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<u>Hon. Secretary:</u>	T.E. Reynolds, 'Tudor Cottage', Beryl Lane, Wells, BA5 3AD.
<u>Asst. Secretary:</u>	K.E. Barber, 4 Catsash, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA5 5EH.
<u>Hon. Treasurer:</u>	Mrs. P. Green, 12 Keyford Terrace, Frome, Somerset.
<u>Hut Warden:</u>	M.W. Dewdney-York, Upper Pitts.
<u>Subs. Treasurer:</u>	A.E. Dingle, 32 Lillian Road, London, S.W.13.
<u>Cave Keys:</u>	J. Jones, 33a Dinaw Street, Nantmoel, Glamorgan.
<u>Journal Distribution:</u>	M. Hewins, 31 Badshot Park, Badshot Lea, Farnham, Surrey.
<u>Club Meets:</u>	Club Secretary or direct to Editor.
<u>Hut Administration:</u>	) R.R. Kenney, 'Yennek', St. Marys Road, Meare,
<u>Editor:</u>	) Glastonbury, Somerset
<u>Upper Pitts Address:</u>	Wessex Cave Club, Priddy, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3AX.

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## EDITORIAL

This is the time of year when the Journal comes to life. Authors become people at the AGM and Dinner. Printed words are replaced by emitted grunts. Irate letter writers pretend an inoffensive innocence. People who have been corresponding regularly suddenly find that they cannot recognise each other. However, surveyors are readily identifiable by the stadia marks up their arms and the cross-hairs in their eyeballs.

It's all rather like contemplating a stone lying on the ground. Lift it up and one sees all manner of creepy-crawly things beneath.

## CLUB NEWS

### Annual General Meeting and Dinner

This Journal, which should hopefully reach members by the first week in October, contains the notice and agenda for the 1972 A.G.M. The A.G.M. will be held at Priddy Village Hall at 3.00 pm prompt. Members are reminded that if the A.G.M. starts on time, it will finish earlier and so there will be more time for talking, changing, drinking etc before the Dinner.

There are several propositions from the Committee this year. Basically they are as follows:-

Propositions (a) & (b) are to increase the subscription for full members from £1.50 to £2.00 and for joint members from £1.75 to £2.25. This will automatically increase the subscriptions for affiliated members to 50p each.

Propositions (c), (d) & (e) are to tidy up the confusion that surrounds the Club having effectively three year ends, viz the date to which the accounts are made up to - August 31st, the statutory end of the Club Year - September 30th, and the A.G.M. which is usually held on the third Saturday in October. If these propositions are passed the number of year ends will be reduced to two, viz: the accounts year end of August 31st, and the A.G.M. which will be fixed at the third Saturday in October. Finally all changes in the rules, subscription increases etc will then take effect from the A.G.M. at which they were passed.

Proposition (f) is to incorporate into the Rules the proposed changes in the Club constitution which were outlined in the August Journal.

There are still some tickets for the Dinner, so if you haven't yet ordered your tickets then write to: Jenny Murrell, Top Flat, 1 Clifton Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1BN. The tickets are £1.35p each. It is intended to provide a coach from Upper Pitts down to Cheddar and back after the Dinner. The cost of the coach will be 25p a head. Please send cash with orders for tickets, coach etc and also send a stamped addressed envelope - it makes Jenny's job much easier. The Dinner is at the Bath Arms Hotel, Cheddar and is at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm. The Guest of Honour is Dr. E.K. Tratman, O.B.E.

### New Members

We welcome the following new members:-

Elected July 16th, 1972:-

William J, Hebditch, New Cross Fruit Farm, South Petherton, Somerset.

Charles H. Moss, 49 High Street, Dollar, Clacks., Scotland.

Jonathan Parkhouse, 4 The Serpentine, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs. FY8 5NW.

Nigel Taylor, Whidden Farm, Chilcote, East Horrington, Wells.

Elected September 3rd, 1972:-

Philip Hendy, 5 Tring Avenue, Ealing Common, London W.5.  
Thomas Davies, Hillcroft, Woodborough Road, Winscombe, Somerset.  
Stephen Thorne, 58 Rosewall Road, Maybush, Southampton.  
Roger Robinson, West Lodge, Seaton Avenue, Hythe, Kent.  
Brian Goldsworthy, 19 Harbury Road, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4PN.

#### Use of Club tackle

The Tackle Warden has found in the past month or so that several ladders which he had made recently have been so damaged by bad handling that they will have to be rebuilt. This obviously takes a lot of time and effort and also costs the Club quite a bit of money. In order to avoid this happening members are asked to take special care to ensure that ladders are used properly so that they are not damaged whilst being used. The ladders mentioned earlier have been damaged by not being hung down a pitch correctly. Instead of being fed down the pitch, and the top end then belayed, the ladders were belayed at the top and the bundle of ladder thrown over the edge and left to unroll itself as best it could. Unfortunately with this method there is a tendency for the ladder to thread itself through itself. When a ladder has done this, and weight is put on the ladder, the ladder apparently straightens itself out. But, the straightening process kinks the wires so badly that they have to be replaced. So, next time you ladder a pitch, feed the ladder down.

#### Hon. Secretary's new address

Will all members please note that as from October 1st, 1972, Tim Reynolds' address will be:-

TUDOR COTTAGE, BERYL LANE, WELLS, SOMERSET.

#### **MEETS**

Upper Pitts Slide Shows Saturday November 25th 7.30 p.m. Jim Hanwell, Picos de Europa, Northern Spain.

Saturday December 9th 7.30 p.m. Tim Reynolds, caving in the Rockies.

#### Caving Trips

<u>Friday October 20th 7.30.</u>	Do you think that you know Burrington? Meet at East Twin Valley and see. Possibly wet suits.
<u>Friday November 3rd 7.30.</u>	Priddy Green Sink and clean up after in Swildons.
<u>Saturday November 18th.</u>	South Wales. 9.30 a.m. at Penwyllt.
<u>Friday December 1st 7.30.</u>	A sniff around the Velvet Bottom area.
<u>Friday December 15th 7.30</u>	G.B. Permits are essential.
<u>Saturday December 30th 3.00</u>	Singing River Mine.

Please note that the dates of some of the above trips are different from those previously advertised.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Do not use the public car park near the Cross when attending the Annual Dinner. The metal gates are shut and locked at 8 p.m. until the following morning. Use the park behind the Bath Arms (access to the rear is at the end of the Hotel nearest the zebra crossing).

## THE PICOS DE EUROPA AND THE VEGA DE LIORDES

by J.D. Hanwell

### Introduction

After the well-known Sierra Nevada in the south of Spain and the Pyrenees in the north, the less familiar Picos de Europa comprise the highest peaks in Spain and Portugal at nearly 8700 feet (2650 metres). Although this comparatively small knot of mountains is barely higher than many others throughout the peninsula, much of the vertical range of these rival sierras is diminished by their massive scale and the vastness of the surrounding Meseta tableland averaging between 2000 - 3000 feet high. In striking contrast, the full extent of the abrupt and serrated ridges of the Picos is visible from beaches along the northern coast and well into the Bay of Biscay. From these northerly aspects, patches of permanent snow and ice add to the impressions of height and inaccessibility; views quickly confirmed if you are enticed along the few roads penetrating a mere twenty miles inland. What is more, the whole range is formed of Carboniferous limestones!

Having been easily persuaded by Dave Causer's accounts of his holiday there in 1967, I paid my first visit in March the following year and then during the summers of 1969 and 1971. The last visit saw our first serious cave exploration with the discovery of the Cueva de Liordes described elsewhere. Since the Spanish authorities have given us permission to explore the surrounding area in more detail, the following account of the region gives some ideas on its problems and potential as gleaned from previous stays. At the same time, it is intended as a preliminary report to fulfil our obligations to individuals and organisations in Spain who have greatly assisted and readily approved the work undertaken. For this reason the report is couched in a widely used technical style to help translation; all proper names and the information on diagrams being in Spanish (we hope!). Those wishing to follow the descriptions more closely will find the special revised edition of the 1:50,000 Mapa de los Tres Macizos de los Picos de Europa, published by the Federacion EspaEola de Montanismo, Barquillo 19, Madrid-4 in 1966, of considerable help. In Great Britain this excellent map is obtainable through Edward Stanford, 12-14 Long Acre, London W.C.2.

### Geological features

The Picos de Europa were uplifted by comparatively recent Alpine movements, then considerably dissected by glacial action in Pleistocene times. The Western Massif between the rivers Dobra and Cares attains heights of nearly 2600m, the Central Massif between the rivers Cares and Duje contains the highest peak at 2648m whilst the Eastern Massif between the rivers Duje and Deva is less extensive and about 2400m high. The rivers are about 10 km apart and flow northwards via imposing gorges to the Bay of Biscay.

Like most alpine areas, the influence of major geological structures upon local relief is considerable. The thick Carboniferous limestones are very deformed and fractured by two phases of mountain-building; the oldest during the Armorican uplifts give rise to folds trending southeast whilst the younger more dominant Alpine elements can be traced eastwards along the Cantabrian ranges towards the Pyrenees. During the 200 million-year Mesozoic era between these uplifts, the Carboniferous rocks were buried beneath younger sedimentaries also containing important limestones. At the same time, the detached stable block forming Iberia was moving away from that now seen in central France; hinging about the Basque region and producing the jaw-like sphenochasm of Biscay. So, at the culmination of the Alpine uplift, the Cantabrian folds were overthrust into this chasm whilst pitching eastwards towards the hinge area. The overfolding gives rise to the abrupt northerly slopes of the range, their proximity to the sea giving the base level advantage to north flowing rivers, whereas the eastward pitch brings older rocks to the surface in the Asturias and Galicia west of the Picos de Europa. The cover rocks remain to the east in Santander; a province already noted for caves developed in Mesozoic limestones. Thus, the Picos de

Europa area is the latest Carboniferous region of northern Spain to have been exhumed. As it seems unlikely that this was completed until Pleistocene times, cavern development is contemporary with glaciation as in other European karst areas. The main features of the region are shown on the geological section.

The major W-E arrangement of the three massifs reflects the dominance of Alpine folds whilst the pronounced NW-SE ridges in the western and central massifs are associated with the older Armorican flexures. Those in the more impressive Central Massif are particularly well developed, conveniently providing municipal boundaries for the provinces of Leon, Oviedo and Santander. Evidence of inverted relief is widespread: the highest peaks occur in a broad W-E syncline and the near vertical flanks of the main ridges appear to be developed along major joint and strike faces. The large headwater basins of the river systems upstream of their gorge sections are developed in an anticline along the southern boundary of the three massifs where weaker Lower Carboniferous shales have been exposed in the core. Here the rivers Cares and Deva in particular have important W-E components along the strike of the shales; for example, the Rio del Arenal and Rio de Cantijlia respectively. The narrow col between these rivers called the Puerto de Remoña provides the easiest link from the Val de Baro around Espinama to the less accessible Val de Valdeón: a direct line which is now being opened up as a local road to Santa Marina de Valdeón.

Mineralization accompanied the periods of folding and has led to numerous high altitude mines approached by very steep mule tracks. Whilst the tortuous nature of these paths must have been a major cause in closing down the workings as uneconomic, their remarkable state of preservation is crucial in attracting a growing number of alpinists to the area, and now speleologists!

#### Geomorphology of the Vega de Li'ordes area

The map and valley profiles show the principal surface features of this area which lies immediately to the south of the highest peaks in the Central Massif. The shales described above outcrop across the south of the area shown on the map. The imposing 1000-metre wall of limestones curving eastwards around Fuente De is an escarpment resulting from the general northerly dip of the Carboniferous succession. A local synclinal flexure going northwest from the Pena de Remona gives rise to the embayment of the escarpment about Fuente Dé. The same feature creates a structural depression centred upon the Vega de Liordes and similar flexures could occur to the north of the area shown.

