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<u>Asst. Secretary:</u>	D.I. Gordon, 3 Townsend, East Harptree, Bristol..
<u>Hon. Treasurer:</u>	A. Newport, 87 Bonnington Walk, Lockleaze, Bristol.
<u>Hut Administration:</u>	W.J. Ham, The Laurels, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset,
<u>Subs. Treasurer:</u>	R.C. Harper, Kitchener House, 6 Gordon Terrace, Newington, Edinburgh 16.
<u>Cave Keys:</u>	J. Jones, 33A Dinaw Street, Nantmoel, Glamorgan.
<u>Journal Distribution:</u>	M. Hewins, 31 Badshot Park, Badshot Lea, Farnham, Surrey.
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CLUB NEWS

Now that the A.G.M. and Dinner have passed the Club can now get back to the more mundane activities of caving etc.:. A brief report of the A.G.M. appears elsewhere in this Journal, but the attention of the members is drawn to the changes in the Club rules that were passed at the A.G.M. The effect of these changes is as follows:-

1. The subscriptions have been increased to £2.50 for an ordinary member and £3.00 for a joint member. This increased subscription takes effect as from the A.G.M.
2. The Club year now ends at the A.G.M., not on September 30th as previously.
3. The structure of the club administration has been revised along the lines outlined in the article which was published in the August Journal.

An insert is included with this Journal which gives details of how to pay subscriptions. Tony Dingle is no longer handling subscriptions, and all subscriptions should be sent to Rod Harper, Kitchener House, 6 Gordan Terrace, Newington, Edinburgh 16. The revised rates of subscriptions take effect from the A.G.M. This means that any members who paid their subscriptions for the current year before the A.G.M. will have paid at the lower rate. The A.G.M. made it clear when approving the increased subscription that there must be no 'witch-hunt' of members who had paid at the lower rate. But, if any member who has paid at the lower rate feels like paying the difference, it is doubtful whether the cash will be refused!

The Officers and Committee for the current year, together with the committee appointments, are listed after Club News. An extra copy of this list has also been inserted loose in this Journal so that members can keep it handy for easy reference. Once again the Committee would like to remind members that if a query or a request for keys is sent to the right officer, then your letter will be answered very much more quickly than otherwise.

Club Activities

Over the past year it has become apparent that organised club trips seem to be out of favour with club members. There have been several cases of trips in the past year that were organised but were later cancelled because of lack of interest. This trend is probably partially caused by the ease of communications which change a Yorkshire trip from the epic that it once was to the easy week-end trip that it is now. In view of this lack of interest the Committee has decided not to prepare a detailed list of club meets. But, for any members who are interested in caving activities of this nature the Friday Night Club meets regularly and anyone is welcome. More details of the Friday Night trips are available from Richard Kenney, Yennek, St. Mary's Road, Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset.

The only region to which Club Trips have produced any interest has been South Wales. This is probably due to the restrictions on access to the major caves in this area. The Club does have guest leaders for both Dan-yr-Ogof and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and these leaders can lead parties of club members down these caves. So, any members interested in a trip down these caves should get in touch with one of the club guest leaders and get them to arrange a trip. The leaders are as follows:-

Dan-yr-Ogof

Tony Philpott, 3 Kings Drive, Bishopston, Bristol 7.
Tim Reynolds, Tudor Cottage, Beryl Lane, Wells, Somerset BA5 3AD.
Roy Stanings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.
Derek Tringham, Silverdale, Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu

Tim Atkinson, 1 Carlingcott, Peasedown St. John, Nr. Bath, Somerset.
Phil Davies, Cophalls, West Hill, Wraxall, Bristol BS19 1PN.
Bob Pyke, 20 Owen Grove, Henleaze, Bristol 7.
Don Thomson, Pinkacre, Leigh-on-Mendip, Somerset.
Ian Jepson, 7 Shelley Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath, Somerset.
John Jones, 33A Dinaw Street, Nantymoel, Glamorgan.

It is only necessary to have a leader for trips into O.F.D. 1. No leader is required for trips to O.F.D. 2 and 3.

Committee Meeting abstracts

The 267th Committee Meeting was held at Upper Pitts on Sunday, November 5th. All Officers and Committee Members were present. The matters discussed included the following:-

