested that the duties and responsibilities of Committee and Wardens be separated.

Now some random thoughts on Dave's random thoughts. Have these, by the way, been communicated to the M.R.O. Secretary for discussion? If not surely he has no right to complain if action has not been taken. A Land-Rover is doubtless a vital necessity in the North, and to get a rescue party to Oxclose Mine or Sell Gill for instance could be very difficult without one. But on Mendip where most caves are only a few yards from the road and several people have Land-Rovers anyway it would be a gross misuse of M.R.O. funds to buy one. It would cost all of £200, and a further £70 annually to keep it on the road, and could do no more than carry an extra half-dozen cavers from Bristol to swell the already milling throng. Synthetic fibre ropes are already available to M.R.O. and the goon suit we have previously used as an exposure suit may have some advantage over a neoprene exposure bag, as neoprene works best when fitting closely. The suggestion of a rescue team standing by at all times for each cave individually would certainly be a challenge to any organization. Translated into real terms it would mean sixty people standing by every weekend to cover the six major systems of Mendip alone, and few rescues could be managed on ten volunteers. The organization of rescues, it is quite true, is often carried out on the surface by people who no longer cave. If thought desirable to do so, this could be remedied by taking an active caver out of the rescue squad and leaving him on the surface, I am against this.

The great majority of accidents have occurred in the past in parts of caves well known to those who no longer cave frequently. One does not need to know Swildons VI to run the soup kitchen. Whether one accepts the figure of 40% as the active percentage of M.R.O. rather depends on what one means by "active". It is arrogant to assume it excludes all who do less caving than oneself. Surely it means that one is reasonably fit and knows one's way round most of the Mendip caves. To demand more than this of a warden is going to make it difficult to fill all the wardens' posts, and impossible to achieve any continuity. The question of living locally must still be relevant, when it takes ten minutes to drive from Wells to Priddy, and four hours from London to Mendip. There are already Wardens in Bristol.

M.R.O. can be made to work better, but it is difficult to see any of the suggestions made so far as being very positive. It is very easy to be critical of the working of M.R.O. when one is at the height of one's caving career, and it would be easy to award the title of warden to the first ten in a flat out race to the bottom of Swildon's, but it seems more sensible to use as M.R.O. wardens the sort of people who are being used now, and let the tigers get on with the work of discovery and exploration. The position of warden on the M.R.O. was never intended to be one of privilege.

The prime problem is the "them" and "us" attitude, and this has arisen because most people do not seem to realize that while they are actively caving they are ipso facto involved with M.R.O. It is a very good thing that opinions about M.R.O. should be vented freely, if only to reveal the misconceptions, and for emphasis I make this point for the umpteenth time. The M.R.O. includes all the active cavers of Mendip. It includes today's tigers until they occupy the armchairs of the next decade. It includes our friend Sago of the S.V.C.C. and it includes Dave Drew.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Thomson.

"Dear Sir,

In Mr. P.R. Cousins' article on Self-Drilling Bolts (W.C.C.J. No.105, p.19) he says that figures are not available to show the different effects of tensile (i.e. axial) and shear (i.e. at right- angles) loading of eyebolts. The Rawlplug Co. in their booklet "Heavy Fixings" give the following table of loads in lbs. at which welded eyebolts commenced to bend under tests.

Bolt Diam.	Direction of load				
	0	30	45	60	90
1/4"	125	130	180	220	1100
5/16"	160	180	280	390	1600
3/8"	260	330	340	500	2500
1/2 "	600	800	900	1300	3500

0 degrees is load acting parallel to wall (shear loading). 90 degrees is load acting at right-angles to wall (tensile loading). As usual factors of 1/5 for a static load and 1/10 for shock loads are recommended. Thus the safe working shock load of a bolt mounted in a vertical wall is 60 lbs. or 1/3 of a caver! These are loads at which the test bolts began to bend not shear. But I don't find bent bolts very inspiring and any bolts less than 1/2" diameter may bend under routine use. Since Drill anchors take bolts of the same diameter as the expansion shields, presumably these figures still apply. Artificial belays are neat and useful, but regrettably they are not very strong.