The narrow "canals" provide the only feasible routes into the mountains and high karst basins. The Canal de Jenduda and Canal de Pedavejo occur along major joints enlarged by meltwater streams overflowing from glaciers and ice fields which formerly occupied basins like the Hoyo de Lloroza and Vega de Liordes. The latter canal is also associated with the shatter zone of a local fault line. Both are short scree-filled gullies giving access to their respective basins via distinct cols at about 2000 m. The larger, more gorge-like Canal del Embudo was probably developed by a sub-glacial stream beneath ice feeding the Deva valley during the maximum glaciation of the region. Starting from corries in the Hoyo de Liordes and Hoyo Oscuro, a glacier some 600 m wide but barely 100 m thick would have passed over the present Collado de Liordes. It is likely that the over deepening of the Vega de Liordes basin and the dissection of the Canal del Embudo were initiated at this time. During later, less cold phases, when the glaciers had receded to the corries, meltwater would have developed underground routes to resurge in the adjacent valleys. With a lowering base level of erosion, sapping occurred at the resurgences possibly accompanied by cavern collapse or unroofing. Thus, the lower reaches of the Canal del Embudo are very incised below 1500 m. Old resurgence cave systems are being explored at about this level.

Sufficient impermeable glacial material was deposited in the Vega de Liordes to support a marginal lake whose outfall probably explains the origin of the Cueva de Liordes. In basins where little fill was deposited, surface water generally percolates and this has produced blind or choked shafts at

the floors of uvala-like depressions. Old snow plugs and cones of frost-shattered debris block most of these shafts. Thus, the "vegas" are characterised by alp-like pastures and the "hoyos" by bare rock profuse with solutional features. Two variants of the "hoyo" exist: those above 2000 m are essentially corries whilst those below are primarily enclosed karst depressions. The potential for postglacial vadose caves has been greater in the "vegas" because of their surface stream systems. It is likely that such caves invade the older drainage lines, although this has not happened in the known Cueva de Liordes system.

A brief description of present-day conditions in the Vega de Liordes will serve to outline the nature of post-glacial cave development in the area.

Although there has been a marked decrease in runoff since the corrie glaciers finally receded, the Picos de Europa is still one of the wettest regions of Spain. Total annual precipitation in the Vega de Liordes probably exceeds 2000 mm. Prolonged frontal rainfall is common and heavy convectional showers occur in summer. Snow to a depth of 3 m covers the whole basin from November to May each year. Streams are in spate when this snow melts, and the occurrence of flood debris in and around the cave indicates peak discharges to the order of 4 cubic metres per second (cumecs). Base flow in late summer was estimated at 0.01 cumecs. The total area of impermeable drift is about 0.7 square kilometres, although the total catchment area is just over 2 square kilometres. While the whole basin contributes to discharge when the snow melts in spring, only the drift area supports the summer flows. Most of the latter comes from a small marsh northeast of the cave entrance, and this is largely fed by the Fuente de Casetones - a shallow spring which issues from the foot of scree slopes below the Pico de Padiorna. Most other streams at the margins of the drift are reduced to mere trickles in summer, or even dry out. Although night frosts occur throughout summer, daytime temperatures in the enclosed basin are sufficient to maintain high rates of evaporation. Thus, seasonal discharges into the cave have a wide range. Considerable mechanical erosion accompanies the flood régime and the cold acidic water from the peats must assist rapid solution. The passages explored in the Cueva de Liordes are almost certainly post-glacial in origin.

The modern resurgences in the adjacent valleys are well below their former 1500-metre level. Further work will be required to comment upon these more fully. At present, it seems unlikely that the small risings from the glacial deposits in Fuente Dé can be associated with underground drainage from the Vega de Liordes as in former times. In view of the area's geological structure and the deeper entrenchment of the Cal de Valdeón to the west, it is possible that capture has occurred in favour of the Rio Cares. These problems need investigation.

## THE EXPLORATION OF THE CUEVA DE LIORDES IN SPAIN, AUGUST 1971

by F.J. Davies and J.D. Hanwell

### Introduction

The Cueva de Liordes lies in an enclosed karst basin at a height of 1858 metres (6240 ft) in the Central Massif of the Picos de Europa, Northern Spain. Full details of its location are given on the survey of the system and in the account of the region's geology and geomorphology elsewhere. The entrance of the cave lies at the foot of a limestone spur beneath the Col de Remoña at the south western end of the Vega de Liordes. A gently graded surface stream flows into the system forming an obvious opening 2 m high.

### The Main Streamway (Galeria del Rio Principal)

Inside the entrance is an elongated chamber some 3 m high and 5 m wide at the far end of which daylight can be seen through a small secondary opening. To the left, a low arch gives access to a 1 m high passage half-filled with still water pools. At roof level nearby a dry 0.5 m high crawl can be followed. The stream appears to flow beneath both routes. It re-joins the main passage at a junction about 10 m inside the cave and can be followed to the right to a pitch (Primer Pozo de 6 metros). An alternative dry route to the left leads through a short oxbow series to an easy climb which bypasses this pitch.

From the foot of the first pitch, the streamway turns right then almost immediately left to another short descent (Cascada de 4 metros). About 5 m beyond the large plunge pool of this second pitch, the stream falls into a two-metre deep pot but a dry passage continues across the head of this via a traverse around the left wall. The stream leads to the Cold Store Passage (Corredor de Frialdad) described later. After the traverse there is an abrupt descent steepening in a series of steps to make a third pitch totalling 30 m (Torca de 30 metros). Small lateral passages are associated with each step of this pitch.

The spacious hall at the bottom of the "Torca" is strewn with fallen blocks. A crawl barely 1 m high, with a very powerful cold draught blowing outwards (Tubo del Viento) leads to a waist deep pool. Ahead, the main stream returns falling 3 m into the pool from an ascending rift leading back towards the Cold Store Passage. It then overflows down a narrow 7 m rift comprising the fourth pitch (Torrente de 7 metros). This rift continues by three well developed pots in the stream bed to a further vertical of 10 m. The level nature of the roof from the Tubo del Viento causes this section of the cave to be lofty as well as very windy. The head of the vertical is the top of the largest shaft discovered in the system which contains the fifth and sixth pitches (Sima Menor de 10 metros and Sima Mayor de 40 metros). Between the two pitches the stream sweeps for about a further 10 m over a series of concave slopes and narrow ledges before falling freely down the main shaft.

A boulder slope from the bottom of the main shaft corkscrews into a steeply inclined passage with a 3 m square cross section. A descent through a flight of six three-metre deep pots in the stream bed ends in a 45-degree slope over a slippery black chert to an apparently stagnant pool. To the right, a low 1.5 m canal-like passage can be followed for not more than 8 m before the water descends another less steep incline in a passage of similar dimensions. A dry way slopes gently upward to the right, then returns steeply to the stream. Beyond, the meanders become very sinuous in a passage some 3 m high but never more than 1 m wide. After about 30 m the seventh pitch is met (Vertical de 3 metros).

The bottom of this pitch is a circular chamber about 3 m in diameter. The main way on is through a narrow passage which goes down a steeply inclined cascade. Slippery black chert is much in evidence again. A higher constricted route (Tubo) continuing in the same general direction as

before gives access to another 30m of passage above before becoming too tight. The eighth pitch (Vertical de 8 metros) occurs after a prominent lip in the chert. A 45-degree slope from the foot of this pitch leads over a lower bed of chert to the head of the ninth pitch (Vertical de 10 metros) after only 5m. As the roof continues fairly horizontal across this vertical, and the passage turns sharply left along a local N-S fault, the rift produced is the largest in the lower parts of the system. The ninth pitch can thus be descended along a side wall out of the waterfall.

The floor of the rift below is covered with fallen blocks which slope south. A constricted route to the right through these blocks gives access to a small passage carrying the stream. This is rarely more than 1m wide and sometimes as low as 1.5m. It slopes gently in a south westerly direction for about 30m before reaching a waterfall about 10m deep down a narrow rift. Alternative routes across this rift gives access to parallel verticals comprising the dry tenth pitch (Chimeneas de 10 metros).

At the bottom of the tenth pitch the stream reappears from among boulders which cover the floor. After a short distance a duck is reached (Sifon) which marks the furthest point explored to date. Over the water surface the constricted passage can be seen continuing generally southwest and a powerful cold draught blows outwards.

### Cold Store Passage (Corredor de Frialdad)

The active streamway bypassing the third pitch gives access to this upper flood-route series. After cascading down the two-metre pot already mentioned, the stream doubles back beneath the main passage for 4m to the lip of the eleventh pitch (Vertical de 7 metros) into a lofty rift chamber. This chamber is over 10m high, 4m wide and some 10m long. To the right, constrictions at floor level lead to a very steep incline over polished chert. About 6m down this slope is the entrance to the Cold Store Passage. The main streamway continues past this along a zig-zag route to the head of the fourth pitch.

The Cold Store Passage is very different in character to the rest of the system; the air is comparatively still but barely above freezing point whilst the dry walls are chilled and very cold to touch. The passage meanders generally south and contains much evidence of carrying flood discharges. After some 30m it splits into interconnected rifts forming the twelfth pitch (Chimeneas de 10 metros). Immediately at the bottom of these rifts there is a static sump pool (Sifon) of very cold water. This pool is about 1m deep and 0.5m wide and, from a small air space, a chilling draught blows outwards as at the terminal sump in the Main Streamway. As all the visits to the cave were undertaken during the afternoons of hot mid-August days, it is not known whether these cold draughts are consistent.

The extreme wetness of the cave and its windiness requires the use of wet suits and electric lighting in the main. It is clear that severe flooding would preclude visits from November to May in any year. The response to summer thunderstorms has not been observed, but there is every reason to suppose that these would be major hazards since only the third and ninth pitches avoid the stream. No flowstone formations exist and the whole system abounds with the erosional features typical of an active vadose cave. It is very reminiscent of the classic type of swallet system encountered in the Pennine karst areas of England. In view of the cave's location and the strenuous nature of overland access with the necessary equipment, any trip must be classed as very severe.

### The Survey

All data recorded in the cave was checked and compiled immediately following each trip. Suunto instruments which were calibrated daily and Fibron tape were used for the main survey work. Compass and clinometer were hand held and measurements taken to the nearest 0.5 degree. Distances were recorded to a tenth of a metre and the "leapfrog" method of surveying used. Passage dimensions were measured at each station and intermediate data estimated and sketched whilst in

the cave. No closed traverses were made but any positional errors are almost certainly less than the plottable error of 0.5m on the original drawings.

The fixed survey station at the entrance was triangulated and resected from sights to surrounding landmarks identified from the 1:50,000 map of the region and checked on the 1:22,000 Plano del Macizo Central de los Picos de Europa (Instituto Geografico y Catastral, Madrid, 1935). Very clear weather conditions prevailed during the triangulation. Magnetic deviation was determined astronomically. The latitude, longitude and altitude of the entrance were interpolated from the maps mentioned above; the former being generally confirmed by the usual methods of noon sun angle and the difference between standard and local times. The entrance station is chiselled into a prominent rib of rock at shoulder height to the left of the stream sink. Another, hopefully more permanent station is the Rawlbolt at the head of the fifth pitch. For the convenience of computing station co-ordinates, an arbitrary origin to the south-west was chosen at Santa Marina de Valdeon. The following table gives details of the fixed stations:

STATION	EASTINGS	NORTHINGS	ALTITUDE
S. Marina de Valdeón	-	-	1158.00 m
Entrance of the cave	3298.75 m	1855.00 m	1858.00 m
Head of fifth pitch	3305.06 m	1821.11 m	1801.22 m

Beyond the last fixed station above, the Main Streamway was surveyed using a Silva compass and paces. Verticals were calculated from known lengths of equipment. Thus, the lower levels of the system are less accurately portrayed on the survey. The same applies to the Cold Store Passage. Overall statistics for the system are:

Altitude of Entrance - 1858 metres above sea level. (6240 ft).

