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 New private address by December!

CLUB NEWS

It is hoped that this Journal will be in your hands before the Annual General Meeting (Priddy Village Hall, Oct. 17th, 1500 hrs). The Editor apologises that forms encouraging prior registration of motions for discussion at the A.G.M. were not included in the last edition but most of the Journal staff had holidays. This does not preclude your active and vociferous contributions at the Meeting. Don Thomson, in his report, has hinted that the Club is in a rather crucial position with a score of successes behind it, an increasing membership and scope for a new major initiative. Mendip is heading for increasing bureaucratic intervention as it is added to the nation's conservation areas. We shall have to avoid the clashes which seem likely with water resources, public health and tourism. While climbers are praised for their bravery and frequently brought to the nation's fireside, cavers often represent a dirty crowd of boozers to even 'informed' public opinion. A Club as articulate as ours must demonstrate the true picture and for this reason the suggestion of better public relations seems a good one. Liaison with other naturalists, walkers, educational bodies, local authorities and water undertakings should come now, before the rough stuff begins. To some extent the pollution trouble caught us with our defences (but not - as the results of our survey show - our trousers) down. Smooth chat and business-like correspondence is not among the chief attributes of cavers but some has got to be done. Thanks to your contributions this Journal helps to present the best aspects of our activities. Let's keep this up and print a few more each time to send to the uninformed but powerful!

In view of the above comments the letter which appears below, passed to us by Mary Galpin on behalf of the Cambrian Caving Council, is particularly unfortunate. If we are not wrong it comes from the same hostility that once refused L-k- D-v-n-sh a pint on the grounds that, although dressed in normal clothing, he was a caver and, "we don't want your sort here". It must be remembered therefore that considerable prejudice is likely to exist in the mind of the author of this letter - for no reason that is ever particularised. We find that most of "our kind" fill the warm and welcoming establishment just down the road when we need a pint! However, this is perhaps a good time to open one mind which has long been closed to any good word on the topic of cavers. One local body we might seek representation on is the magistrates' bench which reviews licences! The letter reads:

Castle of Comfort,
East ? , Bristol.
19.7.70

Dear Mrs. Galpin,

I have been advised to write to you by the Secretary of the Mendip Caving Group. On Wednesday 24th June, two signs valued at £45 were stolen from my premises, one bearing the inn name and the other a 'snack' sign.

Information has been received suggesting that the culprits could have been some cavers who were staying at the Axbridge C.C. hut at Charterhouse. These men were in an old Ford Popular and a mini-van.

On leaving the hut, they told Mr. Fry at a nearby cafe that they were going over to stay in a caving hut in South Wales. It seems likely that my signs went with them, since I know some of the student cavers collect signs for a pastime.

I would be most grateful if you could assist me by having a search made of the huts or by giving me the addresses of such huts and I will get the local police to search.

Should the signs be returned or the whereabouts revealed, I am prepared to let the matter drop.

If they do not turn up, then it will be a serious thing for caving on Mendip, since I intend to press for the repeal of the planning permission for the huts on the grounds of nuisance. I hope this will not be necessary and would be greatly obliged by your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

W.I. Williams (signed).

Editor's Note

I have recently talked to Mr. Williams at the Castle of Comfort. He has found his stolen sign and the above letter probably represents his rather hastily-expressed thoughts at the time of the removal thereof! I see no reason, therefore, to make any apologies for our hastily-expressed reaction which introduces the letter.

Without knowing any identity (and without me buying him a drink!) he was quick to mention that many cavers were well behaved and an asset to the Mendip scene - he mentioned the Wessex Cave Club specifically here.

He may not be lucky in having near him some huts which are used by unwelcome and unregistered guests. Two cases of nuisance he quoted sounded credible and obviously the work of visitors.

Stand-up battles are healthy - if you have a dislike of the "C. of C.", stay away. If you resort to hooliganism and he resorts to threats, neither "side" will gain any credit.

On to more pleasant matters. Having pontificated on the A.G.M. and Dinner let us tell you how to get there. First you must get your tickets, price one guinea (please send s.a.e.) from: Jenny Murrell, 1 Clifton Hill, Bristol, BS8 1BN.

North Parade, Frome is the hill leading down to the river on the Bath road. The Masonic Hall is an evil looking building at the bottom, with a door but no windows. There is a large car park some 50 meters (joke!) from the hall. Dinner, 19.30 hrs. for 20.00 hrs.



Howard Kenney has investigated the legality of helping to sell Nick Barrington and Willie Stanton's book and thanks are due to him for his researches.

The Balch reprint will be ready for sale at the A.G.M., together with the Flood Epic, boiler suits and surveys. Volume 10 of the Journal is about to be bound - the cost being about £2 but less if several people can get together an order.

Thanks are due to Glyn Bolt for welding the fire escape. It is now ready.

The leaders list for St. Cuthberts appears to consist of the following worthies: J.M. Calvert, J. Cornwell, Derek Ford, O.C. Lloyd, R.A. MacGregor, B.S. Prewer.

Membership cards are needed for discounts at Sub Aqua and Bryants. They can be obtained for the price of an s.a.e. from Tony Dingle. We have received a letter from Bryants apologising for any misunderstandings which may have occurred. Application for discounts should be accompanied by identification of membership and in certain cases discount is even then not possible because the goods have to be specially ordered or charged.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Phyllis GREEN, 12 Keyford Terrace, Frome, Somerset.
Christopher PEET, 256B, Burley Road, LEEDS 4.
Derek STEAD, 21 Francis Road, Horndean, Portsmouth.
Julian SPENCE, 4 Chelmer Grove, Keynsham, Bristol.
Barry DAYMENT, 257 Down Road, Portishead, Somerset.
David ALEXANDER, 3 Godwin Gardens, Folkestone, Kent.
Graham FATHERS, 17 Tennyson Road, Lower Weston, Bath.
George HODGSON, 32 Garden House Estate, Grawcrook, Ruyton-on-Tyne, Co. Durham.

CLUB MEETS

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, October 6th. | Ladder Practice. 1930hrs. Meet 1 Clifton Hill, Bristol 8. |
| Wednesday, October 14th. | Longwood/August. 1900hrs. Wet suits and NiFe cells advisable. Leader: Tony Philpott, 3 Kings Drive, Bristol 7. |
| Saturday, October 17th. | A.G.M. and Dinner (Details elsewhere). |
| Saturday, November 14th. | Sapperton Tunnel, between Cirencester and Stroud, blocked 2 miles in. Goon/wet suits essential. Any offer of dinghy welcome. |
| Saturday, November 21st. | Swildons, North-west Stream Passage. Wet suit and NiFe cells essential. 10.00hrs. Leader: Ian Jepson, 7 Shelley Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath. ALSO: 20.30hrs. Talk and slides on 'Cave Exploration in the Rocky Mts. of Canada'. Derek Ford - at Don Thomson's, Pinkacre, Leigh-on-Mendip. |
| Saturday, January 23rd.(1971) | St. Cuthberts. Details and time to be fixed. Jenny Murrell, 1 Clifton Hill, BS8 1BN. |

OTHER NOTES

The Friday Night Club goes on weekly Friday evening trips with Howard Kenney, Tudor Cottage, Beryl Lane, Wells, Somerset. There are digs at Thrupe Farm Swallet (Tony Dingle, 32 Lillian Road, Barnes, London S.W.13), North Hill etc. (Mike Thompson, Fire Engine House, Upper Benter, Oakhill, Somerset), Rhino Rift (J. Cornwell, 26 Russell Road, Fishponds, Bristol) and Sludge Pit (Mike York, Oddset, 19 Alfred Place, Gotham, Bristol 2).

SUMMARY REPORT ON CLUB TRIPS

We have watched the usual story unfold - the huge success of some trips and the dismal failure of others! This is surprising since the same cave often enters both categories, G.B., being a good example. Among the successful trips there was an evening trip to Redcliffe Caves which mustered about 20. The recent Steephelm trip, despite a rough crossing, was very much enjoyed by all. Mike York is pleased that the Portland meet got off the ground and was appreciated by all. Though a Swildon's round trip proved popular the South Wales and Devon weekends had to be cancelled. Longwood/August produced one game caver, Sludge Pit and a Practice Rescue

none at all. Stoke Lane draws quite a crowd. Ladder practice sees variable (0 to 6) people climbing pitches in the Avon Gorge or down to the River Frome.

As commented on elsewhere in this issue, only the few stalwarts appear each time. Leaders have to round up support, at considerable cost in time. Many are now refusing to offer leadership. Where are all those who claim to cave with the Wessex???

LIONEL'S HOLE, BURRINGTON

by W.T. Edwards

It is a warm and humid evening, the date: May 5th, 1970. Two steaming slaves and one large, cool slave driver (L.C.S.D.) have just emerged from a hard digging session at a certain spot in Cheddar Gorge. The slaves are complaining to themselves that this lark was all right when "Sir" only came home for a few weeks each year, but now it is every week, sometimes twice a week. It is deemed too much and it is suggested that something be done. As if reading our thoughts the L.C.S.D. comments on the warmth of the evening and how nice it would be to have a nice surface dig for the summer; he knows "just the spot", only half a mile from the Hunters where one slave could dig whilst the other and himself could bask in the sunshine on the side of the shake hole. He'll see what can be done about it and let us know the following week. That blessed day would see the end of our efforts at the "certain spot" for the season.

May 12th duly arrives. Down we go once again. There is no mention of the sunshine dig and the slaves almost give up hope. At last one plucks up courage and drops a broad hint. "Oh! Sorry chaps", says the L.C.S.D., "I'm afraid the farmer was a bit anti, but don't worry, I know just the spot (again) in Burrington Combe. It's only a few feet long - you won't even need lights, and it should see us through the summer". Slaves promptly fall for this and on May 19th. the eager party meets in Burrington.

Now, one rabbit hole looks much like another to the author, but apparently the one in front of us was characterised by the egress of a draught of air. It proved to be about 8 feet long - a tight passage blocked by a boulder. The difficulty of working in such a confined space was apparent but, after all, this was a summer dig, "no lights", "basking in sunshine" etc. etc.! So L.C.S.D. decided to create a large entrance adjacent to the original one and eventually to block the old one. This was done, with some chemical assistance, and the passage inside made more roomy. At the end of the first evening's work the offending boulder was clearly visible - no, you didn't need a light.