Yours faithfully,

Graham Stevens.

Pete Cousins' comments:-

Very many thanks to Graham Stevens on finding the above information. However, the small solid forged eyebolts which I recommended for use with the Drill anchors have a flange which would normally be flush with the rock surface if the bolt is properly inserted. So, since the eye- bolt which is used with a rawlbolt usually projects about one diameter from the rock, I feel that the figure at which this type of eyebolt bends could well be less than the figure for the solid forged eyebolts which I use with the Drill anchors.

However, if any member has any information on this, I would be very pleased to hear from him.

DIVING IN PENYGHENT POT

Mike Wooding

On the 17th January Dave Drew, Paul Allen (S.V.C.C.) and the writer drove up to Yorkshire to take part in one of the most ambitious cave diving operations undertaken in this country. The objective was the upstream sump in the Hunt Pot inlet series to Penyghent Pot. This sump had been noted previously as a possible diving site and Mick Melvin (W.R.P.G.) had undertaken the organisation of an assault to which we were invited as representatives of Mendip. The trip involved, I think, six parties in all, drawn from the top Northern Clubs. Members' of the following clubs took part, and we are very grateful to them for their support: - Bradford Pothole Club, Gritstone Club, White Rose Pothole Club, Red Rose Pothole Club, Happy Wanderers Pothole Club, University of Leeds Speleological Society, British Speleological Association and Severn Valley Caving Club.

We rose earlier than was pleasant on the Saturday morning and after a quick breakfast in Ingleton made our way up across Glass Moss (?) to the entrance. It was a crisp morning, with odd patches of snow dotting the flank of Penyghent. Several parties were already down the pot, which had been laddered the previous night. The diving party, consisting of Dave Drew, Bill Frakes (B.P.C.) and the writer, accompanied by Mick Melvin, was unencumbered by tackle and so made rapid progress to the Hunt Pot Inlet. The laddering of the fourth pitch is worthy of note. Instead of the usual pattern of 35', 30', 70', the high water conditions made it necessary to ladder the pitch as 35', 100', the latter being a superb free pitch, meeting the water half-way down. As our party approached the Hunt Pot Inlet passage we inadvertently caught up the diving sherpa party and were lumbered with a share of the gear to carry. The Hunt Pot Inlet passage is low, wide, wet, jagged and about 10°C colder than the main stream. Not an inviting place at the best of times. On arrival at the diving site cylinders were laid out and the kitchen set up (an unusual luxury for us, this). From the low circular chamber where the kit was assembled a wide low passage led off to the sump, which consisted of an indeterminate area where the roof met deep water.

As the breathing sets were being checked Bill wisely withdrew from diving due to badly torn neoprene, and Dave and I tossed for the honour of first dive. I won (or lost, depending on which way you look at it) and prepared to dive. On the carry-in the line reel with 1,000 ft. of thin courlene line on it had been smashed, and it proved impossible to sort out the resulting tangle. Consequently we used a loose length of 120 ft. of thicker line to dive on. I dived at a point near the left wall, the line being fed out by a miserable Drew standing waist deep in the water of the sump passage. Almost immediately I found myself in a discreet passage about 10' wide and 4' high at a depth of 5' and after about ten feet surfaced in a tiny air bell. Seeing no future in this I dived again, following the right wall of the passage which maintained its depth and meandered on until I was brought up sharp at the end of the line. On returning I was fed hot soup and several loops were cut from the tangled line reel and tied on to the diving line. Using this extended line I finned gently up the submerged passage, occasionally colliding with the wall (the visibility was extremely poor)

until once again I was rudely halted by the line jerking taut. The passage continued with undiminished dimensions, fading tauntingly through the peaty dark water. On my return it was decided that what was to be done had been done and we prepared to leave. The journey out went smoothly, apart from the inevitable three hour wait at the bottom of the fourth pitch, and we eventually emerged from the pot to be met by the arresting sight of an icy full moon rising over the stark silhouette of Penyghent.