Vertical range to terminal sump - c. 230 metres (754 ft).

Total length explored in Aug. 1971 - c. 530 metres (1738 ft).

### General conclusions

The system is almost certainly post-glacial as explained elsewhere. It is developed along major N-S joints and local faults for the most part, the dip of the limestone being steeply to the north. The most noticeable feature is that the first six verticals, which represent over half of the system's depth, are developed in one major W-E strike joint with evidence of a local thrust fault. Here the stream has enlarged laterally as well as vertically, and there is evidence to show that eventually one large shaft over 100 metres deep will be formed.

Attempts to trace the water with fluorescence proved negative. Although the general alignment of the-cave is to the south, it seems unlikely that its drainage continues to the Rio Cantijlia valley. An old rock shelter with solutional features was found at the foot of the Canal de Pedavejo but no other likely active resurgences were evident. The matter is discussed in the report on the area's geomorphology. However, as the terminal sump passage emits strong draughts and is at least 600 metres above the adjacent valley floors, there is every reason to predict that the system goes much deeper into more extensive passages.

### A diary of the exploration

The probability of a cave system in the Vega de Liordes was brought to our notice by Dave Causer. He and his wife Kate saw the swallet from a distance whilst walking through the vega in 1967. It was examined more closely in 1969 by Dave Causer and the writers from a camp in the Val de Valdeón and it was fairly clear that an open cave might exist. Local farmers and alpinists knew of no previous exploration and no accounts could be found in the literature on the area.

These reports stirred up interest among Mendip cavers and in 1971 a small but strong party were granted permission to camp at Fuente Dé and explore the system. Members of the party were: Fred Dames, Jim Hanwell, Tim Reynolds, Don Thomson, Brian and Janet Woodward and Martin Huaun together with wives and children. We use first names in the following day-to-day account and mention details of equipment and techniques.

Thurs 19 Aug. The complete caving party, with a very small quantity of caving gear made the ascent to cave entrance from Fuente Dé via the Tornos de Liordes - a climb taking 3½ hours. After several had reached the first pitch in ordinary clothes and reported that there was a way on, Fred, Tim and Martin donned kit and, with only a 30m rope, reached the head of the third pitch. Armed with Jumars, Tim abseiled down this pitch and explored to the head of the fourth one before returning. More tackle was needed.

It was decided to use a nearby refugio built by Leon Forrestal as a depot. The party then returned to camp, Don and Jim making a detour via the Canal de Pedavejo to do further geological work. After a quick meal, Brian, Tim and Martin returned heavily loaded to spend the night at the little refugio. The final 170m of their climb over steep scree was completed in the dark.

Frid 20 Aug. Fred and Jim accompanied by Simon Davies and Nick Thomson made an early start with more gear, and reached the refugio before its residents had fully breakfasted.

Later in the day, Tim placed a Rawlbolt belay at the head of the first pitch in such a position that the 6m descent could be completed with only 3m of ladder, Although this made the climb dry, his commendable economy on tackle called for some gymnastics at the top and bottom.

The second pitch of 4m was unavoidably wet, but went easily with a handline. A Jumar clamp was a welcome help on the return, however. The 30m third pitch was permanently rigged with a kern mantle rope belayed to a bridge of rock. Ascents were made with Jumars, but only the lower 20m was vertical and even the bottom 5m of this was climbable by traversing to the right.

A belay for the as yet unclimbed fourth pitch was found in the stream bed. This was laddered and found to be a 7m strike rift waterfall made very chilly by the strong draughts of the Tubo del Viento. After traversing across the pots which followed, the fifth pitch was reached. As this required more tackle, the party returned to the surface.

Fred, Jim, Simon and Nick returned to Fuente Dé with optimistic reports and for further equipment. Late the same evening Janet made a solo carry with much needed food for the vega party, now spending their second night at the refugio.

Sat. 21 Aug. Fred made his third carry of gear with the object of staying overnight for a major assault the next day. Don and Jim stayed at Fuente Dé organising packs for the remaining tackle and survey gear to be taken up early on the Sunday.

Fred, Brian, Tim and Martin went underground at about 10 a.m. and made rapid progress via the fixed tackle to the fifth pitch. A rock flake was found on the left wall and the four climbed down 10m to a large bucket shaped ledge. The water thundered away immediately over the lip into a large wet and draughty shaft holding promise of a big pitch - the sixth. After considerable discussion it was agreed that a double life-line was required which was best hung from a Rawlbolt with longer belays at the head of the fifth pitch. By the time this had been fixed the whole party was cold, and lacking enthusiasm, so returned to the surface.

An hour's sunbathing and copious intake of hot soup brought fresh life and the four returned to the main shaft. Brian tied onto the life-line, took whistle in mouth and went over the lip of the sixth pitch. On returning, he reported a climb of almost 40m and a large descending passage beyond. So,

leaving the pitch rigged with a double line, the party surfaced for a night in the refugio to await the next day's assault. Janet went down to Fuente Dé to advise Don and Jim of what was in store.

Sun 22 Aug. The early morning view of the vega was fantastic: pure white with thick hoar frost and all caving kit solid blocks of ice! Cloud lay like a blanket over the valley below and there was hardly a breath of wind. As the sun rose over the crest of the surrounding peaks, the frost disappeared as though by magic. In ten minutes we changed from shivering mountaineers to lounging sunbathers awaiting supplies from those already struggling up with the last of the gear through the clammy mists still shrouding the Canal de Embudo.

From about 9 a.m. the vega party were joined by Simon and Andy Davies, Jim and Don whose burdens contained the vital sugar needed for breakfast to be completed. The mountainous and multi-coloured array of equipment was spread out to air, creating a festive scene enlivened by the arrival of three local farmers. One of them was known to Fred and Andy from their previous visit and a very vague conversation with plenty of sign language followed. It was quite evident that they had not witnessed the like before and that this was the first such visit to the cave. By 11.30 a.m. they had gone to tend their cattle, Andy and Simon had set-off for Fuente De and the real business of the day had started.

Fred, Brian, Tim and Martin entered the cave to complete the exploration whilst Jim and Don followed surveying and photographing. The 50m pitch proved wet all the way, but went well, and the series of pots found below were negotiated with the expenditure of only another 3m of ladder. At this stage it was feared that a shortage of tackle would put an untimely end to the day. However, the passage continued down a steep slope to a scummy pool with the apparent finality of a sump- But, fortunately, when standing in the pool a level continuation was obvious to the right and it was only the beginning of a short canal. Crouching in the smaller passage beyond, the stream descended steeply once again with a dry oxbow to the right. After this the gradient became less and the passage meandered more to the head of the seventh pitch.

A spike of rock to the left allowed the ladder to be hung clear of the water. At the bottom of this pitch the water doubled back beneath the ladder but a dry passage lay ahead. Martin and Fred followed this sloping "tubo" to a tight squeeze emitting a howling draught before returning. Meanwhile, Brian and Tim had followed the water to the fiercely wet eighth pitch. Below this the passage sloped steeply to a wide platform above the 10m ninth pitch. The last remaining length of ladder was hung to the right down a wall of the rift clear of the water.

Brian found a squeeze through the boulders strewn over the passage below and followed a narrow streamway to the top of three or four parallel chimneys. Being spent of tackle, he returned to the previous pitch and exchanged the ladder for the last rope which was doubled through a Karabiner. The party then descended one of the dry chimneys comprising the tenth pitch. At the bottom the stream was found to flow through a duck with a powerful draught coming outwards. Having already used all available tackle to the limit, it was decided that further exploration was out of the question. The return journey went smoothly: all tackle being removed as far as the fifth pitch; then, either brought to the surface or exchanged for the ropes on the second and third pitches.

During this eventful five hours, Jim and Don had been carrying out their survey to a point half-way down the third pitch. With the traditional inquisitiveness of surveyors when forced to more leisurely progress, they found an easy climb to an oxbow series bypassing the acrobatic first pitch. Surfacing before the others, Don set-off for Fuente Dé to book solid meals all round whilst Jim awaited for news from below and busied himself by doing some geology on the surrounding slopes before the sun left the vega. At about 6 p.m. everyone was out of the cave and, after changing rapidly and tidying the refugio, made the descent down the now familiar track in darkness carrying what was now known to be superfluous gear.

Mon 23 Aug. A well-earned idle in the Deva valley, enlivened by a visit from His Excellency Don Juan, heir to the Spanish throne, the President of the Federacion Espanola de Montanismo, and the Civil and Military governors of Santander.

Tues 24 Aug. Thinking that we were to be joined by some Spanish alpinists who had been interested to hear of the exploration, the whole caving party prepared for an early return to the vega. In the event, they arrived late in the morning but only intended accompanying us on the surface. Thus, it was 2 p.m. before everyone was underground again and the planned programme had to be curtailed to taking the accurate survey only as far as the sixth pitch and then detackling the others.

Meanwhile, as an academic exercise, Brian, Fred and Martin decided to check out the wet route bypassing the third pitch. After a short climb past the wet 2m pot at the head of this route and a horizontal section, the stream fell over the eleventh pitch discovered in the cave. Fred descended this 7m vertical on a rope and followed a flight of zig-zagging cascades to the main stream passage. Although sporting, this bypass was not considered to be an easier route particularly when carrying tackle for the rest of the cave. On retracing his steps Fred then explored the scalloped entrance passages of the Corredor de Frialdad. Eventually, this passage was fully explored by everyone. The bone-dry walls were painfully cold to touch with wet hands and the air temperature was noticeably colder than elsewhere in the cave. This interesting passage ended with a duck at the foot of the 10m rifts comprising the twentieth and last pitch encountered. Both Jim and Martin were encouraged to investigate this pool which was waist deep, still and icy. Despite an enticing draught from beyond and even more enticing remarks from above, neither could contemplate immersion in such bitterly cold water without the protection of face masks, hoods and gloves. This flood route is undoubtedly much more extensive.

Thus, the four-day exploration of the Cueva de Liordes in 1971 came to a close and a tired party arrived at Fuente Dé even later than before with some very heavy loads but light hearts. Although staying in the area for a few more days, no more information was gained about the area's caving potential. However, as this report indicates, the region is of great interest. In the Cueva de Liordes, both the ducks should be investigated: the one at the end of the Corredor de Frialdad is not difficult to reach, and it is considered that although a trip to the lower duck is extremely wet and windy it might be compared with a four man trip down a cave like Disappointment Pot in West Yorkshire.