The first objective of the visit on May 26th. was to stabilise the blocked original entrance with cement as this would lend support to some nasty looking boulders above. This was achieved quite successfully once we had found some water - not easy after the drought. Now to attack the boulder blocking the passage, but perhaps No. 1 Slave would first care to clean up the floor and the top of the boulder so that the chemicals would have good effect. Yours truly proceeded accordingly, but after $\frac{3}{4}$ hour or so I wondered why there was no communication from the support group. An investigation revealed two prostrate forms astride a plastic container, with a

strong smell of cider in the air. In fairness, I later learned that the container had been half-full when they began their inroads upon its contents. After some persuasion they came to, the chemicals were activated and we were left with a large pile of rocks to clear, the job being tackled by the suitably fortified No. 2 Slave. Beyond the boulder the passage was yet choked with small stones and earth. No. 1 Slave was invited to have a poke around at this. At the first jab the crowbar went straight through and in a short time a 1 ft. square hole was made into a black void, down into which stones rattled for an encouraging distance. "Willie, we're in", I cried. "Rubbish", L.C.S.D. replied, having grown used to this exclamation over a period of six years. However, he did peep in and expressed hope. However, it had reached 22.30 and further progress was abandoned until the following week.

Time seems endless with a cave waiting, but on June 2nd. Slaves 1 and 2, with L.C.S.D. (Long, Cool Slave Driver, in case you've forgotten), arrived, with lights, at the entrance. The blockage was removed and the expendable No. 1 Slave was inserted, feet first, and told to "go".

The first chamber had a very loose boulder floor, steeply inclined and but lightly cemented with stal. The roof and sides had several straws and moonmilk. Near the bottom, about 25ft. down, I paused to be joined by L.C.S.D. and No. 2 Slave, who prodded into two lower extensions. About 10ft. above the lowest point I spotted a small space between a boulder and the right-hand wall leading to a short passage and further void. The whip cracked behind me. "Well, push it then!", yelled the S.D., so I pushed in and got stuck. Not a word of sympathy was offered and my struggles only worsened things. Luckily my fellow slave had reached my feet and I was dragged free. The squeeze has since been enlarged by removing a slab. There was no obvious way on so we explored among the boulders with extreme caution. At length a way appeared down two short climbs amounting to 40 feet or so, each ending in small chambers with solid rock walls but unstable roof and floor. Lights were dimming and we made our way out, bypassing the squeeze, reaching the surface and a worried Jerry Baker (he'd watched us go in at 1900) at 2330! The "quiet summer dig in the sunshine" had produced 800 feet in and 120 feet down in one evening.

It was decided to continue exploration on June 5th. before the weekenders arrived to spoil anything. While waiting at the cave entrance I was honoured by a visit by and questions from Tratty himself. News travels fast in Burrington village. Nick Barrington, L.C.S.D. and No. 2 arrived and with Tratty's good wishes we made our second descent. Nick took several photographs for the record and noted details for inclusion in the new book - only just in time to beat the publishers' deadline! Just before the steep climbs I found a small hole leading upwards which emerged into the side of a small and richly-decorated rift going downwards to the left. The bottom has a small extension leading to what we call the Traverse - like Eastwater but inclined at 70 degrees, not 30. At the end of this awkward section we found two ways on, apparently linked by a long tunnel. So another 200 feet were added to the cave.

The third trip, on June 10th. was tourist trip, when eminent gents from the Wessex, Jim Hanwell, Fred Davies, Mike Thompson and others were taken round. A further 100 feet were added. Subsequent trips have concentrated on surveying the cave and it is believed that each and every possibility has now been explored, short of digging again. Several round trips have been discovered but loose boulders do not encourage many of these trips. One tantalising prospect

remaining is that the source of the original draught may be discovered. Our attempts so far - using smouldering cardboard and Willie's other patent draught detectors - have only choked us long before any draught was revealed.

So much for summer digs - I hope he doesn't start any more!

(Editor's note: It is hoped that the L.C.S.D. will add his own notes on geology and produce a survey for a subsequent issue of this Journal).

A SPELEODOUR

in the style of "Alfie"
by John Letheren.

This is the tale of - - - call him Sam
Who longed to cave with Polar Amm.
In school days (not too near the heater)
With charcoal sulphur and saltpetre
He manufactured his gunpowder
But always yearned for something louder
And in the field of banging rose
To nitrate (hex) of cellulose,
And finding this was still too placid
Went on to making picric acid
(For even he was not too keen
On making nitro-glycerine!
The making of explosives high
Is better left to I.C.I.).

But making bang's against the law
And so an officer he saw
Who, looking at his application,
Not knowing of his reputation,
Certificate of Bang he gave
For use in any Mendip cave.

An orgy of cave bangs began
And every Mendip caving man,
(And woman) came and watched in flocks
To see him bending mighty rocks
And put in every passage tight
His Polar Ammon Gelignite,
But soon he found that slabs of Plaster
Could get results a little faster.

One day he took a massive charge
Down Swildons, Sump I to enlarge.
Said he, I see no reason why
Sump I should not be big and dry
But while indulging in self-flattery
He let some det. wires touch his battery.

The water gushed out of Gough's Hole
As the disaster took its toll,
No time for reimbursement gave
To visitors washed from the cave,
And quarry men for miles around
Complained of tremors in the ground.
The bang below blocked up the stream
Which then flowed on through Priddy Green
While some down Hunter's took a header
The rest of it flowed down to Cheddar.
And up into the sky it sent
A mighty cloud of effluent
And for a week there fell a rain
Of brown stuff from this ancient drain.

Now gentle people lend an ear
For this is Conservation Year,
Before you aim your retribution
At cavers causing our pollution,
Reflect, ere you apportion blame,
On how Cowsh Aven got its name!

SPAIN 1969

by Fred Davies

Causer/Davies family holiday - Summer 1969 - began with a party of five, Dave and Kate Causer, Andy, Simon and Fred Davies, loading into one Bedford 18cwt. van together with equipment for almost every mountain or cave - yes, we even had ice axes!

We had hoped to cave in the southern region of the Picos de Europa, where the provinces of Santander, Leon and Asturias meet. The Spanish authorities did not seem to favour two mad Englishmen travelling into the high mountains (2600m) to cave and only gave permission for caving in "La Zona de Ramales". Accordingly our time was split between caving in the Ramales region and walking and cave prospecting in the south of the Macizo Central of the Picos de Europa.

Ramales de la Victoria is a small, sleepy Spanish town, nestling in a steep-sided valley in the south-east corner of Santander province. Taking the road south to Europa one zig-zags up the side of a narrow gorge and is suddenly faced by a sheer wall of limestone about 600ft (180m) high. This is the Mur del Eco and it became the centre of our activities in La Zona de Ramales.

The sketch maps should show the main features of interest. We visited the show Cave Cueva de Covalanes where a part-time guide, carrying an inefficient Tilley lamp, showed us cave paintings ('B' on the map) and we visited minor caves and rock shelters, Cueva de la Luz ('E'), Cueva del Miron O Frances ('C') and caves whose names were unknown to us (at 'H'). We saw the foot of the Mur del Eco ('F') and an oxbow to the narrow gorge of the Rio de la Galera ('D'). Of the smaller caves this was by far the most interesting, having the feel of a 'living' river cave, even though the Rio was dry at the time. A viper posed an unusual speleo hazard.

The really dominant karstic feature of the area remains, however, the Mur del Eco, 180m high and 240m long, a convex wall of limestone with two wings sloping away at the edges (see sketch). Dominating this wall are several cave entrances, the most northerly, 75m above the level valley floor, being the only one easily reached.