1. The sales officer (Ian Jepson) reported that he was following up various sources of supply and that he hoped to have ties, badges and carbide on sale at Upper Pitts in the next few months.
2. In view of the comments made about the apparent lack of affiliated clubs at the A.G.M. the Assistant Secretary (Dave Gordan) was asked to chase the matter up as a matter of urgency. He hoped to be in a position to report back to the next Committee Meeting on the position of the affiliated clubs.
3. Since some members did not receive their October Journal containing the notice of the A.G.M. etc until a few days before the meeting, it was decided to circulate all the A.G.M. notices, minutes, agenda etc separately to the members in late September. It was hoped that this would ensure that everyone received notice of the A.G.M. in good time.
4. It was generally agreed that the Dinner at the Bath Arms had not been satisfactory. The appointment of someone to organise the 1973 Dinner was to be done at the next Committee Meeting but it was felt that a different venue and arrangements were to be tried next year.
5. The 1973 A.G.M. and Dinner was fixed for Saturday, October 20th. More details would be announced nearer the date.
6. The appointment of various people to carry out the sundry duties necessary to run the Club was made. A list of these appointments is given later. No one had been appointed to the post of H.Q. Warden by the A.G.M. and so various arrangements for keeping the H.Q. tidy were discussed. It was agreed that any Committee Members who stayed at the H.Q. should make certain that it was kept tidy and the Hon. Secretary was to approach various people who might be prepared to act as H.Q. Warden on a temporary basis.
7. The site at Upper Pitts was still a bit of a mess. John Ham was to make enquiries to see if he could get someone to plough it up so that it could then be levelled. The boundary walls were in a poor state of repair and these would be rebuilt as and when possible.
8. The Tackle Warden was authorised to spend up to £30 on an electric arc welding set. This was to be kept by the Tackle Warden and would be used for the manufacture of digging equipment and for sundry other welding jobs that had to be done from time to time.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1972 - 1973

<u>President:</u>	F.W. Frost
<u>Vice-Presidents:</u>	M. Norbert Casteret, Rev. C.H.D. Culiingford, C.W. Harris, Com. P.B. Lawder, H. Murrell, Dr. E.K. Tratman, Dr. F.S. Wallis.
<u>Chairman:</u>	J.D. Hanwell
<u>Secretary:</u>	T.E. Reynolds
<u>Assistant Secretary:</u>	D.I. Gordan
<u>Caving Secretary:</u>	J.H. Jones
<u>Tackle Warden:</u>	W.J.R. Willcocks
<u>Treasurer:</u>	A. Newport
<u>Editor:</u>	R.R. Kenney
<u>Hut Administration Officer:</u>	W.J. Ham
<u>Committee:</u>	P. Davies, B. Hansford, I. Jepson

APPOINTMENTS AND DUTIES FOR 1972-1973

Members are strongly urged to direct queries to the appropriate person in the following list of appointments for the current Club year:-

Officers

- 1) Secretary: T.E. Reynolds, Tudor Cottage, Beryl Lane, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3AD.
Internal Club Policy, liaison with other Clubs and outside organisations.
- 2) Assist. Secretary: D.I. Gordon, 3 Townsend, East Harptree, Bristol.
Affiliated clubs. CCC permits for Club members. New membership applications.
- 3) Caving Secretary: J.H. Jones, 33A Dinaw Street, Nantymoel, Glamorgan.
Access to controlled Mendip caves; keys and CCC permits for non-members.
- 4) Tackle Warden: W.J.R. Willcocks, 3 West View Drive, Twyford, Berks.
Maintenance and construction of tackle.
- 5) Treasurer: A. Newport, 87 Bonnington Walk, Lockleaze, Bristol.
Overall club finances.
- 6) Editor: R.R. Kenney, 'Yennek', St. Mary's Road, Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset.
Articles for publication in the Club Journal.
- 7) Hut Admin. Officer: W.J. Ham, The laurels, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.
Co-ordinating repairs and supplies for Upper Pitts.

Committee Appointments

- 1) Sales Service: I. Jepson, 7 Shelley Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath, Somerset.
Sales of Club stocks of caving goods, nife lamp spares etc:
- 2) Survey Scheme: R.A. Philpott, 3 Kings Drive, Bishopston, Bristol 7.
Sales of cave surveys.
- 3) Publication sales: P. Davies, Copthalls, West Hill, Wraxall, Bristol.
Sales of Journal back nos, and Occasional Publications.
- 4) Journal Distribution: M. Hewins, 31 Badshot Park, Badshot Lea, Farnham, Surrey.
Distribution of Journals.
- 5) Librarian: C.J. Hawkes, Bishops Cottage, Longland Lane, Old Ditch, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset.
Care of Club Library.
- 6) Hut Bookings: W.J. Ham, The Laurels, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.
Bookings for large parties who wish to stay at the Club H.Q.
- 7) Club M.R.O. List: H.A. Pearson, 129 East Dundry Road, Bridge Farm Estate, Whitchurch, Bristol 4.
Maintaining a list of people in the Bristol and Mendip areas who are available for M.R.O. call-outs.
- 8) Subscriptions Treasurer: R.C. Harper, Kitchener House, 6 Gordan Terrace, Newington, Edinburgh 16.
Payment of annual subscriptions.