For description and survey of Penyghent Pot see W.C.C. Jnl. Vol. 8, No. 96, p.110 (July 1964).

MENDIP NOTES

Cheramodytes

Dan-yr-Ogof

Our congratulations go out to our child, the South Wales Caving Club, for having discovered another mile and a half of cave passage in Dan-yr-Ogof of fabulous dimensions and beauty. Those of us, who can do so, will no doubt be pouring across the border to have a look. Those of us who can't will wait until the Wessex trip on June 11th. The South Walians have made an effective riposte to the Mendippers recent advances in Swildon's. Now it is our turn again.

Derek Ford's Magnum Opus

That High Priest of Swildon's Hole, Derek Ford, has sent me from Canada a reprint of his latest paper describing the mode of formation of St. Cuthbert's Swallet, Swildon's Hole and G.B. Cavern (Ford, 1965). Many will remember the industrious way in which he explored these caverns a few years ago. I remember once taking two hours with him to get from the 20 ft. pot to the Double Pots. The material went into his doctoral thesis, and two years ago its three parts were published in the U.B. S.S. Proceedings (G.B. Cavern), the Wessex Journal (Swildon's) and the Belfry Bulletin (St. Cuthbert's), each part having its style carefully tailored to fit its surroundings and suit its readers.

The readers of the N.S.S. Bulletin must be professionals, because the technical terms and jargon he now uses make the arguments rather hard to follow. One is more at home with the descriptions, provided one has a very good knowledge of the caves in the first place. As he is writing for an American readership he does not call the different parts of the caves by their proper names, but one recognizes Shatter Pot under the symbol "S".

St. Cuthbert's Swallet is a drained phreatic system. This means that all its development took place under water, at a time when the water table stood at 660 ft. O.D. (it is now at 380 ft.), which is Upper Mud Hall. Above this is a series of vadose shafts. Below, the older structure has been partly spoilt by collapse (e.g. Quarry Corner), but is beautifully preserved in the bore passages of the Rabbit Warren. Ford introduces me to a new concept, here, that of "distributaries". Tributaries join to form a main stream. Distributaries do the opposite. When you find a phreatic passage ending in distributaries you've had it, so far as further exploration is concerned, because the passages get too small. St. Cuthbert's resurges at Wookey Hole, and here the one stage fall of water table is again seen.

Swildon's Hole, on the other hand, had its development conditioned by water tables at four successive levels. The top level (550-600 ft. O.D.) produced Swynne-Puke Passage, the next (480-500 ft) drained the upper system down Shatter Pot and formed Upper Swildon's, St. Paul's,

Paradise Regained, Double Trouble, Vicarage Passage and Fool's Paradise. It is because of this that we know Shatter Passage must lead into a large drainage system independent of the main streamway today. The Causer's Calamity link with Swildon's 6 is an epiphenomenon like Blue Pencil Passage. The third level (400 ft. O.D.) gave rise to the upper parts of the main streamway and the inlet passages (e.g. Approach Passages and Abandon Hope) which drain into it. I strongly suspect that SWETCCC's N-W Stream Passage belongs to this lot. The fourth level is the one we know at present, with a series of elegant sumps, numbered 1 to 12. A study of the Cheddar Caves shows that these also were developed in a series of four water tables, and this seems to me strong evidence that, when Swildon's was being formed, its water went to Cheddar. That doesn't mean to say that it does so now.

"For the way that Swildon's flows
Isn't always where it goes."

But rumour has it that David Drew will be testing it shortly with spores.

G.B. Gave is the most modern of the three and developed entirely above the water table as a vadose cave, right down to its distributaries (Ladder Dig, etc.) some of which have phreatic origins.