Key to Sketch Map of Mur del Eco

A Cuevamur - entrance

B Cueva de Covalcanes

C Cueva del Miron O Frances

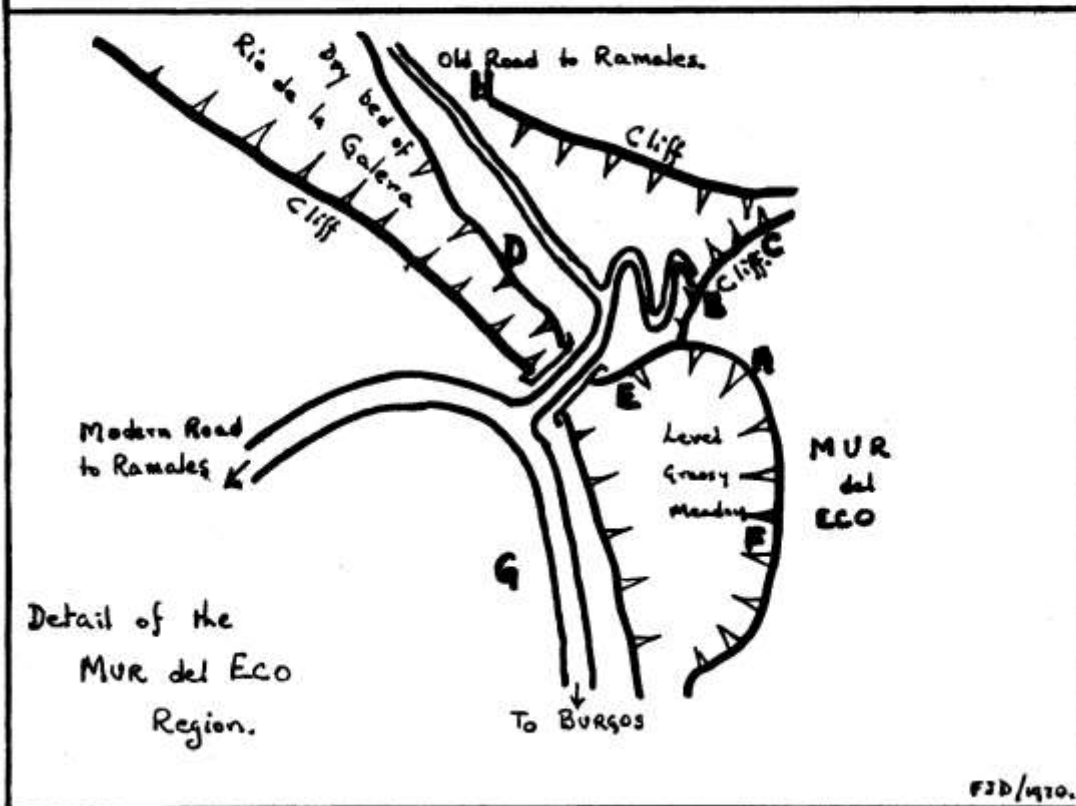
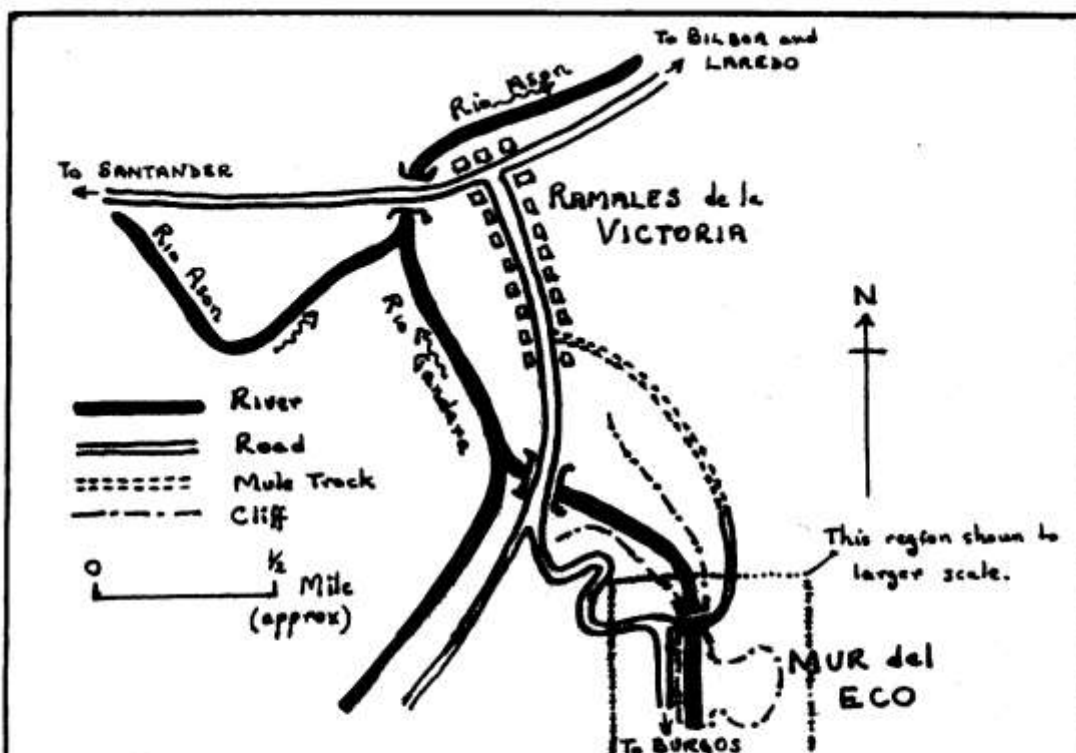
D cave - name unknown - forming an oxbow to the gorge of Rio de la Galero

E Cueva de la Luz

F Small caves at foot of Mur del Eco

G View point for sketch of Mur del Eco face

H Small caves - names unknown - with wooden doors fitted - presumably for storage.



FJD/mto.

This cave, Cuevamur, appears as a vast arch, 35m wide and 30m high, reached by an easy traverse over the buttress forming the northern end of the Mur del Eco. We spent several days exploring; the accompanying plan and section are the results of our work. This was caving in a new style - completely dry. We caved in swimming costumes, plus boiler suits, having to carry water to drink as well as to refill our carbide lamps. We were quite mentally strained by the exposed conditions in some parts of the cave. Being a two-man party we did not attempt to descend the Sima.

Spanish literature refers to it as 55m deep (see section); our attempts to throw stones dropped into it came up with a figure of at least 200ft. (60m).

Once, sitting on a sloping edge of stalagmite at the brink of the Sima I noticed the hollow sound that stepping made. One blow of the fist and the 2mm layer of stal was ruptured to expose soft and oozing moonmilk below. We rapidly retreated to a more secure position but found no position we could trust enough for a belay to traverse the rim of the Sima.

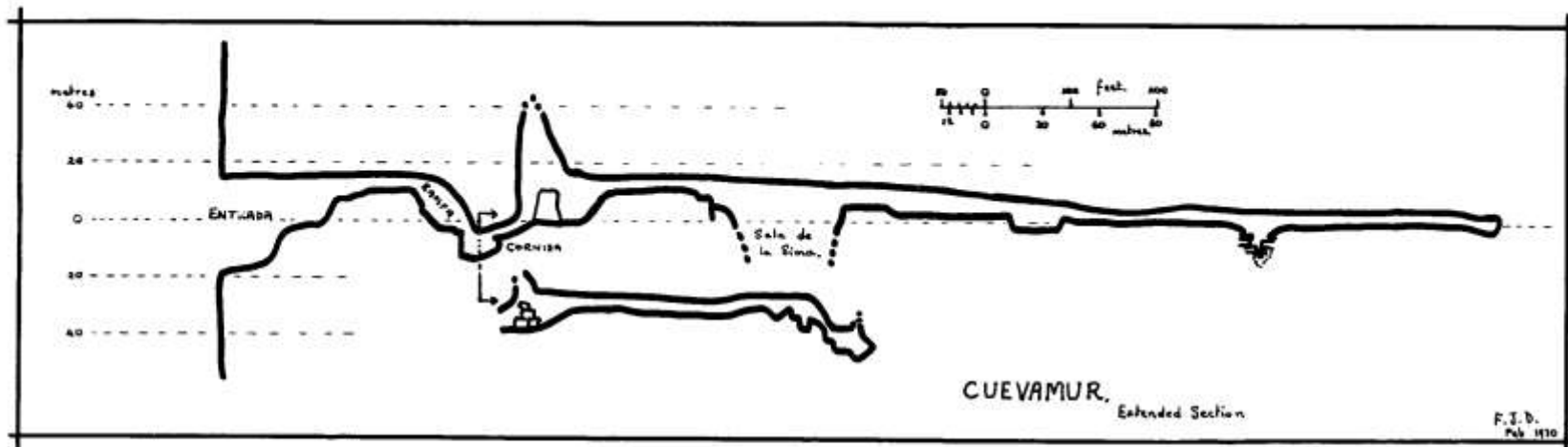
The survey was made by leap-frogging readings with a tripod-mounted prismatic compass and Abney Level. Distances were taken by Fibron Tape to the nearest foot. The traverse across the Sima was impossible - so candles were left on the far side and an attempt made to triangulate to them from the near side. Though direction can be relied on in our results for the Sima the triangle had an apex angle of less than 10 degrees - so distances should be treated with caution.

Geological interpretation of the survey must be left to experts but some points of interest emerge for the cave digger:

1. At the very end a strong draught blows from a small hole at the base of a stal flow - in the sort of space suitable for picks, shovels and wheelbarrows!
2. The proximity of the end of Long Passage, again blocked by stal, to the major Entrada Inaccessible. They are only 50m apart horizontally and probably at the same level.

With regards to names in the cave, most of these were gleaned from "Cuevas de Cuevamur y del Miron O Frances", a well-printed booklet giving descriptions of the two caves and published by Asociacion Espeleologica Ramaliega. The description spoke of Long Passage doubling back towards Salla Blanca and so clearly a survey of Cuevamur had not been undertaken. We have coined some names ourselves and we are grateful for help from Mr. John Bishton of Kings School Bruton for help with Spanish names.

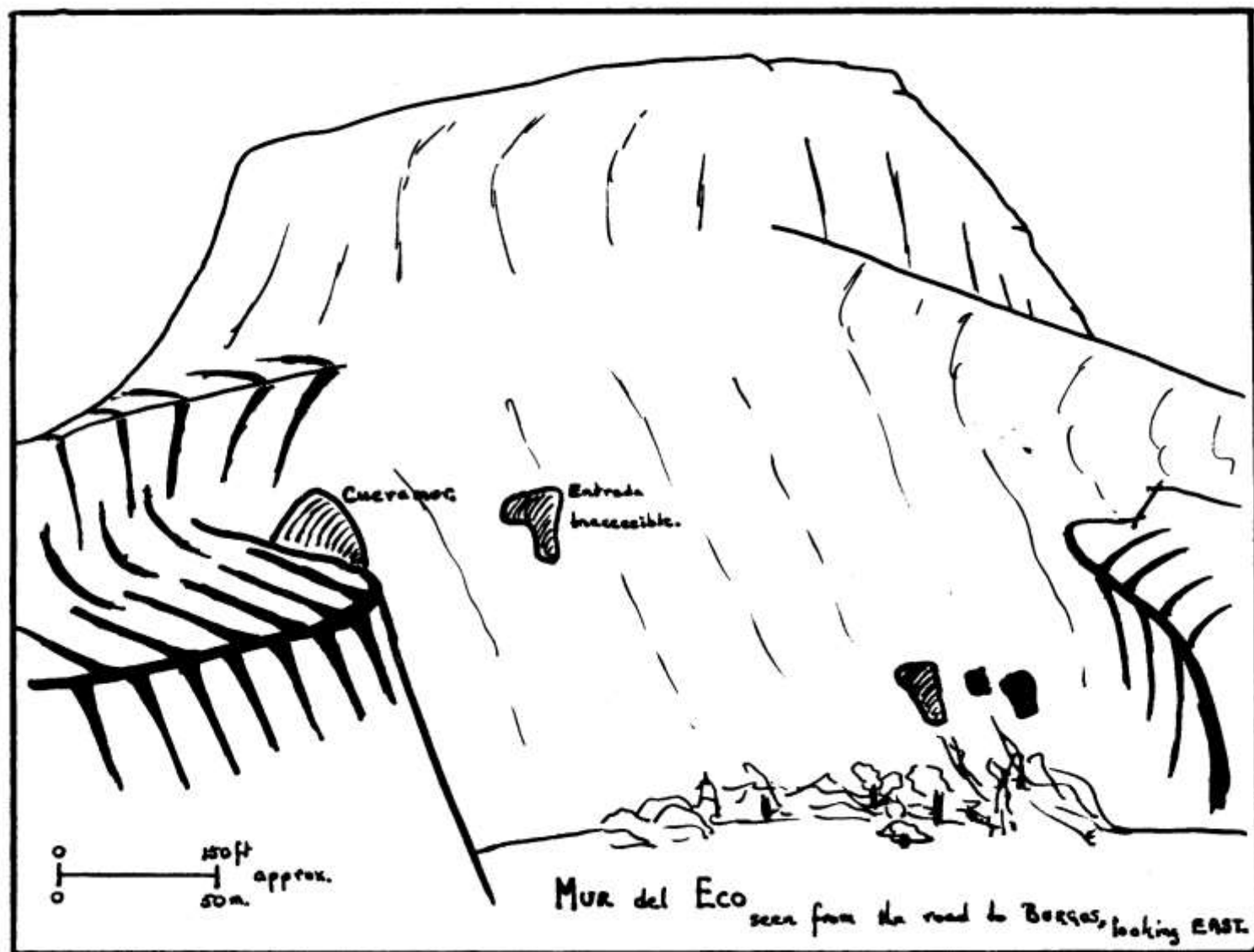
The rest of our time in Spain we spent camping at La Peguera, several kilometres north in the Valley of the Rio Cares. We walked in the mountains and were joined by Jim Hanwell for a few days. One day was spent in the company of a wizened 'Montenero', the day beginning with mutual doubts, but ending with respect for each other's mountain walking ability. He had only sawn-off wellingtons! Caving potential in this area consists of an open swallet at an altitude of 1800m, and a resurgence, bigger than Wookey at about 500m. We hope to get permission to cave in these regions next time.