#### Acknowledgements

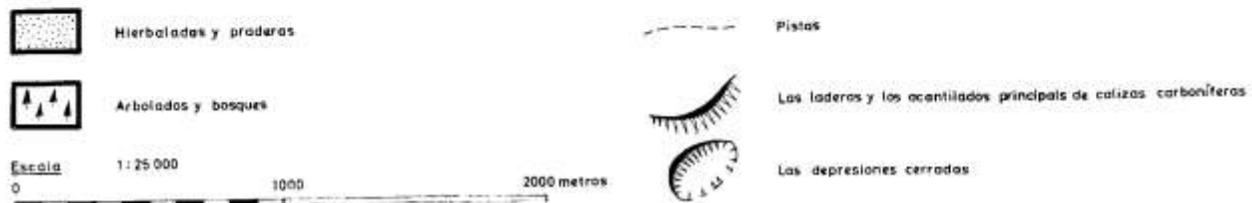
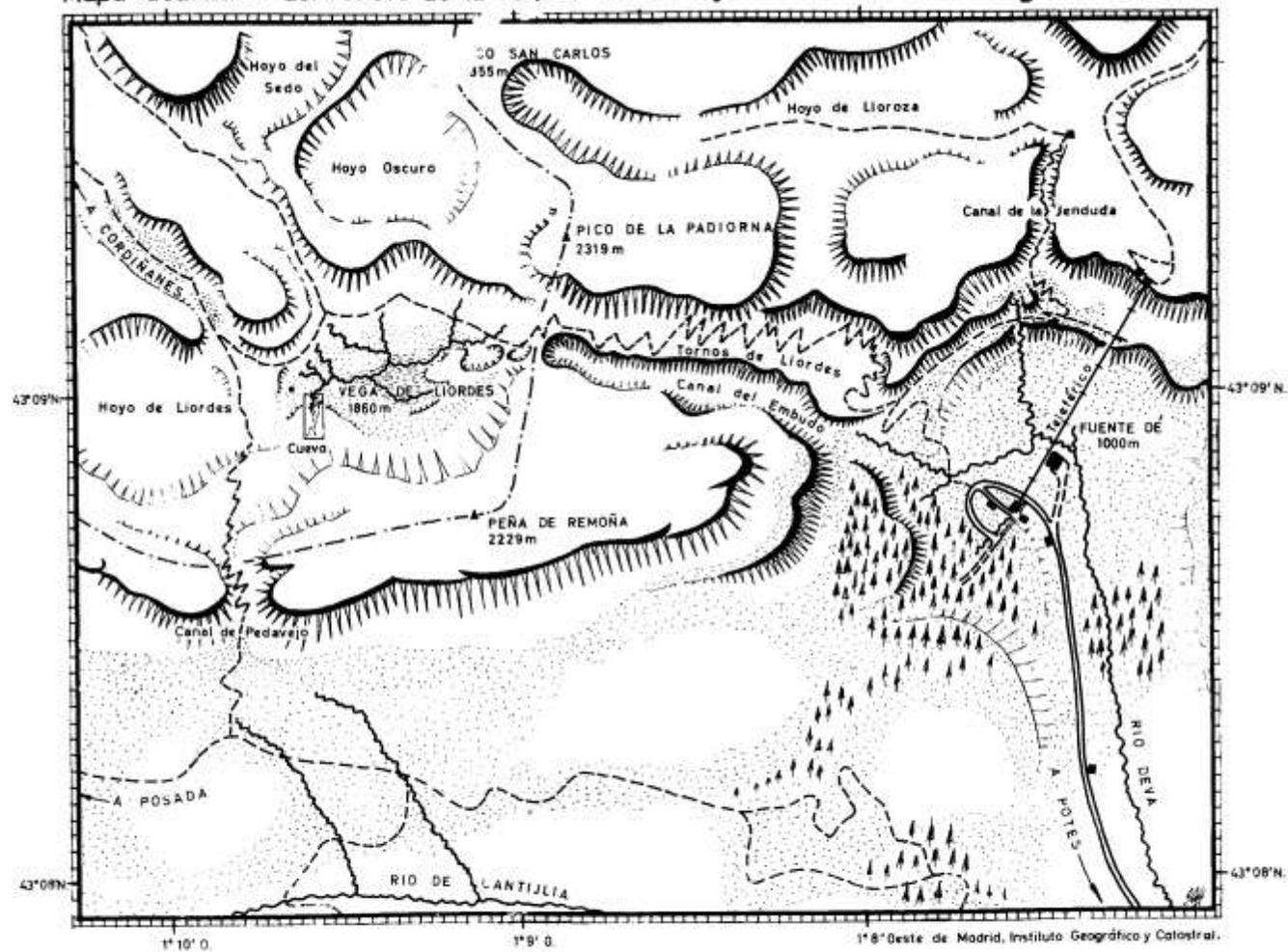
Whilst we enjoyed good weather, nice food, excellent company and caving, little of this would have been possible without the help of many people in Spain. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Comité Nacional de Espeleologia, Madrid, and the personal interest of Dr. Ing. Jose Antonio Ordriozola Calvo, Presidente de la Federacion Española de Montanismo; also, the Seccion de Espeleologia del Seminario Sautuola, Santander. Much valuable advice was given by Señor Don Inocente Fé Olivares, Seccion Agronomica de Santander, and considerable thanks are given to Señor Don Francisco Soberon, Potes, Señor Don Fermin Sanchez and his staff of the Diputacion Provincial, Santander, for their hospitality whilst in the area. We record the helpful replies to our initial enquiries by the Civil and Military governors of the provinces of Leon and Santander.

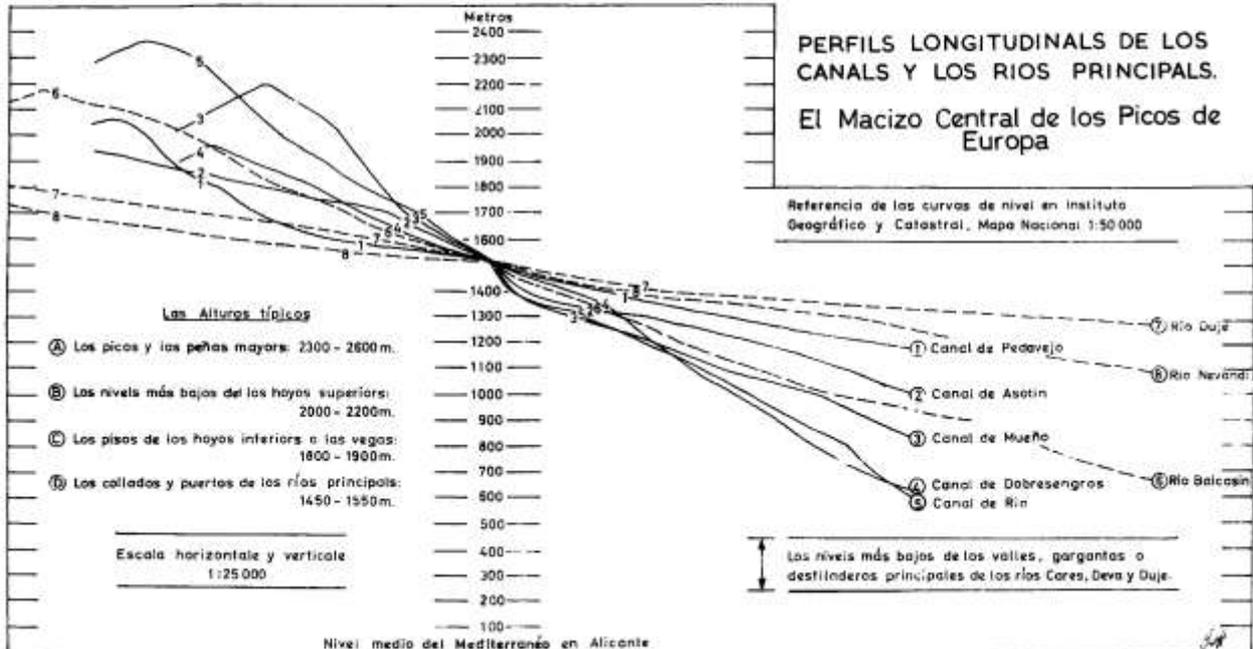
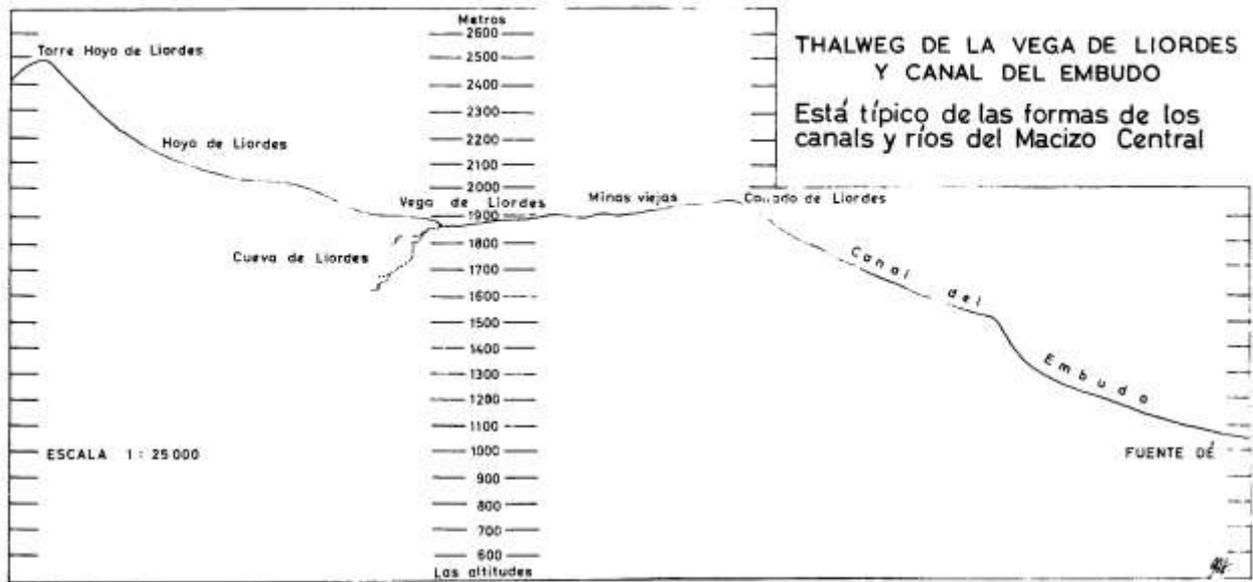


High over the Deva Valley on an early morning climb to the Vega de Liordes.