Derek's paper is fascinating. His ideas have already stimulated cave exploration. His was the impetus which gave rise to the discovery of Vicarage Passage. There is a new wave of digging in the Great Rift of St. Cuthbert's. The other High Priest will have to look to his laurels. But I hope this isn't the end of his writing on these three caves. We still want him to put the whole story together for us, in an English publication, using the well known proper names, and simplifying his language so that "what's his name, and you know who" can understand it. Let him take us through St. Paul's and Double Trouble and say, "Now here's a phreatic bore passage, looping up and down, that got stranded just above the water table. But the water had to get from one end to the other, and that is why you've got that silly little vadose trench cut in the floor."

Cave Lists

The Mendip Cave Bibliography and Survey Catalogue has proved very popular. The authors are busy bringing it up to date. Now the Northerners are trying to compile a survey catalogue of their own. This is being done by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs, the success of whose publication on access to caves is well known. The Southern Council is also preparing a list of caves in the South, with information about how to obtain permission to visit them. This is being done by Ian Standing and should be ready early in the Summer. It will not include the Devon caves, as the Devonians want to do that themselves. SWETCCC has published (1966) a list of Norwegian caves and is promising a "Norway Underground". The Grampian Speleological Group is preparing a Scottish Cave Registry. It is also going to shock us with a Private Eye of the Caving World, a magazine of cave humour. The prospect of three hard, solemn, dedicated

Caledonian cavers trying to amuse us is a trifle unnerving. It will probably be the only intentionally funny caving publication in the country.

Easter in Yorkshire

The party to Ribblesdale this year centred at Selside, though most of the drinking was done in Horton. A great many caves were visited, including Washfold and Hammer Pot (Mr. Coates is relenting), and Tim Reynolds got down Magnetometer Pot as far as the River Styx, in spite of having his right wrist in plaster. It is nice to know that our Editor can cave, even if he can't write.

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SWETCCC (1966), "Preliminary list of Caves in Nordland, Norway", Speleo, 4, No. 2: 53.

NOW AT LAST IT CAN BE TOLD!
EXTENSIONS IN THE FOSSIL SERIES OF SWILDONS HOLE

T. Atkinson.

Introductory

This article sets out to give an account of two explorations in Swildons Hole in which Wessex members played a major part. In the course of exploratory and working trips the writer has made a number of observations of such features as scalloping, etc., and in the second part of the article an attempt is made to interpret these. Observations were not recorded on the spot, but were committed to memory and in most cases written down within a few hours of returning to the surface.

Exploration of Sidcot Passage; the Sidcot Dig.

Sidcot Passage is reached by climbing the Maypole Pitch in Keith's Chamber and continuing along the passage until the 42 Foot Rift to the S.E. Inlet Series is seen in the roof. Passing under this, a squeeze and flat-out crawl are reached at the entrance to Sidcot Passage.

Prior to the discovery of this passage the choke beneath the 42 Foot Rift had been dug by Cambridge University Caving Club. They had been unsuccessful, but in 1962 Mike Boon had visited the site and thought it showed promise. He mentioned this to three Sidcot School cavers, Tim Reynolds, William Fox, and the writer, who visited the choke on 4.4.62. After an hour of digging the tight squeeze was passed and I, being the thinnest, was able to proceed along a 20 ft. flat-out crawl to a gravel floored stream passage about 100ft. long. The passage contained potholes and large gravel deposits, and ended in a high, sandy, chamber with a choked passage leading downwards.

Later that summer, Bryan Guttridge and I returned to the passage on several occasions. We dug a burrow in the final choke, but did not make any real progress. In the roof of the passage, however, was an aven from which a trickle of water fell. With the help of William Fox and others, we were able to maypole this aven to an opening about 20ft. up. A further climb of 6ft. led to 50 ft. or so of tight, wet, and muddy passage, ending in a small chamber with the trickle of water falling from the roof. This concluded the actual exploration of Sidcot Passage.