Notes on the Survey and Sketch

The compass was uncalibrated and so all survey computations were made in terms of Magnetic North. Admiralty Navigation manuals give the declination at Bilboa in 1969 as 7 degrees west and this is assumed when drawing the north sign on the survey. It is of no greater error than involved in the measurements. (The value is 9.5 degrees west at Cape Finistere. Ramales is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ degree west of Bilboa, while Cape Finistere is 6 degrees west - so the more exact value for the cave is 7 degrees, 12.5 minutes).

The sketch of the Mur del Eco, as seen from the Burgos road, was prepared from a set of 6 photos taken by Dave Causer. The scale is approximate and is based on triangulation from a base line adjacent to the photographic site. It attempts to make clear the relations between the vast central face and the "wings" which slope gently up to it at the north and south ends. This face is convex and overhangs its base by about 15m - this being utilised as storage protection by local farmers! Though CuevaMur is accessible by traverse the Entrada Inaccessible will require 120m of ladder from the top - one might be hanging well clear of the face at this level! From the bottom it would require several hundred expansion bolts to climb the 100m from the bottom. There are small caves in the trees shown at the base of the Mur del Eco. The entrances shown about 30m up from the valley floor near the southern end could probably be reached by a determined climbing party as the tree-filled cracks run diagonally towards them.



IN AND AROUND THE PIERRE AND GALERIE WESSEX

(Including the Gallerie Wessex!)

by Nick Reckert

During an appointment as 'Assistant d'Anglais' in Rouen for six months this year I managed to gain some experience of French caving and cavers. The immediate lesson I learned was that 'Necessity is the Mother of Invention', as regards techniques and equipment for some of the gigantic French caves. Quite recently I read an article in the Journal which described cavers who had descended the 25-odd metres into Lamb Leer main chamber as the 'Suicide Sect'. I would have agreed with this, but having now descended pitches of up to 120m on a 'Dressier Abseiler' I can say that, in my opinion, this is the safest, fastest and least tiring method of descending big pitches. Likewise I cannot now remember when I last climbed a pitch life-lined from the top; I now use the brake-block system of self-life-lining (see 'Descent' No.10). I see no real reason why these techniques shouldn't become current in Britain, or at least in some of the big Yorkshire pots.

For the first part of my stay in Rouen I did little caving because of the 500km. journey to the best areas. When I finally got started I was really flung in at the DEEP end - my first big trip being the world's deepest cave (1152m), the Pierre St. Martin. With the Speleo-Club de Rouen I spent three days camping in the Arphidia branch of the Pierre. With us were a Frenchman, Ruben Gomez, who had acted as guide to the Eldon's 1969 expedition, and a Spaniard, Felix de Arcaute, the discoverer of the world's largest chamber in the Torca del Carlista.

I was somewhat overawed at first, not only by the size of the cave (the terminal chamber, the Salle de la Verna, could contain the entire Eastwater system 6 times!) but also the renown of the cavers. However, the cavers proved only human and the cave, although so huge, very like the others. This expedition resulted in the discovery of 800 metres of new passage and was my first introduction to Pyrenean caving.

Every August the Association des Recherches Speleologiques Internationales de la P.S.M. (ARSIP) organises a camp near the new upper entrance of the system Gouffre de la Tete Sauvage, which descends 410m in a series of pitches to the river. This chasm is set in the Arres d'Anie, a vast region of Lapiaz, literally riddled with holes; a real caver's paradise. On the 5th of August I set off into the Tete Sauvage in the company of five French cavers. We were held up for three hours at the top of the final 100m pitch while a small party of Spanish cavers who were life-lining each other down the ladders (another blow for the abseiler!). At one in the morning we reached our bivouac and climbed gratefully into our sleeping bags. Incidentally, if the Eldon member who left a

pornographic novel at the Camp des Anciens should chance to read this article and should want it back he can contact me via the Wessex, but not before I've finished reading it!

The next couple of days were spent in fruitless exploration of the Reseau du Bassaburuko Lezentzat and in vain attempts to sleep (three of our air mattresses had burst mysteriously on arrival, which meant that we had to sleep two to a mattress!). We emerged at 6 pm. on the 8th. and arrived at the surface camp after a hectic half-hour of hide-and-seek in the fog with the representative of the local news rag ('Any body killed?', 'Any records broken?', 'No accidents?'). After a brief and somewhat bucolic rest period we set-to, prospecting the lapiaz. Our main find was 'M.3', a pot which opens directly over the highest known point in the Pierre's streamway. So far we have descended over a kilometre of pitches in this pot (not in one go!) and have at times been within 30 metres of the Pierre, but we still haven't broken through. When the connection is found it will add about 75m to the depth of the system. The looseness of the pot is somewhat perturbing - to clean one pitch we had to knock over a ton of rubble into it!

Next on the programme was a photographic trip from the Tete Sauvage to the Salle de la Verna. This is a through-trip which descends 850m in a horizontal distance of 7km. Unfortunately one of the Italian photographers was ill, so we took twice as long as necessary. In the canals I shared a dinghy with another Italian, our only common language was Spanish and neither of us very fluent at that - so the confusion can be imagined. We capsized with magnificent frequency and grace. Since the water was at 1.5 C. I was glad to find the sun shining when we got outside.

The last major incident of my stay, and by far the most important, was the discovery of a new river parallel to the Pierre. One very hot afternoon a few of us were wandering around the Plateau de Maillardoun, lazily poking into all the holes we could find. We came across a small pot and tossed some pebbles into it. To our surprise they kept echoing for about 15 seconds. When some ladders had been let down I climbed in to have a look but after 13m found a very tight descending rift. None of us felt energetic enough to try and force it. However, we decided to return to this 'G.L. 4' as a French hydrogeologist, M.Ravier, had predicted that there was an underground river in the area. The name he had applied to it was 'Riviere Arrigoyena' - River of the Black Ravine.

A couple of days later four members of the Speleo-Club de la Tronche arrived. This is probably the hottest caving club in France; its members regularly bottom the Gouffre Berger (1122m) at the weekend and think nothing of it. As they were invited by the Rouen club, of which I became a member, I took it upon myself to show them the best area for prospecting. One of them, Jean-Claude Dobrillat, promptly did two solo trips (abseiling down and prussicking up) in G.L.4, descending the second time to a depth of 280m where he found a small stream. Another brief trip, this time 'en masse' and the

River Arrigoyena was found. A couple of days were spent fending off the Press, T.V. and Radio Luxembourg, after which we were able to set off for a serious three-day camp. Among other things we were able to make a film for French T.V.

The pot (named the Gouffre Lonne-Peyre after the mayor of the nearby village of Arette) descends about 320m to the river; the first pitch measures 125m. The cave is much like to Pierre; downstream are cascades, fossil galleries and massive chambers. We spent two days exploring, surveying and filming in this part of the cave and were only stopped, at a depth of 600m, by a punctured dinghy. The upstream part of the cave, the Galerie Wessex, takes the form of a wide canal and was only explored until the water became too deep for wading. On the fourth day we reached the surface, leaving behind more than enough work for next year.

The depth of the system is about 1,200m and it is reasonable to suppose that at least 1,000m will be humanly accessible, making this at least the 3rd. deepest cave in the world. The flow of the river was estimated at 1,500 - 2,000 litres/second, about 2/3 of the Pierre, with which it shares a resurgence. The ARSIP, which coordinates work in the area, has invited me to return next year with a small team from Wessex,, The Pierre, M3 and Arrigoyena will be on the agenda - and we may find the Riviere Saint-George which will dwarf the Pierre. Above all it will certainly be a rest from digging!

Hon. Secretary's Report to the Wessex Cave Club, September 1970.

We are now approaching the end of a three-year cycle which seems to have become associated with a change of leadership of the Club. A change of Secretary every so often brings new ideas forward, and although we shall try to ensure some element of continuity there are going to be several changes in the Committee membership. Perhaps, looking back over the year, we have not made any very fundamental decisions; it has been a year of consolidation rather than advance on all fronts. I think this has engendered a feeling of frustration among some people in the Club: they have detected an air of stagnation and perhaps a sense of anti-climax following the opening, if not the completion, of the new Headquarters.

Much of the work has been done by but a small proportion of the Membership. Willie Stanton's 'Pioneer Under Mendip', the biography of H. E. Balch, was published early in the Club year in recognition of the 100th anniversary of Balch's birth. It formed part of the Club's Occasional Publication scheme. Recently Willie Stanton and Nick Barrington have published 'The Complete Caves of Mendip'. The Headquarters was completed by The Few and we now live there, are part of the local community, pay rates, and sometimes get the dustbins emptied! A great deal of the comfort of Upper Pitts is due to Les Teasdale, who worked out for us a very sophisticated oil-fired central-heating system and, after supervising its installation, he has advised us on the running. Hot water and showers are very acceptable in a caving HQ. Much of the constructional work and the electrical wiring were done by Phil Davies and Alan Surrall. It was in recognition of this that the Club voted them Honorary Membership at the last Annual General Meeting. Work has continued there since, again by comparatively few people. Especially active there have been Carl Pickstone and Mike Dewdney-York, but others - the Trenchards, Wally Willcocks, Glyn Bolt and Ian Jepson have done much more than their fair share; there has been little help from the general Membership.