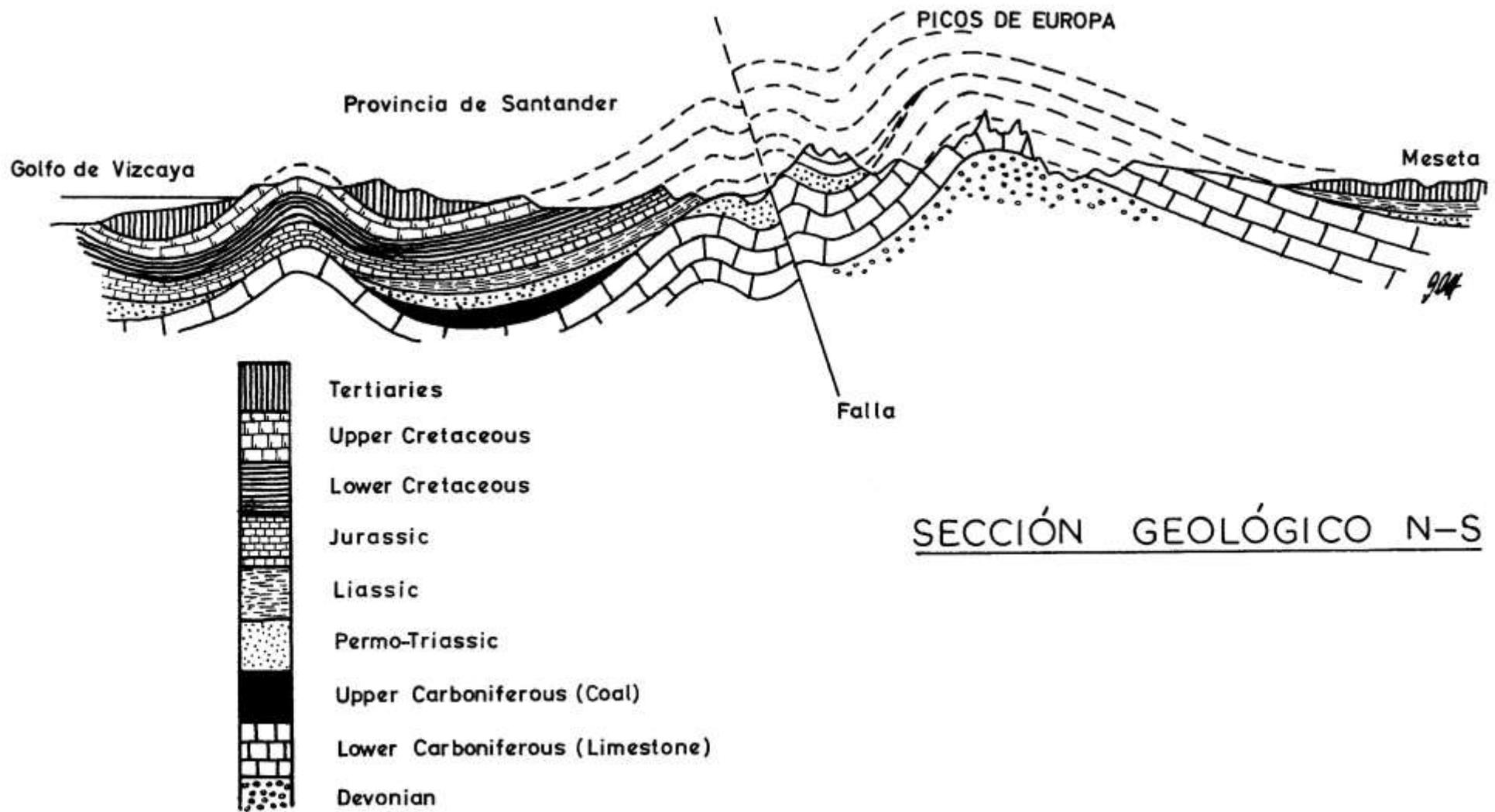
Photo by D. M. M. Thomson.

Mapa idealizado del relieve de la region Urrieles y localizacion de la Vega de Liordes











The Vega de Liordes

At the cave entrance looking towards the Collado de Liordes and Fuente Dé



Cueva de Liordes

The entrance showing the location of the fixed survey station with an arrow



Carboniferous fossils exposed in a scallop along the Main Stream Passage

Photos by D.M.M. Thomson.



The 30 metre "Torca"



← Part of the Main Stream Passage



← The second pitch of the "Cascada"

Photos by D.M.M. Thomson.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor, Wessex Journal.

Dear Sir,

By one of those odd coincidences which happen from time to time, the article by Pete Cousins in your Journal for August 1972 followed one by myself on somewhat similar lines in the Belfry Bulletin for July 1972.

Since we are both attempting to put something more meaningful in place of the present C.R.G. grading system and since, as Pete says, we both acknowledge the work done by Dennis Warburton (Wessex Journal Vol 7, No 89 for April 1963); perhaps you might find space for a non-member of Wessex to join in the discussion on this subject in your pages.

Whereas I find Pete's article very relevant and useful as a short guide to good cave surveying practice, I must disagree with his proposal to replace one set of rules with another set which is of basically the same type, although differing considerably in detail.

Pete's system is, of course, better than that which it is designed to replace and takes account of techniques as well as instrumentation but would suffer in time the same fate as any system of like nature. In my recent article, which is to be republished in the C.R.G. Newsletter and, I hope, elsewhere - I suggest that all attempts to classify surveys by sets of rules should be permanently scrapped. As far as accuracy is concerned, the only statement necessary or desirable from the surveyor to his public is one concerning the magnitude of his probable errors plus some description of apparatus, techniques etc. enabling him to justify the figures quoted.

The emphasis on accuracy is, I feel, the result of too many years of looking at surveys from the point of view of the surveyor rather than that of the user, and in this connection I am glad to see Pete's suggestion that the user might have some points of view to contribute. I conducted a quiz amongst survey users some years ago, the results of which I used in my paper at the C.R.G. symposium in Leicester on 'Maps to assist the caver'. It must be remembered that unless, for example, a user takes a measurement from a survey, he cannot be concerned with accuracy beyond that implied by major errors such as water flowing uphill, caves sticking out of the ground etc.

Many of the problems which should be tackled by surveyors of the future concern aspects such as what information to present to the user and in what form (incidentally, some of the present conventional signs are extremely bad) and we are - or should be - at a state of the art where the need is for the greatest amount of flexibility and experiment in survey presentation. The presence of formalised classification systems hampers initiative - and without such initiative the subject of cave surveying is likely to become increasingly tedious.

Yours, etc.,

S.J. COLLINS

"ALFIE"

## A WATER TRACE AT CHANTRY, EAST MENDIP

W.I. Stanton

The last decade has seen the majority of Mendip's swallet streams traced, and we now have a fairly good idea of the underground flow patterns and catchment areas of most of the large Mendip springs. The exceptions include Banwell Spring, Chewton Mendip Rising and Saint Andrew's Well, but there is another equally puzzling area with several quite considerable swallets but, as yet, no known major resurgences. This is the Chantry - Mells - Great Elm district of East Mendip.

The district is destined to be very extensively quarried, and many quarries will go deep below the water table and cut through active phreatic cave systems. With this in mind, the Bristol Avon River Authority has recently been prospecting for springs and active sinks, which will be traced to help forecast the effect of the quarries on water, and of water on the quarries.

Two of the sinks, Park Corner Swallet and Mells River Sink, have been known for some time and figure in the Complete Caves of Mendip. Another, Finger Slocker, was recorded in this Journal No. 140, and two more, Hale Combe Swallet and Finger Farm Swallet, appear in the M.C.G. Newsletter No. 95. A full list of the new sites follows.

CHANTRY SLOCKER 71644725 A500 Chantry, 350 metres N.W. of the Church. Small perennial stream, fed by Old Red Sandstone spring, sinks in 7' depression under hedge. In Lower Limestone Shales. BARA dye-tested the stream to Chantry Spring in 1972.

FINGER FARM SWALLET 71054743 A500 Little Elm, 200 metres S.W. of Finger Farm. Tiny intermittent stream flows through ditch and culvert to sink in another ditch under roots of fallen tree. (The MCG location is the start of the culvert).

FINGER SLOCKER 70474752 A495 L5 VR5 Mells Park, Finger Valley, in left bank of stream 200 metres down valley from the road at Hale Combe Quarry. Choked hole in valley-floor alluvium, active and submerged beneath the valley stream in winter but dry in summer when Hale Combe Swallet takes all the diminished flow.

HALE COMBE SWALLET 70354746 A505 L5 VR5 Mells Park, Finger Valley, in stream bed 60 metres down valley from the road at Hale Quarry, 140 metres upstream of Finger Slocker. Choked hole in valley-floor alluvium, submerged beneath the valley stream in winter and taking all the diminished flow in summer.

WHATLEY BROOK SINKS In winter the Whatley Brook flows on the surface through Railford, Whatley and Fordbury Bottoms to join the Mells River, but in the average summer, as its flow diminishes, it sinks in its bed before reaching the Mells. Desiccation takes place progressively upstream from the Mells confluence to Whatley Bridge, a distance of two kilometres, but the only open swallet worthy of the name is a small hole in valley-floor clay 300 metres downstream of the bridge at 73484800 A320, which takes about 1.5 litres per second.

CHANTRY SPRING 72104740 A440 Chantry, 400 metres N.N.E. of the Church on left bank of small polluted stream. Small spring in Lower Limestone Shales, capped for water supply. Proved feeders Chantry Slocker.

COBBY WOOD SPRING 71444819 A390 Mells Park, Finger Valley, 500 metres W.S.W. of Clavey's Farm, in rock outcrop beneath artificial waterfall. Large complex spring that fails in dry summers. Mean daily flow probably about 0.4 million gallons (1.8 million metres). No proved feeders.

FINGER SPRINGS 71304806 A420 (middle spring) Mells Park, Finger Valley, 500 metres north of Finger Farm. Three small springs about 80 metres apart on the right bank of the valley stream (the lowest a triple spring). In summer they dry up, the highest first and the lowest last, soon after the valley stream dries. No proved feeders. The valley stream is stone-lined over long stretches, probably to stop it sinking, to keep the Squire's waterfall going.

The first water trace was carried out on Chantry Slocker. A solution containing 100 grams of the green fluorescent dye Pyranine Conc. was poured into the slocker on 31.8.72 and was washed underground by the stream (estimated flow 0.2 litres per second). Next day, 21 hours later, bright green water was overflowing from the tank at Chantry Spring (estimated flow 1.0 litres per second), and the stream from it was green down to the confluence with Whatley Brook, where the colour was lost in the later body of water. The dye had travelled about 500 metres (straight line) underground and at least 500 metres on the surface; thus the underground travel may have taken less than 11 hours. It is concluded that the slocker and spring probably form a small independent system following the strike in the Lower Limestone Shales.

All the other known springs in the area were dry at the time of the trace.

The problem remains, where is the main resurgence for the area? Cobby Wood and Finger Springs probably release some of the local swallet water in the winter, but whereas they are now dry, several of the swallets, including the important Whatley Brook Sinks, are still active. No risings are known in the Mells River in Wadbury Valley, and it may be that we must look 2 miles further east in the valley of the River Frome between Spring Gardens and Oldford, where, in and around a Carboniferous Limestone inlier, are a number of springs and some important borehole sources. Tracing over this distance, in country of low relief, will not be easy.

## FROM THE HILGROVE AND EASTWATER LOGS

### 12th February 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

M. Wooding, R. Gannicott to Vicarage Passage, Hairy Passage Dig for first dig since June. Despite adverse conditions (ask Gannicott) the constriction was passed to gain 30ft of passage to the head of a pitch which was not descended due to the presence of a rock flake. Small stream drops down pitch and stones dropped can be heard to fall for about 20 ft (to a pool?). Anxious moments were had on the return when the dig was found to have filled with water. Then on to the new Vicarage Passage extension (SWETC?) to look for muddy stream entering. On the way out became involved in rescue which ran v. smoothly "more by luck than...". Why isn't a pulley kept at Main's Farm? 11½ hr trip.

### 21st May 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Giles and Gilbert to August Hole to apply a chemical hammer to the main stream sink. Two ½ lb charges were placed on a large flake at the right of the slot down which the stream flows and fired from a point about 150ft up the main stream passage. Examination of the results was prevented by excessive smoke. Cave much drier today than on previous trips this year.

P.M.G.

### 22nd May 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Hart, Gilbert and Gannicott found banged flake gone and banged more.

### 27th May 1966 EASTWATER

Bob and Anne Lawder and Giles to Eastwater for a brief exercise. The results of the bang carried out by Davies and Giles on 24.9.64 in Mortons Pot examined (by Giles only) and Mortons Pot written off as a possible way on. The whole party then attempted the terrible Upper Traverse in which Lawder R.E. jammed and prompted an early return to tap-room level. Stream present in cave.

P.M.G.

### 28th May 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

Gilbert and Wooding to Hairy Passage, Swildons. The previous bang had been extremely successful - the impossible slit and 10ft pitch were transformed into a scree slope and 4ft drop! After a short distance the passage became very tight and some head first digging was done in the compacted fill, then a bang was effected at a 'window' leading back into a tributary passage. P.S. The pipe is back.