Sidcot Passage is clearly an inlet of some importance, however, and digging there seemed to offer considerable possibilities of extension. With this in mind, Willie Stanton, Tim Phillips, and I restarted the dig in the summer of 1964. Digging continued until February 1965, by which time a trench 30ft. long had been excavated. The uppermost layer of fill material was soft gravel, but 6 ins. down this was replaced by extremely hard, compacted sand and gravel through which most of the trench is dug. The main reason for the hardness of this deposit was its desiccation, and it may

be softened by pouring about ten gallons of water down the dig at the end of each session. We obtained our water by damming the little trickle from the aven mentioned above. Current bedding was common in the gravel fill, but as there was only rarely a clean section along the right direction it was difficult to interpret.

This dig has not been visited since 7.2.65. mainly because of activities in Shatter Passage and elsewhere. However, all digging tools and a little carbide and chocolate are still at the site, and anyone who wishes to work there is welcome to do so, although I should be pleased to hear from them first.

Exploration of Shatter Passage

After the initial discovery of Shatter Passage in 1961 no serious exploratory efforts were made until late 1962, when Bob Pyke had a short dig in the duck at the end of the main passage. In the same year Dave Causer dug in the rift leading from the right of Five Ways Chamber. Both digs proved fruitless. No more successful were Oliver Lloyd's dig in the Bat Hole in 1962-3, or Jim Giles's and Dave Causer's beneath the 10 Foot Overhang in 1963-4.

After the prophet's announcement that "Shatter" must go (Stanton W.I., this Jnl. Vol. 8 No. 94 Mar. 1964, More of the Darn Place), interest in the muddy and wet choke at the end of Shatter Passage was renewed. Nick Hart and Tim Reynolds made a preliminary inspection and reported that the first task was to remove a large boulder obstructing progress in the tiny chamber beyond the duck. This was blown up on 6.3.65. by Phil Davies, Tim Reynolds, and myself. Two weeks later a large party, Nick Hart, Bob Gannicott, Tony Dingle, Steve Causer, Mick Hennessy, and Martin Cadman, spent the night of 20/21.3.65. at the dig. In digging a channel to drain the duck they discovered that the roof rose to the right of the spot where Pyke had dug. The space so formed was filled with boulders. These were removed, and at the cost of slightly crushed hands a slot 8ft. high was excavated between boulders and the wall. At the top the slot opened into a low, muddy, chamber with a passage leading on to the right. The explorers pushed on into a second chamber from which a low crawl led under the right hand wall to some remarkable pale blue flowstone, and a blind end. The main passage led up a stal bank to a bifurcation. To the left was; the Crystal Pool, which was not crossed, while ahead a hole in the floor led through a low duck encrusted with botryoidal stalagmite. Immediately beyond was a slide down a stal bank to a crawl in a pool blocked at the far end by a boulder. Here exploration ended for that week-end.

On 4.4.65, Willie Stanton, assisted by Mark and Francis Morland and myself, surveyed the new passages. At the same time Nick Hart and Mike Wooding attacked the boulder at the previous limit of exploration. After some hammering they were able to squeeze past and remove it more easily from the other side. They then set off to explore, with the others in hot pursuit. 100ft. further on was a 20ft. aven, from the top of which a strongly scalloped tube led 110ft. to a small chamber with a tight crawl leading onwards. The party did not follow this up, but returned to the main passage and followed it for a further 100ft. to a second aven The passage appeared to end in a

choke here, but closer inspection revealed a way around the obstruction and we continued along 100ft. of low, muddy, tunnel to a small chamber. In the S.E. corner a trickle of water fell down a 30ft. shaft to a chamber with a boulder floor. Mike and Nick set to work on this while the others investigated a gravel choke in the chamber above. The latter proved to be the way on and a little excavation of mud deposits allowed us to follow the passage for 60ft. or so to a point where a boulder choke blocked the way. A continuation could be seen but was too tight to pass. On this trip, too, the Crystal Pool was passed for the first time, and found to end after a few feet in a blind stalagmite choke.

During the following week Mike Wooding made a solo trip to the new series, and pushed on through the low crawl at the end of the scalloped tube. He found a large ascending passage, strewn with boulders, and heavily collapsed at the far end. This chamber was later called Pirate Chamber.