Much remains to be done. As part of the Mendip scene the site must be tidied and landscaped. John Alder has repaired the Club Fly-Mo; now equipped with razor sharp blades it is a truly lethal implement. The dry stone wall needs repair and the grass needs levelling, rolling and seeding as a background to the shrubs the Trenchards have offered to plant. The oil tank has to be moved as it is an unacceptable fire risk where it is. It also needs wire brushing and repainting. The ceilings of the kitchen and changing rooms need painting and the more difficult job of the Common Room also has to be done - scaffolding will obviously be required. Added to this is the continual work of general maintenance, for with heavy use any building needs regular attention. Ian Jepson carried out a stock and job check recently and concluded that we need a few more items inside. A minimum of a dozen mattresses, thirty pillows and fifteen blankets are needed and, in the kitchen, heavy iron or aluminium frying-pans and saucepans.

The Club Membership has increased quite dramatically by some 5% to 327 during the year. Set against the static or slowly falling membership over the last three or four years this may well be a vindication of the decision to build the new headquarters. The new building has encouraged more visitors to stay, made a policy by Mike York as hut warden. Many of these visitors have joined as full members. Several others have come from affiliated clubs, also justifying the hospitality. The loss of members through non-payment of subscription and resignation has been less than in previous years, perhaps because the sub. has not been increased recently and

members have felt that the Club gives good value, even if their only contact is via the literature. The membership trend is to be encouraged. It has always been the tradition of Wessex that older members are encouraged to stay on when they become too arthritic to cave. For one thing, their subscriptions subsidise the more active members.

The Committee has worked in reasonable harmony this year, and it has been noticeable that decisions reached after considerable discussion have been put into effect by all members, a true cabinet attitude! Jim Hanwell has chaired all the meetings and has not found this year's Committee as easy as its predecessors. There has been a wider range of opinion - resulting in longer and more difficult meetings. However, one had the feeling that more grass roots opinion reached the administrators than before. It would be valuable if the general membership agrees with this conclusion. The Committee has met six times and there remains one 'fixture'. Meetings have been well attended and no member has missed more than two. The Chairman and Secretary have attended each meeting and the Treasurer all but one. The principle of delegation has been continued. The routine work of dispensing keys and application forms, together with much other documentation, has been done by Roy Staynings. Tony Dingle has, by acting as Assistant Treasurer, gathered in the subscriptions while Tim Reynolds has kept overall control of Club finances. Affiliated clubs were looked after by Roy Staynings who also typed our Minutes. Jenny Murrell has represented the lady members' interests and also handled Club trips. Mike Dewdney-York has been Hut Warden with the assistance of Ian Jepson. Journal distribution has been arranged by Pete Cousins, with the help of Brenda Willis. Technical projects have been in the care of Hugh Pearson, whose wife helped by typing some of our Minutes. Sales and services have been handled by Ian Jepson, except for surveys which have been distributed by Tony Philpott and Phil Davies. Three of the Committee meetings have been held at Pinkacre and three at Upper Pitts. Several members do not intend to stand for next year's Committee. Brenda Willis does not wish to, and it is unlikely that Pete Cousins will. Tim Reynolds will not be taking on the Treasurer's job this year. The Club wholeheartedly thanks these people for their time and energy spent on Club affairs.

The Club has continued to provide services to members. In previous years this has been very much with an eye to profits, with necessity! With the completion of most of the headquarters we have begun to think less of this aspect. Sources of easy money, such as the scrap metal collection, have been tapped as before but we have endeavoured to provide members with facilities not otherwise available. A new development has been the entry of the Club into the publishing business. The Balch biography and the water tracing papers have been examples and more are on the way. Spare parts for Edison and NiFe cells, electrolyte and cave surveys are on sale. Boiler suits should be ready by the A.G.M. Discounts have been arranged at Bryants and Sub Aqua Ltd., even though some members have had trouble negotiating these. The Cousins Wonderboot, with its vibram soles and uncrushable toes is now almost standard on Mendip. Other possibilities should be considered: climbing ropes and iron-mongery could be obtained and there are several schemes for cheap Kodachrome film if an enthusiast could be found to run these.

The Occasional Publication scheme is progressing. The principle behind it is that the Club loans money for the publication which is repaid on its completion, the profits being used to float the next volume. Eventually the scheme will be self-supporting but this depends on having first-rate

material and the support of the whole membership. At present the Balch biography, having completely sold out, is being reprinted. Members have received these publications at very favourable discounts. The next publication, entitled 'The Great Storms and Floods of July 1968 on Mendip' - by Jim Hanwell and Malcolm Newson, will be ready for sale at the A.G.M. (price 12/-, or 60 n.p.). This is a comprehensive account of the effects of the floods above and below ground, the meteorological situation which caused the havoc and an attempt to inform cavers on the dangers and signs of flooding. If members will complete the form in this volume of the Journal this will greatly help administration of the project - we aim to sell 200 copies as soon as possible. It is interesting to note that we have produced enough material to overwhelm the printer, Ron Foord, who has done magnificent work on the Journal and previous 'Occ. Pubs,' and we have had to go to the Oakhill Press. Since this firm did a fine job on 'The Complete Caves of Mendip', it is likely that the Flood publication will be equally good. The Club will shortly have to think seriously about metrication in its publications - A5 size paper is proving £50 cheaper at the Oakhill Press than any traditional size used to date! The A.G.M. will have to discuss this as Volume 12 of the Journal must go metric. Another local publication is on the way - Dave Drew and Dingle Smith are preparing a volume on Mendip in the C.R.G. regional series.

Although Club trips have not done very well this year, there has been a lot of private activity within the Club. Mike York, fresh from his dig at Eastwater, has been digging regularly in Sludge Pit sump, a very promising site. The N.A.S.A. dig at North Hill continues, still looking as hopeful as it did last year, but rather longer. Willie Stanton has had some successes, one of which was Lionel's Hole in Burrington - snatched from under Trat's very eyes. Fred Davies has been prospecting recently in Cowsh Aven and Bladder Pot. Wessex has been well represented by Tim Reynolds and James Cobbett in the Wookey 20 discoveries and Bob Lewis has been maypoling in the second chamber. John Cornwell was digging at Rhino Rift but access has been difficult recently. A trip to Yorkshire was arranged at Easter - not an official trip and very wet, Fred Davies having to don neoprene to get to his tent! Chris Hawkes has continued, in association with Prof. Tratman, the Westbury Quarry archaeological dig which now shows itself to be of national importance. Roy Staynings has run several practice rescues and Jenny Murrell has organised ladder practice in Bristol. The most ambitious enterprises have been Carl Pickstone's expedition to Mexico and Tim Reynold's trip to the States. On the caving fringe Dave Tombs and Hugh Pearson have built a new entrance, with door, to Swildon's Hole at the request of Mr. Main. Work is soon going to start on a dig straight into the Bone Chamber of Stoke Lane: if we don't do this the quarry will! Hobbs Quarries own the field under which the big chambers lie. They have been prevented from destroying the cave and obviously they want to recover some of their lost capital. It is felt that if cavers do the actual work the continuation of exploration will be permitted and the commercial section would be a useful exit in times of rescue.

The Journal is now halfway through Volume 11. Volume 10 finished with last December's issue and was the largest in the Club's history. A good start has been made on Volume 11, under the new Editorship of Malcolm Newson. He has put his stamp on the publication quite quickly and illustration is improving. The Journal is a vital part of the Club and, as mentioned above, is the only bridge across the gaps in our large membership far-flung across Britain (and the world!). Malcolm has made a good start with articles of high quality, though this is not by way of discouragement for the less experienced writers. He will be pleased to suggest ways of

improving presentation and will draw and letter diagrams for the authors if they wish. The Wessex has always published accounts of caving trips and more of these should be sent in. There is more than enough room for the simple accounts amongst all the erudition. The Journal distribution is wide, including the Bristol Central Reference Library and the Somerset County Archives. Someone will shortly be needed to replace Brenda Willis in Journal distribution. We wish Malcolm every success in his Editorship. It is a job which will influence the progress of the Club greatly, one of considerable creativity and one of considerable responsibility and satisfaction.

The Library has been in the care of Christopher Hawkes and, pending the completion of the Library at Upper Pitts, has been kept in Bristol. Library meets have been held regularly and we exchange with many other caving bodies, in U.K. and abroad. The money to equip the Library at Upper Pitts has not been available but it seems likely that it will be forthcoming in the near future. The Committee felt that the job should not be done until it could be done properly. £50 at least will be required to do this. Members are reminded that donations of books for the Library are always welcome. New books are appearing faster than the Club can afford to buy them. Recently Mike York and others have been investigating the possibility of the Club acting as agents for the sale of books, a system which can be made to result in free books for the Library! Ideas for the future include a complete 2½ Inch map cover for Mendip, geology maps and an expansion of the Club photographic collection. Since most people now take colour slides the Club's albums have suffered. However, it is possible to get quite reasonable prints done from slides and Tony Philpott would be happy to receive more of these, especially showing Club personalities.

The Club has maintained good relationships with its neighbours. This has previously been unofficial but the formation of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs has put it on a more stable basis. Jim Hanwell has chaired the Council during the year and has been concerned with the formation of the National Caving Association. The inauguration of this was delayed by differences of opinion over the voting procedures. We felt that it was very important to get this right from the very beginning and although not entirely happy with the outcome the compromise has meant that the N.C.A. is likely to be formed later this year. We owe our thanks to Oliver Lloyd and Bob Lewis for their help in the discussions. One of the subjects now under discussion is the practicability of national or local bodies owning caves to preserve access facilities, and the formation of limited companies to run such schemes.

The Club has continued to support the Mendip Rescue Organisation. We have offered a site for construction of a permanent rescue building near Upper Pitts in what is a convenient central site. In common with all other Mendip clubs we have provided manpower for rescues and have donated a large tent.