### 28th May 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Giles and Pickstone to August to resume work at the Main Stream Sink. Last Sundays bang v. successful and debris removed prior to another charge. Today's bang seemed to have little effect beyond breaking off a few small chunks of rock and loosening the roof somewhat.

### 29th May 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Causar, Gannicott and Reynolds to August to bang the end choke. A fast trip was made to the bottom via Longwood and Christmas Crawl and the damage done by yesterdays bang done (sic). This was not very great, so four plasters were placed and set off. The resulting bang was satisfyingly loud and we retreated out of the cave without stopping to see what damage we had done.

## WESSEX CAVE CLUB

### The Report of the Hon. Secretary for 1971-1972

With the approach of Autumn the end of another Club year looms into view. This past Club year has in some respects been an eventful one for the Club. Probably the two major events in the year were the publication of Fred Davies' article on the training of novices in the June Journal, and the granting of planning permission for the proposed workshop extension to Upper Pitts. Whilst these two events appear, at a first glance, to make strange bedfellows, they are both very important for the long term future of the Club.

The past year has seen a lot of hard work and digging by cavers on Mendip, but unfortunately this effort has not been rewarded by discoveries of any size.

In spite of this lack of new discoveries on Mendip, Wessex members have been active at Swildons Hole, Manor Farm Swallet, Wookey Hole and several other sites. In Swildons, Tony Jarratt and Pete Moody discovered some 300ft of passage leading off from the top of Victoria Aven in Swildons XII, and Fred Davies has continued his assault on Cowsh Avens which has been rewarded by some more passage heading towards the salubrious cave - Priddy Green Sink. The North Hill diggers, after a brief foray at Rock Swallet have now got their teeth into Manor Farm Swallet. This site, the only large stream sink on Mendip that has not yet been dug to reveal a cave, is being dug jointly by the Club and the U.B.S.S. So, the story of the year seems to be a lot of hard work which unfortunately has not yielded any major discoveries. The only consolation, if it is one, is that the other major Mendip clubs have had the same experience over the year. The Friday Night Club has continued its series of meets which have proved to be very popular. With the lack of opportunities on Mendip, Wessex members have been visiting caving areas in England and abroad. It now appears that the days of the large Club organised weekends in Yorkshire are a thing of the past, but there have been several 'private' trips arranged by members to other caving areas in the country. This trend shows the effect that the improved motorway system has had on caving. South Wales is now an easy day trip from Bristol. This autumn another party of members has gone to the Picos de Europa area in Spain to continue the exploration of the two caves that were discovered last year.

An advertisement has recently appeared in the Bristol newspapers to the effect that the Club is sponsoring a course for caving instructors. This course which is organised by the Bristol Youth Committee is in fact a direct result of Fred Davies' article in the June Journal. The course is under the direction of Fred and he intends to teach the people who attend the course his philosophy of introducing novices to caving as outlined in his article. If this course is a success it will give wider circulation to Fred's ideas and it is hoped that eventually the introduction of novices to caving will move away from the 'leader/led' methods used previously to letting a novice learn under controlled conditions with people of his own ability. Over the last couple of years Fred has employed the latter method with considerable success to the people who write into the Club and ask how to go caving. It could be that the increasing number of enthusiastic youngsters who now stay at Upper Pitts is partially due to the success of Fred's ideas.

Upper Pitts. This was a major topic of discussion at the last year's A.G.M., and various suggestions were made as to how the state of the H.Q. should be improved. The Committee have devoted a considerable amount of time to Upper Pitts during the year and it is hoped that members can see that some progress has been made. During the year John Ham has nearly completed the panelling in the library. John hopes soon to be in a position to make the shelves and finish off the woodwork and we will then have a room for the library which we can be proud of. The Club owes a lot to John for all the hard work and effort he has put in over the last few months. A lot of other people have worked on the H.Q. over the year and it would be difficult to name them all, but the following have put in a very considerable amount of work:- Mike Dewdney-York, Ian Jepson, Richard Kenney and Wally Willcocks. Whilst it is true that they are all Committee members and in some cases have

direct responsibility for the H.Q., nevertheless they have spent a lot of time and trouble on working on the H.Q. and keeping it tidy.

The plans for the new extension to Upper Pitts are included at the end of this report. As can be seen it is for a workshop to give working space for major engineering projects, ladder building etc and to provide storage for the bits and pieces of shoring, angle-iron, winches etc that give such an untidy air to the Upper Pitts site at present. Planning permission has been obtained and we have until March 1977 to start work. The main crunch problem is quite simply - money. It is hoped to have a cost estimate ready at the A.G.M., but basically the problem is that the Club does not have the money to build this extension at the moment. This leaves us with two alternatives - either to raise subscriptions and H.Q., fees to produce a larger surplus or to start on the donations/fund raising round. This is one of the matters that the A.G.M., will have to consider.

The Tackle Warden, Wally Willcocks, has been very busy again this year, and the Club now has somewhere in the region of 1,500ft of ladder and corresponding amounts of rope. Our very great thanks are due to Wal for the considerable amount of hard work which he has put into ladder making, together with the few slaves he has managed to collect from the members who are unfortunate enough to live near him! Tackle is something which everyone uses, and so the more help the Tackle Warden receives to make tackle, the more tackle the Club has the more caving can be done.

During the year the Club administration has produced its usual headaches, but in the end it seems to have muddled through. A club the size of the Wessex which relies on a voluntary administration of people scattered over the South of England will always have problems of this nature, and short of paid help there is no solution to the problems. The amendment to Rule 5 is an attempt to remedy some of the problems that have been caused by the haphazard growth of the Club's administrative structure in the past. If this change is approved by the A.G.M., it is hoped that this, together with other measures adopted this year will solve at least some of the problems.

In the early part of the year, a questionnaire was circulated with the January Journal. This was an attempt to obtain more information about the Club membership and it was promised that the results of the survey would be published in the Journal in due course. These results, together with my comments on them, are published as part of this report since I felt that it would be of interest to members to have this information available before the A.G.M. In case anyone wishes to make a more complete analysis of these results than I have done, I have the original questionnaire available.

Finally I would like to thank all the people who have helped in the running of the Club over the past year. This includes both members of the Committee and non-Committee members who have contributed their help. A Club like the Wessex depends very much on the voluntary help given by its members and without that help the Club would be in trouble.

## Questionnaire Results

About 300 questionnaires were sent out with the Journal, and 78 were returned. This was a return of approximately 26% and was much higher than I had anticipated. I would like to thank all those members who took the trouble to complete the questionnaire.

While it is difficult to say if the members who returned the questionnaires form a representative sample of the Club, questionnaires were received from all types of members and so I feel that the results are fairly representative of the views of the Club as a whole. The results were as follows:-

### During which period did you join the Wessex?

1935 to	40	4 replies	1961	to 65	13 replies
1945 to	50	11 replies	1966	to 70	28 replies
1951 to	55	9 replies	1971	to date	7 replies
1956 to	60	6 replies			

This means that 45% of those who replied joined the Club since 1966. So (as expected) the bulk of the Club's members are young. On the other hand, 15 replies (19%) were received from people who had been members of the Club for over 20 years. This shows that the Club has a sufficiently broad base to keep the interest of the older members, and also shows a gratifying loyalty from these members.

### How did you start caving?

	<u>Replies</u>
On your own	5
Introduced by friends and joined the Wessex later	27
By joining the Wessex	3
By joining another caving club, and then the Wessex	11
At school	27
At university	<u>5</u>
	<u>78</u>

From the basis of these figures it seems that the advice of, 'go and join a caving club', is not the best way to start caving! It is interesting to note the large number of people who started caving at school. This is partly caused by the large proportion of the Club's membership that started caving as members of school clubs that were affiliated to the Wessex, and it also shows the very considerable value these school clubs have been to the Wessex. The people who started caving at University is a recent phenomenon - all of the 5 listed above joined the Club since 1960. This reflects the growth of the Universities in the last few years and it is probable that the proportion of people who 'learnt' their caving at University will increase in the future.

### How often do you go caving?

I thought that the results of this question would be more meaningful if plotted against the details of when people had joined the Wessex, and so the figures have been presented in this form:-

Date of joining the Wessex	How often do you go caving?					
	Often	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Total	
1935 to 1940	-	-	2	2	4	
1945 to 1950	7	2	-	2	11	
1951 to 1955	6	1	-	2	9	
1956 to 1960	1	2	1	2	6	
1961 to 1965	5	5	3	-	13	

1966 to 1970	17	8	2	1	28
1971 to date	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u>40</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>78</u>
	(51%)	(25%)	(12%)	(12%)	

These replies indicate a very healthy state of affairs in that over half of the members who replied went caving at least once a month on average. If the replies are extrapolated to cover the total Club membership, this indicates a very large number of active cavers in the Club - but again the sample might not have been representative.

<u>Do you go caving mainly:-</u>	<u>Replies</u>
On Wessex organised Club trips	3
With a group of friends, the majority of whom are members of the Wessex	35
With a group of friends, the majority of whom are NOT members of the Wessex	24
With anyone you can con into coming with you	<u>7</u>
	<u>69</u>

The replies to this question indicate that there are three 'types' of Club members. There are; those for whom the Wessex is their main Club and most of their caving is done with the Wessex, those who cave locally with friends and use their Wessex membership to obtain access to controlled caves and for the Journal, and finally, those people who are members of other clubs but keep up their Wessex membership for the Journal, Mendip cave access etc. I feel that any discussion as to which 'type' of member is of more value to the Club is irrelevant - they are all cavers and that basically is what the Wessex is all about.

### Journal

There were 75 replies to the questions on the Journal. They were as follows:-

Do you consider that the Journal frequency is: Too often – none. Not often enough - 9 replies. About right - 66 replies.

Do you consider the length of the Journal to be: Too long - 1 reply. Too short - 9 replies. About right - 65 replies.

Do you consider the content of the Journal to be: Too serious - 5 replies. Too frivolous - 12. About right - 58 replies.

The answers to these questions indicates that the Editor is doing a good job, but that it is difficult to keep everyone pleased. The 9 people who consider the Journal to be too short and too infrequent are going to cause him a bit of a headache!

### Subscriptions - do you consider £2.50 to be too high

The replies to this question have been shown against the date of joining the Club, and the results are as follows:-

Date of joining <u>the Wessex</u>	The subscription at £2.50 would be:-			
	Too high	Too low	About right	Total
1939 to 1940	-	-	4	4
1945 to 1950	1	-	10	11
1951 to 1955	3	1	5	9
1956 to 1960	2	-	4	6
1961 to 1966	5	1	22	28
1971 to date	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u>22</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>78</u>

So, whilst the majority of replies favoured a £2.50 subscription there was a large (30%) minority which thought that £2.50 would be too high. One of the points, which was made several times was that for some members the only thing that they received from the Club was the Journal, and £2.50 was a lot to pay for just a Journal. This is a valid point, and a subscription increase of this magnitude might prove to be too much.

#### Would you be interested in a period subscription?

The replies to this were as follows: Yes - 43 replies. No - 26 replies. What is a period subscription - 9 replies! Unfortunately, the present period of rising prices makes it difficult to fix a subscription for the next five years and so it is unlikely that period subscriptions will be reintroduced until prices have stabilised somewhat.

#### How often do you stay at Upper Pitts?

After the discussions at last year's A.G.M., this was probably one of the most important questions in the questionnaire. The results have been plotted against the replies to 'how often do you go caving'.

How often do you go caving?