The next week-end Nick Hart, Jim Giles and Dave Savage dug in the choke at the end of the main passage. With the help of a chemical persuader they opened the passage, and on 17.4.65. found a large chamber, very muddy, and with a very solid looking boulder choke at the far end. This sombre place is one of the biggest chambers in Swildons, and it has received the name Shatter Chamber.

Two more trips completed the exploration of Shatter Series. On 25.4.65. Willie Stanton led a large party to survey the new series and to push the remaining side passages. The only discovery of any note was made by Steve Causer. At the top of the second of the two avens he found a scalloped tube leading downwards towards Swildons 6. This regrettable passage ended in a tight and muddy sump. By universal consent it was christened Causer's Calamity. Finally, over a month later, a party of five visited Shatter Chamber in order to explore the avens seen there. Carl Pickstone climbed one in the S.E. corner of the chamber while Tim Reynolds and I thoroughly explored the boulder choke. Carl's aven ended in boulders 40ft. up, and as the only other aven in the chamber, in the N.W. corner, was too slippery to climb, we withdrew after blowing up a boulder obstructing a mildly promising opening near the base of the choke. This was of no avail, as Tim Reynolds found a month later when he returned to find a second boulder in the place of the first.

A postscript to the exploration was the discovery by Mike Wooding, assisted by Dave Drew and myself, of a link between Swildons 6 and Causer's Calamity. This has already been described elsewhere, (this Jnl. Vol. 8, No. 102, July 1965).

Exploration of Fault Chamber Avens

1965 also revealed further extensions in Fault Chamber, where the Severn Valley Caving Club have climbed up to two avens, Severn Aven and Trench Aven, on the N.E. side of the chamber. A full account of these is given in S.V.C.C. Journal, Vol. 1, No. 2. Suffice it to say here that exploration has been carried to a point 200ft. above the floor of Fault Chamber.

Some notes on the new passages.

D.C. Ford has given an account of the history of development of Swildons Hole in this journal, Vol. 8 No. 99 p.p. 198-205. Anyone requiring more detailed information on the work on which it was based should consult his thesis, "Aspects of the Geomorphology of the Mendip Hills", which is available to holders of a reader's ticket at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The remainder of this article attempts to fit the new passages into the scheme which Ford proposed.

1. Fault Chamber Avens.

It has been suggested, though not in print, that the new avens in Fault Chamber make nonsense of Ford's First Cave water table at 550-600 ft. O.D. This is not in fact the case. Although the writer has not visited the avens, Paul Allen (S.V.C.C. Jnl. Vol. 1, No. 2.) describes them in some detail and from his description it may be concluded that they are splash pots of the Cowsh Aven/type. A large fault zone such as that in Fault Chamber is a suitable site for such pots to develop, since the shattered nature of the rock encourages their inception and accelerates their enlargement. The newly discovered avens are thus relatively late additions to the cave, and the water of the First Cave presumably passed through the choke found by U.B.S.S. at the other (west) side of the roof of Fault Chamber.

2. Sidcot Passage.

Ford describes the probable role of Sidcot Passage as being the third of a series of headward capture passages which drew water from the 550-660ft. level to the new, Second Cave, level at 483ft. at Shatter Pot. The first two such passages were in the roof of Shatter Pot itself, and the 42ft. Rift. There is no reason to doubt this view.

Two points do arise, however. Firstly, the large size of Sidcot Passage in comparison with the other capture passages, and the presence of vadose potholing, both indicate that this passage was in use for a long time; in fact, until after saturation level had dropped below the head of the Maypole Climb at 530ft. Thus Sidcot Passage may be expected to lead via fairly large passages to the buried swallets which Ford has shown to exist beneath the fields west of the entrance.

Both Terminus Chamber and the Sidcot Dig contain coarse gravels with large sandstone pebbles. Both digs are heading steeply downwards. These deposits were left by streams which were not powerful enough to carry them up the slopes. Clearly the presence of large pebbles in filters of this sort at the known limits of the passages excludes the possibility of similar large filters further upstream. Thus the way onwards beyond the present digs is liable to be relatively unobstructed.