The Club has provided caving tackle which has been under the jurisdiction of Carl Pickstone and is kept at Upper Pitts. Some has been kept out for general use while the remainder has been locked up for spare or special use. Carl has been away and has not been able to provide a tackle report at the time of writing - for the very worthy reason that he has been caving! Some of the tackle is being rebuilt.

It is instructive to try to evaluate the directions in which the Club will develop and to try anticipating the problems which the next Committee will encounter. In the immediate future subscriptions will have to be reviewed but at the moment the Committee is not recommending any change but that of one to decimal currency. With the increasing rise in prices, postage and our narrow margin of income over expenditure it is evident that the Club will run into deficit soon if more income is not raised via the subscription. We have to choose between pegging subs, and limiting facilities, or raising them and doing more. During my time in the Club it has always been best and shown most vitality when it is thinking big. One senses that, as Howard Kenney said at the last Meeting, the Club needs a new objective, some problem worthy of solution - over and above the provision of headquarters. Jim Hanwell has said the need is for more cave. How do we set about finding this? Although persistence will continue to yield extensions to known caves, and some sinks will no doubt be forced, there remains the problem of finding big passages. Wookey 20 goes within a few feet of the surface and nobody knew of its whereabouts until it was discovered from 'the inside'. Should the Club be thinking of more efficient ways of locating caves? We spent over £2,000 on a headquarters. Should we therefore be raising a similar sum to buy a gravimeter? Should we be buying a drilling rig and have our own compressor? Could we hire aircraft and make a complete aerial survey of Mendip? Perhaps the purchase of a coach would encourage expeditions like the one to Balinka Pit! Our relationships with official bodies may need cultivation. Our lines of communication with County Hall, Taunton have been found to be most tenuous and those with local landowners need constant attention. Mendip is likely to become an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. How will this affect caving? While it may help us prevent destruction of known caves may it not make surface digging more difficult? The Karst Hydrology Research Project has shown the way to cooperation with such bodies as Bristol Waterworks and one feels sure that a satisfactory relationship with other authorities will be achieved.

So another Committee will take over. We wish every success to the Club in 1970-71. It seems likely that the new Committee will be rather more left wing than the one it replaces. It also looks as though there will be an election this year, the first time for about eight years. Altogether the outlook for the Club seems encouraging.

Donald Thomson
Pinkacre,
Leigh-on-Mendip.

Wessex Cave Club

Report of the Hon. Treasurer for the year to 31st August 1970

The accounts for the current year show a final surplus of income over expenditure of £191 as against £299 for last year. The main reasons for the decrease were as follows:-

Surplus on running club huts. A decrease of £70. This is caused by the lower 'profitability' of Upper Pitts as against Hillgrove. But, as I mentioned in my report last year, all that was hoped for from Upper Pitts in its first few years was that it should break even or make a slight surplus. So, the surplus of £50 (see note 1 for details) in the first full year of operation is very pleasing, especially as one of the main money spinners - the showers - was not in operation until the last three months. From the figures as shown in these accounts no increase in the hut fees appears to be necessary, although some adjustment will be required in view of decimalisation (probably changing members fees to a flat 2/- a night as against 2/6 the first night and 1/6 each succeeding night as at present). So, the new H.Q. is fully launched and paying its way.

Surplus on goods supplied to members. A decrease of £129. This was caused by the quite simple fact that we did not have any Nife or Edison cells to sell in the year. These are always good money spinners, the rest of the goods sold being in the nature of a service to members. So, if anyone knows of any Nife or Edison cells being sold off by the N.C.B., get in touch with someone on the Committee.

Against these decreases in surpluses must be set the following increases:-

Profit on sale of Occasional Publications, an increase of £22. This results mainly from the Balch publication which is nearly sold out. Note 5 gives details of how Occasional Publications sales have gone to date.

Surplus of subscription income against Club expenses, an increase of £69. The two main causes of this increase were higher subscription income due to more members and more donations received in the year whilst expenditure remained very nearly static. Lets hope that this trend continues.

Overall the Club's financial position is healthy and there is a reasonable sum of cash in hand, in spite of having paid for Upper Pitts. As will be seen from the Balance Sheet the final instalment of the grant has now been received and all final liabilities relating to the building have now been paid off. The transfer to the Hut Fund this year has been based on the estimated amount of expenditure required to finish off the library/quiet room. This is estimated to be in the region of £50 and as will be seen there is this amount of cash available as Hut Fund investments.

The survey scheme has had another successful year and a considerable sum has now built up in the scheme. The only trouble is - what to do with it?! It might be worth considering amalgamating the survey scheme with the profits made to date on Occasional Publications sales to provide a larger fund of cash for floating either new publications or new surveys.

Members will no doubt notice the item under current liabilities '1969 Dinner surplus carried forward'. After last year's Dinner the Committee were so dissatisfied with the service and meal provided by the Caveman Restaurant that a refund was obtained. This refund has been carried forward and put towards this year's dinner, so reducing the cost to members. Let's hope we get a good dinner this year!

Finally, this year has been my last year as Treasurer, and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Club for putting up with me as Treasurer, and I hope members will give the new Treasurer the help which they have given me.

Notes on the accounts for the year to 51st August 1970

| <u>1. Surplus on running Club Huts</u> | Upper Pitts for coming year | | | Hillgrove, Eastwater and Upper Pitts for eleven months to 31/8/69 | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|
| Fees received | £256 | 0 | 11 | £225 | 0 | 0 |
| Less: Expenses:- | | | | | | |
| Rent | | - | | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Rates | 26 | 18 | 6 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Insurance | 48 | 18 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Electricity | 4 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Calor or Propane gas | 11 | 10 | 8 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| Coke | | - | | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Central heating costs | 80 | 19 | 10 | | - | |
| Miscellaneous repairs and cleaning materials | 33 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 0 | 0 |
| | 206 | 5 | 10 | 105 | 0 | 0 |
| Surplus for the year | £49 | 15 | 1 | £120 | 0 | 0 |

Wessex Cave Club
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31st August 1970

| Eleven months to 31/8/69 | | Eleven months to 31/8/69 | | Eleven months to 31/8/69 | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------|--|-------------|
| £ 7 | Tackle expenditure | £ - | £ 360 | Subscriptions for the Club year (see note 3) | £ 400 12 0 |
| 2 | Club dig and Georesistivity project expenses | 2 0 0 | 31 | Affiliation fees | 15 15 0 |
| 289 | Journal | 274 15 11 | 7 | Entrance fees | 11 0 0 |
| 5 | Library expenses | 1 10 0 | 11 | Donations | 53 8 5 |
| 33 | Insurances - Third party | £ 31 10 0 | 1 | Tackle fees | - |
| 1 | - Duplicator | - | - | Use of duplicator | 1 13 0 |
| | | 31 10 0 | 1 | Publication sales - Volume 1 reprint | £ 1 17 6 |
| 26 | Stationery, postages and telephone | 30 7 6 | 1 | - Volume 8 supplement | 1 5 0 |
| 7 | Meetings expenses | 2 8 2 | 15 | - Journals | 16 10 11 |
| 4 | Bank charges and cheque books | 4 10 3 | | | 19 13 5 |
| 2 | Lamb Leer expenses | 1 11 6 | - | Profit on dinner and parties | - |
| 3 | Subscriptions - Cave Research Group | 3 0 0 | 7 | Charterhouse Caving Committee permits | 4 16 0 |
| | - Council of Southern | | - | Sundry receipts | 19 0 |
| 2 | Caving Clubs | - | | | |
| 1 | - Cambrian Caving | | | | |
| | Conference | - | | | |
| | | 3 0 0 | | | |
| 9 | Charterhouse Caving Committee - share of expenses | - | | | |
| 6 | Loss on annual dinner and parties | 13 10 0 | | | |
| 9 | Replacement of G. B. locks | - | | | |
| 10 | Thefts from Hillgrove | - | | | |
| - | Club hand book | 28 4 8 | | | |
| - | Materials for Swildons blockhouse | 7 1 11 | | | |
| | | 400 9 11 | | | |
| 396 | | | | | |
| 38 | Surplus carried down | 107 6 11 | | | |
| £ 434 | | £ 507 16 10 | £ 434 | | £ 507 16 10 |
| - | Deficit on goods supplied to members (as note 2) | 4 15 9 | 38 | Surplus brought down | 107 6 11 |
| | | | 120 | Surplus on running Club huts (as note 1) | 49 15 1 |
| 299 | Excess of income over expenditure carried to | | 124 | Net surplus on goods supplied to members | - |
| | Accumulated Funds | 191 5 7 | 17 | Profit on sale of Occasional Publications | 38 19 4 |
| £ 299 | | £ 196 1 4 | £ 299 | | £ 196 1 4 |

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| | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| £2,217 | <u>Hut Fund</u> As at 1st September 1969 | £2,692 0 11 | |
| | Add: Proposed transfer from | | £ 483 |
| 260 | Accumulated Funds for 1970 | 100 0 0 | 3,966 |
| 116 | Period subscriptions received in year | - | 4,449 |
| 57 | Donations | - | 1,918 |
| 24 | Interest on investments | - | 2,531 |
| 70 | Proceeds from disposals of club huts | 3 0 0 | |
| | Profit from jumble sale | 15 12 6 | 169 |
| <u>2,744</u> | | <u>2,810 13 5</u> | |
| 52 | Less: Period subscriptions relating to Current year | 52 15 0 | |
| <u>2,692</u> | | | £2,757 18 5 |
| | <u>Survey Fund</u> As at 1st September 1969 | 45 14 4 | |
| 46 | Add: Profit on sale of surveys in year | 10 7 1 | |
| | | | 56 1 5 |
| | <u>Accumulated Funds</u> As at 1st September 1969 | 316 6 2 | 111 |
| | Add: Surplus for the year | 191 5 7 | |
| | | <u>507 11 9</u> | 531 |
| | Less: Proposed transfer to Hut Fund to be approved by 1970 A. G. M. | 100 0 0 | 12 |
| 316 | | | 179 |
| | <u>Current Liabilities</u> Short term loan (unsecured) | - | |
| 300 | Subscriptions in advance | 65 5 0 | |
| 72 | Mossdale Memorial Fund | 14 6 0 | |
| 14 | Sundry creditors | 27 5 3 | |
| 139 | 1969 Dinner surplus carried forward | 32 19 3 | |
| | | | 139 15 6 |
| <u>£3,579</u> | | | <u>£3,361 7 1</u> |
| | | | £3,579 |

| | | | |
|--|--------|-------|-------------|
| Freehold land and buildings - Eastwater | | | |
| Cost to 1st September 1969 | £4,449 | 4 | 8 |
| Add: Expenditure during year | | 176 | 12 7 |
| | 4,625 | 17 | 3 |
| Less: Grant received | | 1,918 | 0 0 |
| | | | £2,707 17 3 |
| <u>Hut Fund Investments</u> | | | |
| Balance at bank and cash in hand | | | 50 1 2 |
| | | | 2,757 18 5 |
| <u>Survey Scheme</u> | | | |
| Stock of surveys at cost | 22 | 13 | 0 |
| Balance at bank and cash in hand | 33 | 8 | 5 |
| | | | 56 1 5 |
| <u>Current assets</u> | | | |
| Sundry stocks (see note 6) | 129 | 12 | 2 |
| Balance of grant due but not yet claimed | | - | |
| Debtors and payments in advance | 28 | 16 | 6 |
| Balance at bank and cash in hand | 388 | 18 | 7 |
| | | | 547 7 3 |