<u>Frequency of stays at Upper Pitts</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Total</u>
At least once a month	9	1	-	-	10
At least once every three months	6	4	1	-	11
At least once a year	9	3	2	-	14
Never	<u>16</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>43</u>
	<u>40</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>78</u>

These replies show that (probably to most people's surprise!) that the people who stay at Upper Pitts do a lot of caving, and the people who don't go caving don't stay at Upper Pitts. Another interesting point is that the majority of the members who do a lot of caving (63%) do not stay at Upper Pitts. However, a large number of these people visit Upper Pitts fairly frequently to collect tackle, find out what is going on, attend slide shows etc. The total number of people who said that they never visited Upper Pitts was only 11 or 14% of the replies. So, for the majority of club members, Upper Pitts is the Club H.Q. in some form or another. Of the people who never stayed at Upper Pitts (43) 22 gave a reason for this. The reason was quite simply that they either lived nearby or had relatives who lived nearby and so they saw little point in staying at Upper Pitts. A couple of people said that they or their wives found Upper Pitts a bit rowdy. The behaviour at, and the usage of, Upper Pitts is obviously a very difficult question and attitudes are going to vary from time to time. But, there is one important point that members should consider. This is that the majority of people who stay at Upper Pitts stay there so that they can go caving. Caving is never, at the best of times, a clean past-time and so it is unavoidable that Upper Pitts is going to appear a bit scruffy compared with (say) someone's living room. There are of course degrees of scruffiness and it is the Hut Warden's job to steer a middle line between a state of complete shambles on the one hand and on the other hand a hut so tidy that no one dares drop so much as a piece of mud on the floor. A hut like this would tend to drive the majority of cavers elsewhere.

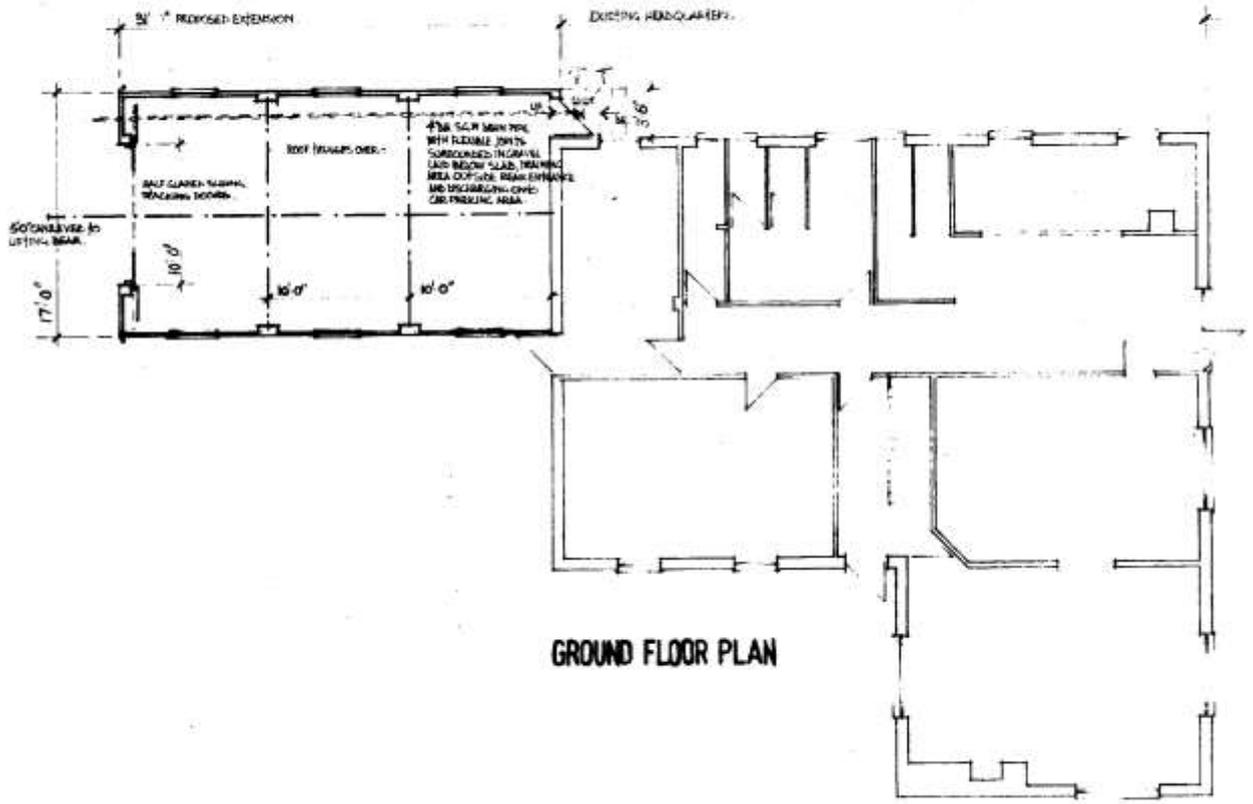
One thing however, can be said for certain, Upper Pitts is being used for the purpose for which it was built and has already acquired a character of its own.

### Club Activities

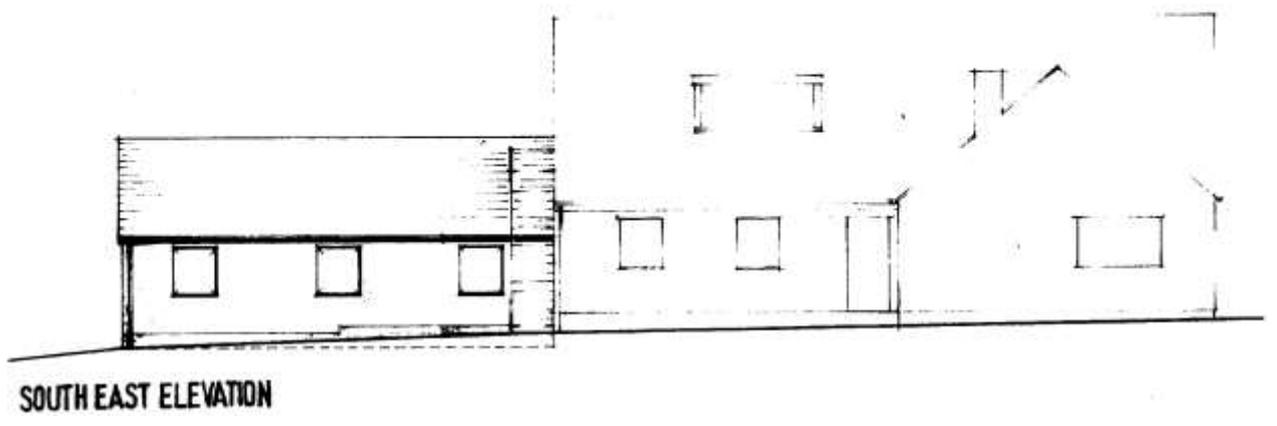
I have the figures for the replies to the questions on these, but I don't think that listing them would be very meaningful. Basically the replies were in favour of more Club activities, with members not so interested in the buffet supper at Wells or the Barbecue at Upper Pitts as the other alternatives. I feel that during the year one of the problems with Club meets has been that members have at times received their Journals after some of the events have taken place. The causes of this are basically due to the complicated nature of the Journal deadlines and distribution. It is hoped to remedy this problem to some extent during the coming year.

T.E. Reynolds

September 1972



**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**



**SOUTH EAST ELEVATION**

## WESSEX CAVE CLUB

### Report of the Hon. Treasurer for the year ended August 31, 1972

Whilst the accounts show a final surplus of £129 carried to Accumulated Funds for this year as against £155 last year, these figures disguise what has been a somewhat disastrous year for the Club financially. This is because the subscription income for the year has not been sufficient to meet the related expenses (tackle, journal etc) and so there is a deficit of £63 as against a surplus last year of £44 when comparing subscription income and related expenses. This deficit is converted into the final surplus of £129 by the surplus on running Upper Pitts (£116) and the surplus on goods supplied to members (£95).

The cause of the deficit of £52 are as follows:-

1. Static income - £497 this year as against £487 last year. The Club's largest source of income is subscriptions, and whilst the membership is growing slowly it is not sufficient to cover the rising costs. While the income has risen by £10 the costs have risen by £117 (from £443 to £560).
2. Increased Journal costs - £326 this year as against £251 last year. This partly caused by increased paper costs and partly by the very heavy increases in postage charges in the year. In fact out of the £326 cost of the Journal, £88 or about a quarter was spent on postages and envelopes. This compares somewhat unfavourably with the £57 spent on postages and envelopes last year.
3. General increased costs. Whilst there is no other large single increase that it is possible to single out, it is noticeable that just about all the other items of expenditure have increased this year. The only crumb of comfort that can be offered is that the Tackle Warden is unlikely to be building as much tackle next year, and so tackle expenditure should be less next year.

It is this deficit that is behind the motion to increase the subscriptions from £1.50 to £2.00 with effect from the A.G.M. If this motion is passed it will give the Club approximately another £135 of income which, coupled with reduced tackle expenditure next year, should give the Club a comfortable surplus again (hopefully). If the increase is not passed the Club will very shortly find itself short of cash and so it will be necessary to cut back expenditure by such measures as reducing the size and frequency of the Journal which would, I feel, have a detrimental effect on the Club.

Against the rather gloomy position on subscriptions it is pleasing to record one area which is now back to profitability. This is Upper Pitts. The increases in hut fees from 10p a night to 15p a night coupled with better supervision has increased hut income from £265 to £412. The costs of running Upper Pitts have not risen to any large extent in the year but it is obvious that the Committee will have to watch the position to ensure that the H.Q. is making a sufficient surplus to pay for any major repairs that might become necessary.

The transfer to the Hut Fund for the year has been calculated as follows:-

Amount to cover period subs. for the year	£53
Surplus on Upper Pitts	<u>116</u>
	<u>£169</u>

Whilst this transfer is larger than the surplus for the year the Committee feel that a transfer of this size is necessary to build up the Hut Fund to a reasonable level to meet any major expenditure on the H.Q.

As a result of the motion at the 1971 A.G.M. a Publication Fund has been set up by transferring the accumulated profits which had been made on the sale of Occasional Publications out of the Accumulated Funds to a separate fund. Separate accounts have been prepared for both this Publication Fund and for the Survey Fund and are included along with the main Club accounts. These funds now have their own bank accounts and are entirely self-contained.