3. Shatter Series

The two most important features of Shatter Passage as it was known before 1965 are the large size of the passages, which have a cross sectional area of about 80 sq.ft., and the large quantities of mud they contain. The latter, as Ford has shown, were deposited by ponded water during the Second Capture and afterwards.

The new extensions retain this large size until the Crystal Pool is reached, when the explorers' route undergoes a striking reduction in size. At the bifurcation there is strong scalloping, indicating flow into the now choked Crystal Pool passage. Following the explorers' route, the passage contains scallops and pockets, which have not been seen to coalesce. Flow was in a S.W. direction. In the tube to Pirate Chamber there is strong inwards scalloping on all rock surfaces. The tube is a bore passage with a round cross section. In the small chamber just before the crawl into Pirate Chamber, a low archway in the north wall is filled by stalagmite. Pirate Chamber itself has a smoothly contoured, solutional, roof, a few shallow pockets and a cross section comparable with that of the earliest-explored parts of Shatter Passage. The passage ascends steeply a slant dip and strike. The floor is covered with collapse blocks under which is thick mud. Thick, ancient stalagmite has been shattered by the collapse, but beneath it blocks belonging to an earlier collapse may be seen.

Returning to the main explorers' route the passage is seen to continue with a cross section of only 20 sq.ft. or so, with thick mud abounding.

Causar's Calamity is a tube of 6-10sq.ft. in cross section, strongly scalloped towards Swildons 6.

Shatter Chamber is very large, but much of this size seems due to heavy collapse. Mud again abounds. The dip of the strata is steep, about 45-50° to the west.

The various changes in passage size and scalloping, suggest the following working hypothesis for the development of this part of the cave. The formative water of Shatter Passage, drawn from Double Trouble and St. Pauls, originally flowed along the main Shatter passage until it reached the Crystal Pool. Here, as the scalloping indicates, it turned left, and moved via passages unknown, to Pirate Chamber. Later, the passage between Pirate Chamber and Crystal Pool was blocked, perhaps by collapse, and the water bored the passage followed by the caver to the first aven. It flowed up the aven and along the heavily scalloped bore at the top, rejoining its old route just before Pirate Chamber. The bore passage is not very large, whereas the volume of water flowing through it was, so it may be inferred that events occurred relatively rapidly at this stage. The Pirate Chamber route was blocked, perhaps by the collapsed blocks found beneath the ancient stalagmite in the chamber, and the water was compelled to find a new way around the obstruction. It did this by forming the passage to Shatter Chamber.

Finally, when the Second Capture began, and water was drawn down to the 410ft. level, Causer's Calamity/Wet Link/N.E. Tributary Passage were formed as a capture passage carrying the stream, or part of it, to Swildons 6. As progressive headward capture of this type drew the stream down into the bores to be found in the roof of the modern streamway, so the waters in Shatter Passage and Paradise Regained were ponded. The ponds were fed by flood overspill from the newly opened routes and deposited the thick mud seen in the series today. Finally, the deposition of stalagmite and the collapse of Pirate and Shatter Chambers completes the picture.

Two questions arise from this hypothesis. One is, whether or not Shatter Chamber connects with Swildons 7. Probably it does. It is heading in the right direction and there is a passage of the right size heading east from 7. The dips in both parts of the cave are steep.

The second, and perhaps more intriguing question concerns the course of the passages beyond the choke in Pirate Chamber. There are two possibilities here. Either a passage connects Pirate Chamber and Shatter Chamber, in which case the main streamway to Swildons 12 is also the old "master cave"; or Pirate Chamber will give access to a high and dry passage independent of the modern streamway. In the latter case Shatter Chamber would probably represent a stage in the Second Capture.

There is very little evidence one way or the other. It is perhaps significant that there are tubes similar to the N.E. Tributary Passage in Swildons 8 and 9. These may represent capture stages from a high and dry Second Cave. On the other hand, they may not.