These accounts are subject to audit.

| <u>2. Deficiency on goods supplied to members</u> | Year to 31/8/70 | | | Eleven months to 31/8/69 | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|----|-----------------------------|---|----|
| Carbide | £2 | 1 | 11 | £2 | 0 | 0 |
| Electrolyte | 1 | 13 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Blazer Badges | | (13 | 3) | | - | |
| Club Ties | (1 | 8 | 0) | | - | |
| Carbide lamp spares | 1 | 7 | 4 | | - | |
| Nife and Edison lamp spares | (3 | 12 | 3) | (5 | 0 | 0) |
| Nife and Edison sets | (4 | 5 | 0) | (123 | 0 | 0) |
| Deficiency for the year | (4 | 15 | 9) | £124 | 0 | 0 |

(Note: The figures in brackets represent a deficiency, those without brackets a surplus).

3. Included in the amount of £400 - 12 - 0d for subscriptions for the club year is the amount of £52 - 15 - 0d which represents the proportion, of the period subscriptions received in previous years which relate to the current year. This amount has been debited to the Hut Fund.

4. The total figures of cash in hand and at bank appearing on the Balance Sheet are:- £472 - 8 - 2d. This is made up as follows: -

| | | | |
|--|------|----|---|
| Midland Bank, Solihull - current account | £369 | 10 | 2 |
| The Fidelity Bank, Philadelphia, U.S.A. | 49 | 2 | 0 |
| Cash in hand with publication sales officer (A.J. Philpott). | 53 | 16 | 0 |
| | £472 | 8 | 2 |

5. Included in the Accumulated Funds are profits from the sales of Occasional Publications as follows:-

| | Total | | | Series 1, No.1. Balch Biography | | | Series 2 No.1. | | | Series 2 No.2. | | |
|------------------------------|-------|----|----|---------------------------------------|----|---|-------------------|----|---|-------------------|----|----|
| Cash received:- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year to 30/9/68 | 57 | 5 | 0 | - | | | 57 | 5 | 0 | - | | |
| Eleven months to 31/8/69 | 51 | 10 | 0 | | | | 11 | 15 | 0 | 39 | 15 | 0 |
| Year to 31/8/70 | 307 | 9 | 0 | 290 | 18 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| | £416 | 4 | 0 | 290 | 18 | 0 | 74 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 6 | 0 |
| Less: Production costs | 395 | 17 | 2 | 279 | 4 | 8 | 55 | 18 | 3 | 60 | 14 | 3 |
| Cash 'in hand' at 31/8/70 | 20 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 13 | 4 | 18 | 1 | 9 | (9 | 8 | 3) |
| Add: Stocks at 31/8/70 | 46 | 9 | 0 | 18 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 24 | 17 | 0 |
| Accumulated profits | £66 | 15 | 10 | £30 | 2 | 4 | £21 | 4 | 9 | £15 | 8 | 9 |

It is intended that this sum and also profits from any future sales should be used to finance future Occasional Publications.

6. The figure of sundry stocks appearing in the Balance Sheet is made up as follows:-

Goods for resale:-

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----|---|---|
| Carbide | £1 | 10 | 0 | | | |
| Club Badges | 1 | 8 | 6 | | | |
| Carbide lamp spares | 1 | 18 | 4 | | | |
| Nife and Edison lamp spares | 52 | 6 | 4 | | | |
| Occasional Publications | 46 | 9 | 0 | | | |
| Goon suits | <u>3</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>0</u> | | | |
| | | | | 107 | 2 | 2 |

Upper Pitts stocks:-

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Fuel oil | 17 | 10 | 0 | | | |
| Propane gas | <u>5</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | | | |
| | | | | <u>22</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | | | | <u>£129</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>2</u> |

7. The expenditure to date on the Upper Pitts H.Q. has been as follows:-

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Land, fencing, car park and paths | 481 | 10 | 0 | | | |
| Site drainage and septic tank (no grant available) | <u>70</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> | | | |
| | | | | 551 | 19 | 3 |
| Erection of shell | 2,924 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Floors, ceilings, partition walls, internal joinery, paint and plastering | 375 | 0 | 8 | | | |
| Wiring, electrical and gas fittings | 195 | 14 | 5 | | | |
| Plumbing, hot and cold water system and drainage | 181 | 15 | 5 | | | |
| Central heating installation and boiler | 363 | 5 | 8 | | | |
| Fire escape (eligible for grant) | <u>34</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>10</u> | | | |
| | | | | <u>4,073</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | | | | <u>£4625</u> | <u>17</u> | <u>3</u> |

The final instalment of the grant (£531) has been received and there is no further cash to come from the Government.

The Committee has authorised further expenditure of £50 in order to fit out the library. This figure is not included in the accounts

8. At 31st August 1970 the Club owned the following items of equipment; Roneo duplicator, Ladders, ropes and caving equipment, Hut furniture and equipment.

All these items were written off in the Income and Expenditure Account in the year in which they were purchased, and so are not represented on the Balance Sheet.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Priddy Village Hall on Saturday 18th October 1969.

1. The Meeting opened at 3.10 with the President, Mr. F.W. Frost in the Chair. 58 members were present.

2. Apologies for absence were received from: Oliver Lloyd, James Cobbett, Eric Hensler, Bob Woolley, Leslie Teasdale, Bob Lawder, M.W. Dewdney-York, Brian Hansford, Mr. & Mrs. A.D. Oldham, David Bryant, Mrs. Charles Bryant, Denis Warburton, Dick Hales, Judy Banker and Fred Davies.

3. The Secretary apologised for the fact that an omission had been made in the Agenda. The appointment of Officers and Committee had been omitted. Mr. Frost had been nominated for President, proposed by Jim Hanwell and seconded by Donald Thompson, and the existing Vice Presidents were nominated en bloc. The Meeting accepted the inclusion of this item.

4. The President then gave his address:

We are very pleased to welcome you yet again to another Annual General Meeting of the Wessex Cave Club. We have had a most satisfactory year, this being very obvious from the admirable Report of the Hon. Secretary. It should be mentioned that Donald Thomson wrote this report in a vein which we hope will stimulate members to join in the discussions during this meeting.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that your committee is very keen to have members views on all matters affecting the Club's interest. They, the officers and committee, do not, as is often the case with clubs and societies, look on the general membership as a necessary evil between one annual general meeting and the next, but are most anxious to have your views on all Club matters.

One of the reasons for the success of the Club today has been the efforts of individual members on behalf of the Club. Here we would like to show our appreciation of the work on the new H.Q.'s by Philip Davies and Alan Surrall by electing them to Honorary Membership of the Club.

We are very grateful to the Officers and Committee for their work during the year and if it is true that a Club gets the Committee it deserves then we must indeed be a good Club.

I must also mention the outstanding good work the Editor and his assistants have done on the Journal. They are to be congratulated on the results of their labours. (The emphasis being on the word labour).

I know this meeting will wish to express its sympathy to the B.E.C., for the loss by fire of its H.Q.

It is my sad duty to mention the death last November of Wilfred Sharpe, a member from the

early days of the Club. He was not a young man when he joined us, but his sincere and active interest in helping run the Club was most marked. Even when he left the district he continued this interest and this extended right up to the time of his death. Those who met him will always remember his outstanding and charming personality.

Another friend and member of the Club in its early days who died during the year was Bill Tucknott. Although he had left the Club some years ago we still remember his very practical help during his membership.

I have suggested that before we discuss some of the items on the Agenda it may help if particular points could be listed so that these are not overlooked."

He suggested that the Secretary should list points for late discussion.

5. The Minutes of the previous Meeting, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, and signed by the President as Chairman.

6. Matters arising from the previous Meeting:

a) Howard Kenney enquired as to the present position of the Mossdale Memorial Fund. The Secretary reported that a total of £14.6.0. had been collected. Having received no concrete ideas on how to use the money from people in the North he suggested that we might use it to re-equip the M.R.O. box kept at Upper Pitts. Mr. Ashworth suggested it be left in bank as the basis for any future funds raised for the family of anyone else who came to a bad end on Mendip, but the Secretary thought it would be a small sum and would not help much. Luke Devenish suggested using it for storage at his house, but in the end it was decided to leave it to the Committee.

b) Howard Kenney reminded members that the previous meeting had favoured the idea of rewriting Peter Johnson's book "History of Mendip Caving", and that this had now been done in the form of the Occasional Publication on the biography of H.E. Balch, written by William Stanton. He gave a resume of the book and announced that it would be on sale at 8/- to members and 12/- to the general public. With a masterly display of salesmanship he produced a pad for members to sign and a basket for the advance payments and within minutes had sold 53 copies, thus aiding the publication, which would cost £225.