Finally, Tony Dingle who has served the Club so admirably as Subscription Treasurer has decided that he can no longer afford the time to continue. The Club owes a lot to Tony for the amount of work that he has put in looking after subscriptions, so many thanks for all your work Tony.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB  
Income and Expenditure Account  
For the year ended 31st August 1972

<u>1971</u>		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>1971</u>		<u>£</u>
98	Tackle expenditure	108	—	402	Subscriptions for the Club year (Note 2)	417
3	Club dig and georesistivity expenses	3	—	10	Affiliation fees	-
251	Journal	326	—	7	Entrance fees	6
7	Library expenses	4	—	29	Donations	36
47	Third party insurance	55	—	-	Use of duplicator	6
24	Stationery, postages and telephone	45	—	27	Journal sales	32
5	Bank charges and cheque books	4	—	3	Profit on Annual Dinner and Parties	-
8	Subscriptions (Note 1)	12	—	4	Charterhouse Caving Committee permits	-
-	Sundry expenditure	3	—	5	Contribution towards cost of timber for Lamb Leer Platform	-
443		560	—	487		497
44	Surplus carried down	-	—	-	Deficit carried down	63
487		560	—	487		560
-	Deficit brought down	63	—	44	Surplus brought down	-
-	Purchase of Addressograph	19	—	14	Surplus on running Upper Pitts (Note 3)	116
155	Excess of Income over Expenditure carried to Accumulated Funds	129	—	15	Surplus on goods supplied to members (note 4)	95
155		211	—	82	Profit on sale of Occasional Publications	-
155		211	—	155		211

The notes attached form part of these accounts

SUBJECT TO AUDIT

**WESSEX CAVE CLUB**

Balance Sheet as at 31st August 1972

1971		£	£	1971		£	£
	<u>Hut Fund</u>				<u>New Headquarters</u>		
2,759	Balance at September 1, 1971	2,772			<u>Freehold Land and Buildings - Eastwater</u>		
66	Add: Proposed transfer from Accumulated Funds for 1972	169		4,626	Cost to September 1, 1971	4,672	
<u>2,825</u>		<u>2,941</u>		46	Add: Expenditure during year	50	
53	Less: Period subscriptions relating to the current year (Note 2)	53		<u>4,672</u>	Cost to August 31, 1972 (Note 5)	<u>4,722</u>	
				1,918	Less: Grant received	1,918	2,804
<u>2,772</u>				<u>2,754</u>	<u>Hut Fund Investments</u>		
			2,888	18	Balance at Bank and cash in hand		84
	<u>Accumulated Funds</u>			<u>2,772</u>			<u>2,888</u>
	Balance at September 1, 1971	496			<u>Current Assets</u>		
	Less: Transfer to Publication Fund	149		321	Sundry stocks (Note 7)	151	
		<u>347</u>		42	Debtors and payments in advance	22	
	Add: Surplus for the year	129		305	Balance at Bank and cash in hand (Note 6)	<u>309</u>	482
		476					
496	Less: Proposed transfer to the Hut Fund to be approved by 1972 A. G. M.	169			<u>SUBJECT TO AUDIT</u>		
			307				
	<u>Current Liabilities</u>						
56	Subscriptions in advance	66					
83	Sundry Creditors	83					
33	1971 Dinner surplus carried forward	26					
			175				
<u>3,440</u>			<u>3,370</u>				<u>3,370</u>

The notes attached form part of these accounts

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Survey Fund (Note 9)

Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31st August, 1972

<u>1971</u>		£	£	£
	Sales			110
	Deduct			
23	Stock at August 31, 1971	35		
59	Survey purchases and costs	80		
82		<u>115</u>		
35	Less: Stock at August 31, 1972	<u>38</u>		
47				<u>77</u>
<u>19</u>	<u>Profit carried to Balance Sheet</u>			<u>33</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST AUGUST, 1972

<u>Assets</u>				
35	Stock of surveys at cost			38
40	Cash in hand			70
<u>75</u>				<u>108</u>
<u>Represented by</u>				
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>				
56	Balance at August 31, 1971			75
19	Profit for the year			33
<u>75</u>				<u>108</u>

Publication Fund (Note 10)

Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31st August, 1972

	£	£
Sales		113
Deduct		
Stock at August 31, 1971	221	
Expenditure in year	-	
	<u>221</u>	
Less Stock at August 31, 1972	<u>168</u>	
		<u>53</u>
Profit carried to Balance Sheet		<u>60</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST AUGUST, 1972

<u>Assets</u>		
Stock of publications at stock		168
Debtors		12
Cash in Hand		29
		<u>209</u>
<u>Represented by</u>		
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>		
Balance at August 31, 1971 transferred from general Club Funds		149
Profit for the year		60
		<u>209</u>

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Notes on the accounts for the year ended 31st August, 1972

1. Subscriptions paid

During the course of the Club year the Wessex Cave Club has paid subscriptions to other caving organisations as follows:

	1971	1971
	£	£
Cambrian Caving Conference	2	1
Charterhouse Caving Committee	9	3
Council of Southern Caving Clubs	1	4
	12	8
	12	8

2. Subscriptions for the Club Year

Included in the amount of £417 (1971 - £402) for subscriptions for the Club Year is the amount of £53 (1971 - £53) 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.

3. Surplus on running Upper Pitts

	1971	1971
Hut fees received	412	265
Less: Expenses		
Rates	61	62
Insurance	57	50
Electricity	24	11
Propane Gas	17	25
Central Heating costs	53	60
Hardcore for drive	23	-
Miscellaneous repairs and cleaning costs	61	43
	296	251
	116	14

4. Surplus on goods supplied to members

	£	1971
	£	£
Blazer Badges	2	-
Carbide and Carbide Lamp Spares	3	(1)
Electrolyte and Nife and Edison spares	(13)	8
Nife sets	107	-
Boiler Suits	(4)	8
	95	15
	95	15

The figures in brackets represent a deficiency, those without brackets a surplus.

5. Upper Pitts H. Q.

The expenditure to August 31, 1972 on the Upper Pitts H. Q. has been made up as follows:-

	£	£
Land, fencing, car park and paths	482	
Site drainage and septic tank	70	
Erection of shell	2,924	552
Floors, ceilings, partition walls, internal joinery, paint and plastering	471	
Wiring, electrical and gas fittings	196	
Plumbing, hot and cold water system and drainage	182	
Central heating installation and boiler	363	
Fire escape and miscellaneous	34	
	4,170	4,722
	4,170	4,722

The building and contents at Upper Pitts are currently insured for the sum of £10,500 and the Committee are of the opinion that the current market value of the Upper Pitts exceeds the book value of £2,888 shown in these accounts.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Notes on the accounts for the year ended 31st August, 1972 (continued)

6. Balance at Bank and Cash in Hand

The total figures of balance at Bank and cash in hand are £393 and are represented by balance at Midland Bank Ltd., Solihull of that amount.

7. Sundry Stocks

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

	£	£
Goods for resale		
Carbide and Carbide Lamp Spares	5	
Electrolyte and Nife and Edison spares	16	
Boiler Suits	11	
Pack Frames	4	
Nife Cells	<u>40</u>	
		76
Upper Pitts stocks		
Fuel Oil	45	
Propane Gas	<u>5</u>	
		50
Journal Covers		25
		<u>151</u>

All the above stocks are valued at the lower of cost on net realisable value.

8. At August 31, 1972 the Club owned the following items of equipment which were not represented on the Balance Sheet as at that date.

Roneo duplicator, ladders, ropes and caving equipment, hut furniture and equipment. Roneo Addressograph.

All these items were written off in the Income and Expenditure Account in the year in which they were purchased.

9. Survey Fund

This fund was set up in 1962 for the purpose of making cave surveys more available, to prevent them from becoming lost and to sell them at as low a price as reasonable. The surplus on this fund is to help finance the holding of a stock of surveys, to buy surveying equipment and to help the production of surveys in other ways. The survey fund is operated under a joint arrangement with the Bristol Exploration Club, Mendip Caving Group and Shepton Mallet Caving Club.

10. Publication Fund

This fund was set up at the 1971 A.G.M. with the prime purpose of financing future publications. The fund may be used for any other purpose at the discretion of a general meeting of the Club. The fund is to be mainly financed by the sale of publications.

## WESSEX CAVE CLUB

### Annual General Meeting

The 1972 Annual General Meeting of the Wessex Cave Club will be held at Priddy Village Hall on October 21st, 1972, starting at 15.00 hours prompt.

#### AGENDA

1. Election of a Chairman
2. President's opening address
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of the 1971 Annual General Meeting (previously circulated)
5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 1971 A.G.M.
6. The Report of the Hon. Secretary (previously circulated)
7. Discussion of the Report of the Hon. Secretary
8. The Report of the Hon. Treasurer and the accounts for the year to August 31st, 1972 (already circulated)
9. The Report of the Hon. Auditor
10. Discussion of the Reports of the Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Auditor
11. Report of the Trustees
12. The following alterations to the Club Rules have been proposed by the Committee:-
  - a) Rule 8 - Para 1, line 1, delete "£1.50" and substitute "£2.00".
  - b) Rule 8 - Para 2, line 4 delete "£1.75" and substitute "£2.25".
  - c) Rule 8 - Para 1, line 2, delete "on October 1st each year" and substitute "at the start of the Club Year".
  - d) Rule 13 - Add to this rule the following, "Alterations in subscription rates shall be effective from the date of the meeting at which they are passed".
  - e) Rule 6 - Delete this rule and substitute a new rule 6 that reads as follows, "The election of the Committee shall be by postal ballot. The end of the Club year shall coincide with the date of the A.G.M. The A.G.M. and the Annual Dinner shall be held annually on the third Saturday in October".
  - f) Rule 5 - Delete this rule and substitute a new rule 5 that reads as follows, "That the affairs of the Club shall be conducted by a Committee which shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Gear Curator, Assistant Secretary, Caving Secretary, Editor, H.Q. Warden, H.Q. Officer, and three other members who shall retire annually and be eligible for re-election., These posts are honorary and must be filled by full members of the Club. Full members standing for office of for membership of the Committee must be nominated by two other full members of the Club. The Committee shall fill any casual vacancies.  
The Committee may appoint any full member of the Club whether they be a Committee member or not to carry out any duties that the Committee consider necessary.  
The Honorary Secretary of any properly constituted group within the Club shall be eligible to attend a Committee meeting in an ex-officio capacity, and may nominate a substitute to attend any meeting to which he cannot attend personally.  
An Honorary Auditor shall be appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting."
13. Discussion on the proposed extension to Upper Pitts.
14. Election of officers and committee for 1972 - 73 (see details circulated with this agenda)
15. Election of an Honorary Auditor for 1972 - 73.
16. Notices.

Light refreshments will be available after the meeting. Nife cell spares, surveys etc will be on sale.

The Annual Dinner is being held at Cheddar, at the Bath Arms Hotel, at 19.30 hours for 20.00 hours.

## WESSEX CAVE CLUB

### Nominations for Committee for 1972-73

President	F.W. Frost	J.D. Hanwell	T.E. Reynolds
Vice-Presidents	M. Norbert Casteret	The Committee	The Committee
	Rev. C.H.D. Cullingford	The Committee	The Committee
	C.W. Harris	The Committee	The Committee
	Comm. P.B. Lawder	The Committee	The Committee
	H. Murrell	The Committee	The Committee
	Dr. E.K. Tratman	The Committee	The Committee
	Dr. D.S. Wallis	The Committee	The Committee
Chairman	J.D. Hanwell	T.E. Reynolds	D.J. Causer
Secretary	T.E. Reynolds	J.D. Hanwell	P. Davies
Tackle warden	W.J.R. Willcocks	A. Newport	A. Audsley
Treasurer	A. Newport	A. Audsley	W.J.R. Willcocks
Assistant Secretary	I. Gordan	T.E. Reynolds	I. Jepson
Caving Secretary	J.H. Jones	M.H. Evans	I. Jepson
Editor	R.R. Kenney	B.E. Prewer	C.H. Kenney
H.Q. Warden	-----		
H.Q. Administration Officer	W.J. Ham	M. Dewdeney-York	I. Jepson
Committee	P. Davies	T.E. Reynolds	J.D. Hanwell
	B. Hansford	A.R. Jarratt	M. Dewdeney-York
	I. Jepson	R.C. Harper	T.J. Lyons

No nomination for the post of H.Q. Warden had been received by the Hon. Secretary by September 17th. It will therefore be necessary for the A.G.M. to appoint an H.Q. Warden at the meeting, or failing that for the A.G.M. to direct the Committee as to how the H.Q. is to be run in the absence of an H.Q. Warden.

It has been assumed that the change in Club Rule 3 mentioned in the August Journal will be passed at the A.G.M. If the change is not passed then the nominees for the posts of: Caving Secretary, Editor and Hut Administration Officer will be considered for nominations for the Committee, This will give a total of six nominations for the Committee and so it will be necessary for the A.G.M. to nominate three more Committee members at the meeting.

If the change in Club Rule 5 is passed at the A.G.M., there are (with the exception of the H.Q. Warden) the correct number of nominees for the posts and so there will be no election.