4. Vadose Passages

It is worth noting in passing the number of small trickles which have formed splash pots tributary to the passages in all levels of Swildons Hole. They are found in Cowsh and Fault Chamber Avens, in Blue Pencil Aven, Terminus Chamber, Sidcot Passage and Shatter Passage.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Long Chamber/Coral Area, St. Cuthbert's Swallet by D.J. Irwin, Bristol Exploration Club Caving Report No. 11. 27 pp. 2 plans Oct.1965 at 3/6d. plus postage from: The Hon. Editor, at Knockauns, Combwich, Bridgwater, Somerset.

The B.E.C. discovered St. Cuthbert's in 1953 and even today they have not fully written up a complete description of their cave, in fact they are still discovering (and rediscovering) portions, not that they seem to take much discovering as the majority of finds are just open passages which only need walking in to.

As its title implies this report covers the Long Chamber and the Coral Series, about two thirds of a mile of passage. The system is quite complex with passages at five different levels and so the report probably warrants its boulder by boulder description.

The Text includes five pages of sections and two 12" x 19" plans with a C.R.G. grading of 1-3 (sic.). In view of the vast difference in accuracy between C.R.G. Grade 1 and C.R.G. Grade 3, it is not possible to ascertain the degree of accuracy. Whilst Grade 1 is possibly better than no survey at all, one cannot help considering the wisdom of going to all the trouble of producing a report with such a low grade survey. Surely if one is going to take the trouble to publish one's results, then a survey of at least Grade 3 is called for.

A.D.O.

Biospeleology: The Biology of Cavernicolous Animals by A. Vandel. 524 pp. 80 fig. published 1965, Pergamon Press. Price £7.0.0d.

This is the most comprehensive book on the biology of cavernicolous animals which has ever been written. Racovitza in 1907 laid the foundations of biospeleology with the publication of his paper "Essai sur les problemes biospeologiques", and thus inspired the development of research on a world wide basis. This book will undoubtedly remain the standard work on this subject for many years to come and is essential reading for zoologists in particular and biologists in general.

The author is Professor of Zoology at Toulouse University and the Director of the Subterranean Laboratory at Moulis. A scientist of international renown he is well known for his researches on Isopoda, and no-one could be better qualified to undertake the task of writing a volume of this scope.

The book is a translation of "Biospeleologie" which was published in France in 1964 (Gauthier - Viallars, Paris). It is divided into six parts, covering such topics as a general section outlining the subject; an account of the different groups of animals and plants found in caves; geographic distribution and ecology; physiology; behaviour patterns and sense organs; and evolution.

Each sub-section within each of the 31 chapters is complete with its own bibliography, making the volume invaluable as a reference work, apart from the general information it contains. There are many excellent line drawings and illustrations, plus photographs of a more general nature. The book is concluded with an extensive 21 page subject index plus an 11 page index of authors mentioned in the text.

A.D.O.

Beyond Time by Michel Siffre 228 pp. 16 plates and illustrations. Published 1965 by Chatto & Windus, London at £1.10s.0d.

In 1962 Monsieur Siffre spent 63 days in the darkness and solitude of the 375 ft. deep Cave of Scarasson. The first part of this book tells the reader, in a flowing style, reminiscent of the great French Speleologist Norbert Casteret, something about Siffre and his interest in geology, which later turned to Speleology. He started caving at the age of 10 and at the age of 13 was sending reports to various scientific societies. At 19 he received a grant from the Fondation de la Vocation to explore the caverns of the tropical rain forests in Ceylon. On his return he was asked to lead an expedition to the Marguareis Massif. It was on this trip that he discovered the Cave of Scarasson in which he was to perform his great feat of human endurance.

Part two of the book contains a day by day diary of his subterranean sojourn, which being rather repetitive makes heavy reading. Possibly it would have been as well to have left this section for the scientific journals and just let the book stand as a popular account of sixty three days under the earth.

A.D.O.