7. Hon. Secretary's Report for 1968/69.

This had been previously circulated in the Journal and was taken as read. The following points were raised:-

a) The Secretary expressed his satisfaction that the Club had decided to offer Philip Davies and Alan Surrall Honorary Membership.

b) The attendance on Club trips was discussed. Although these were almost always badly attended it was felt that they were an essential part of the Club's service to members and should be continued. At times they were well attended. Howard Kenney said he was caving privately

regularly once a fortnight, and members were welcome on his trips. He felt others might like to publicise their trips, perhaps via the notice board at Upper Pitts, or through the Journal.

c) The size of the Club's Committee was reviewed. The general feeling was that it was about right. John Iles thought that the quorum should be fixed by the A.G.M. The President stated that the usual practice was for the Committee to decide about its own quorum at the beginning of the year, knowing the likely availability of its members. There were powers to co-opt. It was relevant at this stage as there were three vacancies on the Committee. Phil Davies considered that the Committee was about the right size and that members could be co-opted as necessary to take advantage of individual talents, Howard Kenney thought it a pity if good members were kept off the Committee because there were too many, and reminded the Committee that the work could be dealt with by sub-committees. The general feeling was that the system had worked well enough for years, and could well go on as at present. Jim Hanwell said that the main officers of the Committee, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, should normally be present, and two thirds of the remaining Committee members.

d) The Gear Curator, Peter Cousins, had been very upset at the loss of some tackle. There were two ways of looking at this, either to accept it and be thankful the tackle was being used, or to lock it up and keep it under strict control. Tim Reynolds felt the loss should be accepted, Mr. Beauchamp thought we should consider exacting a deposit as the loss was becoming excessive. Peter Cousins thought that 120 ft. of missing ladder was probably in somebody's garage, some 20 ft. of maypole was in Swildons IV, some was used as a tripod for digging and more was elsewhere. The President suggested publicising the losses and declaring a tackle amnesty. Peter Cousins stated that 250 ft. of ladder was under construction. It had taken a long time, being extensively tested but should be ready by Christmas, however in response to a question from the President he gave the percentage tackle loss at 15-20% which the President thought was a frightful lot, much worse than in the past. Richard Kenney felt that a system of deposits would not work, and that a greater degree of conscientiousness in booking out tackle was required.

A discussion on marking tethers followed. Peter Cousins stated that George Pointing and Dave Berry had stamped W.C.C. on many of the rungs of all ladders they had made up. Colour codes also indicated ladder lengths and dates of manufacture, and made closer check easier. Colour sleeves on ropes indicated ownership (Wessex being red), others indicate lengths by the number of sleeves, and colour of sleeves are used for dating. Luke Devenish felt the mixture of colours would lead to much confusion. Dunking ladders in coloured paint had been tried by Peter Cousins with very limited success, as it wore off. Hugh Pearson felt that members ought to have their own tethers. Richard Kenney regretted that many people no longer bothered with tethers. Luke Devenish wondered if private tethers might invalidate the Club's insurance. An inconclusive discussion followed this. Christopher Hawkes felt that a bigger, brighter & better more obvious tackle book might help. Luke Devenish thought the theft of tackle was related to the theft of other property.

Luke Devenish also pointed out that some ropes might be borrowed for climbing outside caves, and that nylon was the only suitable one for this. Peter Cousins pointed out that other ropes were used, as these were easier to replace than nylon, and anyway most climbers preferred to keep their own ropes.

e) The Secretary stated that we were spending about two thirds of the subscription income on the Journal, and that this proportion seemed about right. Jim Hanwell said we were coming to the end of Volume 10, and that we would have to change sooner or later on to the metric system. This might mean that if we did not change we might have to pay extra for using other than Post Office preferred envelope sizes. Peter Cousins thought that the extra postal charges would be only £1 per issue, and that there would be a range of sizes, one of which we could use. Quarto paper might be more difficult to come by, and Jim Hanwell felt that a change to continental size A4 might save some £10 p.a. The printer seemed to have plenty of quarto. A4 was difficult to obtain, and British Industry would probably take more than 2 years to change. After discussion it was decided to leave Volume 11 in Quarto size.

f) Christopher Hawkes stated that he was hoping to prepare a list of books which would be kept at Upper Pitts. At present there was no space for the Library. He sought advice about what books should be kept at Upper Pitts. He felt valuable books would disappear. Some losses could be accepted, some, as Jim Hanwell said, like the log of the Wookey Hole Divers, were irreplaceable. A catalogue of books kept elsewhere should be kept there. Peter Cousins suggested bound copies of other Clubs' Journals ought to be kept at the H.Q. Chris Hawkes thought this explained the gaps in the Club's collection.

g) Jim Hanwell was asked to give his views on the formation of the National Caving Association, an ad hoc body established to deal with matters about which all caving bodies were concerned. The British Association of Caving Instructors was discussed. This was a powerful body of career based professionals and they had asked to join the National Caving Association. The B.A.C.I. had grown very powerful since it was formed, and now gave rise to some apprehension. Access was the problem concerning us more than any other and there was a danger that such a body, being professionals, might well become the accepted authority on caving, and therefore the body to whom the Authorities might come to entrust arrangements relating to cave access and possibly even cave ownership. Jim Hanwell had seen the syllabus and felt that most amateurs would be unable to compete. The danger was a link developing between Planning Authorities and the B.A.C.I. Mike Thompson recognised a whole chain of enemies. Howard Kenney felt that the goodwill of the landowners, on whom our present access arrangements depended, was lessening, and we should consider the possibility of owning caves. He felt we might be able to acquire the ownership of cave entrances for about £100. We might even persuade reluctant landowners to allow us to dig by offering to buy any caves we found from them. However, difficulty had been encountered in buying land at Stoke Lane. Eastwater and Swildon's entrances might be bought some day. We could then keep out the Youth Leaders, although we might be outbid, and the idea should not be broadcast too widely. Jim Hanwell was authorised to support the idea of cave purchase at the forthcoming N.C.A. Meeting. Various views were expressed about the professional caver. A distinction was drawn by Jim Hanwell, between the professional academic (a worthy man) and the professional sporting caver, whom we should discourage. Peter Cousins had met caving instructors and had been very unimpressed. People went caving often against their wishes, and he supported the idea of the B.A.C.I. because it would tighten up on this sort of abuse. He also reminded members that they did own some caves, administered on their behalf by the Nature Conservancy. They owned Agen Allwed, and their control of this cave had shown them to be very much on our side. They supported cave conservation and the amateur aspect of caving. Mike Thompson, felt that the ownership of

Swildon's might enable us to negotiate from a position of strength.

The President felt that the discussion had given Jim Hanwell a good idea of the feelings of the Club and he would be able to attend the Meeting of the N.C.A. with these in mind.

h) Howard Kenney doubted the wisdom of not increasing hut fees on moving to Upper Pitts, with its better facilities, and hoped that great consideration had been given. He doubted most of the reasons for the drop in membership. He felt none of the reasons given, due to dissatisfaction, raised subscriptions, or the building of the new H.Q. were relevant. He feared it was due to the formation of other caving clubs on Mendip and felt we ought to consider the possibility of take overs, perhaps if only to avoid being taken over ourselves, assuming we really did want the Club to become even bigger.

i) Howard Kenney asked if we had considered provision of an H.Q. in South Wales. Tim Reynolds felt, and Howard Kenney agreed, that we ought to absorb Upper Pitts before embarking on a South Wales Headquarters and the Meeting agreed with this view. Charles Bryant felt it would be a good thing if we could store some tackle in South Wales.

Mr. Beauchamp proposed a vote of thanks to Secretary and Treasurer for their reports.

8. Hon. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts had been previously circulated.

a) Richard Kenney asked how much it would cost to employ an Auditor. Howard Kenney said it would be more than the Club could afford. Howard Kenney said he found the books very easy to audit, as the Club had a very competent Treasurer.

b) The Treasurer felt that a fund should be established for hut maintenance, drawing from the profits made on the H.Q. to cope with repair and maintenance at Upper Pitts. It was agreed that the present Hut Fund be continued to be used for this purpose.

Phil Davies proposed, and Luke Devenish seconded, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. This enabled the Meeting to accept the Treasurer's recommendation that £260 be transferred to the new fund.

9. Hon. Auditor's Report.

Howard Kenney expressed gratitude to Tim Reynolds for good book keeping and clear accounts. Current liabilities were such that only about £40 remained in the Bank, not really very much cash. The new method of setting out the accounts made the Club's position very clear, the Club's cash assets being £179 against current liabilities of £139. The expenses of Club administration plus tackle and Journal had been separated from the income/expenditure account relating to the Club H.Q., and it was evident that subscriptions just about balanced general administration and those expenses of benefit to members as a whole. The hut is self financing, and those not using the H.Q. are not subsidising it.

The American account, in Philadelphia, might prove to be a breach of the control regulations,

and the Committee should examine this. Board of Trade permission was required to keep a balance abroad, and doing so might prejudice our negotiations over the grant for the H.Q.

Luke Devenish asked why the Club had had to buy locks for G.B. The Treasurer explained that these had been lost by some of our members.

10. It was proposed by Luke Devenish and seconded by Howard Kenney that Phillip Davies and Alan Surrall be invited to become Honorary Members of the Club, in recognition of their considerable efforts on behalf of the Club throughout the completion of the Upper Pitts Headquarters. This was passed unanimously.

11. Election of Officers and Committee for 1969-70.

The Committee proposed that the Vice Presidents be re-elected en bloc.

There were three vacancies on the Committee and the following were proposed:-

Ian Jepson, proposed by Tim Reynolds and seconded by Roy Staynings.
Brenda Willis, proposed by Pat Davies and seconded by Jim Hanwell.
David Tombs, proposed by Hugh Pearson and seconded by H.C. Attwood.

The remaining Officers and Committee were appointed without ballot, as follows:-

President: F.W. Frost
Vice-Presidents: M. Norbert Casteret, Rev. C.H.D. Cullingford, Mr. C.W. Harris, Com.
P.B. Lawder, Mr. H. Murrell, Dr. E.K. Tratman, Dr. F.S. Wallis.
Chairman: J.D. Hanwell
Hon. Sec: D.M.M. Thomson
Asst. Sec: R.J. Staynings
Hon. Treas: T.E. Reynolds
Gear Curator: C. Pickstone
Committee: P.R. Cousins, M.W. Dewdney-York, A.E. Dingle, I.Jepson, Miss J. Murrell,
H. Pearson, R.A. Philpott, D.Tombs, Mrs. BoM. Willis.

12. It was proposed by Luke Devenish and seconded by Com. Lawder that Howard Kenney be appointed Hon. Auditor. This was accepted by the meeting.

13. Luke Devenish proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Committee, Officers and Auditor.

14. The Meeting closed at 5.40.