MEETS

Friday Night Club

<u>Sat. December 30th</u>	3.00 Singing River Mine
<u>Fri. January 12th</u>	Swildons old 40ft.
<u>Fri. January 26th</u>	Nine Barrows and Sludge Pit.
<u>Fri. February 9th</u>	August Hole
<u>Fri. February 23rd</u>	Cuthberts
<u>Fri. March 9th</u>	Shatter Pot, Swildons Hole.
<u>Sat. March 24th</u>	Wales, 9.30 a.m. at Penwyllt.

Friday Meets at 7.30.

1972 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This annual gathering of the Club occurred on October 21st at Priddy Village Hall. The President, Frank Frost, in his opening address mentioned the change that had come over caving as a result of motorways and other road improvements. Trips to Yorkshire and South Wales were commonplace and members were now going abroad to do their caving. He then went on to record sadly that Herbert Ashworth had died recently. Herbert Ashworth had started caving at an age when most people are near to retirement, and had always been a quiet and friendly member of the Club. The President concluded by expressing the hope that 'we will always keep the interest of the ordinary member in mind when deciding Club policy'.

The Secretary's Report created two main points for discussion. The first arose when Howard Kenney enquired why no income had been received from affiliated clubs during the year. If no income had been received presumably there were no affiliated members. It was admitted by the Committee that there had been an administrative break-down which had resulted in no cash being collected from affiliated clubs, but during the year these clubs had received the full benefits of membership (e.g. Journals, insurance cover etc) and it was intended to sort the position out in the coming Club Year. The second item concerned the publication in the Club Journal of the article by Fred Davies on novice training. No adverse comment had been received from the members on the views expressed in this article, and the meeting endorsed these opinions.

Sadly, the Treasurer's Report disclosed that the Club had sustained a loss during the previous year and unless subscriptions were increased the position would become worse in the coming year. The only bright spot in this financial gloom was caused by the Survey Fund which was running at a profit. It was hoped to use part of this profit in the future for buying survey equipment and surveys for the Library. The Auditor went on to endorse the Treasurer's Report and pointed out that the loss the Club had sustained was caused by inflation and so it was unfortunately necessary to increase subscriptions to meet the rising costs that the Club was facing. The discussion of the Treasurer's Report covered various subjects including that of the cash collected from the H.Q. (hut fees, day fees, sales of caving goods etc). These receipts (especially the last two) were difficult to control and it was possible that the Club had lost some money from this source. There was some bewailing the lack of honesty of members, but it was eventually accepted that the total loss for the year from fees and sales was small and that this had to be accepted if these services were to be provided at the H.Q.

After the tale of financial gloom mentioned above, some cheer was brought to the meeting by the report of the 'four wise men' (the Trustees). Howard Kenney who gave the Trustees Report said that they had been very impressed with the state of the H.Q. and the way in which it was being used. The Trustees complimented the H.Q. Warden and the H.Q. Administration Officer on the marked improvement in the condition of the H.Q., and they also welcomed the Committee's plans for the new workshop extension.

After the Reports, the next item on the agenda was the various changes in the Club Rules that the Committee proposed to inflict upon the Club. The first change involved increasing the subscriptions. In the course of the discussion it emerged that the figures in the proposal (£2.00 for ordinary members and £2.50 for joint) were minimum figures and if the subscriptions were fixed at these rates, it would be necessary for the subscriptions to be raised in two years' time or even one year, if inflation continued at the current rate. After various proposals and counter proposals, the subscriptions were finally fixed at £2.50 for ordinary members and £3.00 for joint members. It was agreed that these rates were to take effect as from this meeting, after the Committee had promised not to indulge in a 'witch-hunt' to get members who had paid at the old rate prior to the meeting to pay the extra. In the course of the discussion on this proposal, Luke Devenish enquired if the Committee had considered how they would apply the joint membership rate in the case of a polygamous member.

The next batch of proposals dealt with the change of the date on which the Club year ended and also the change in the Club's administrative structure. These proposals provoked some discussion and were passed after the wording of some of the proposed changes had been slightly altered. The general feeling of the meeting on this subject was that if the Committee considered these changes to be necessary in order to run the Club efficiently, then they ought to be passed. So, if things go wrong during the coming year the Committee are going to have some explaining to do!

Time was now getting short, but another important item loomed into view on the agenda. This was the new extension to Upper Pitts. It was revealed that if it was built professionally it would cost about £2,100. But, if the Club provided all the labour and only purchased the materials, the cost would be about £700. So the actual cost would probably be somewhere between these two figures depending on how much of the work the Club did itself. It was agreed by the meeting that the extension was necessary and that the Committee would look into the question of financing it. The Committee revealed that it had a scheme which it hoped would raise sufficient money and so they were left to follow the matter up. If necessary the Committee would call an E.G.M. to obtain approval from the members before they committed the Club to any major expenditure.

After this the meeting rushed to a close, pausing only to confirm the election of the officers and committee.

The meeting then closed and members gratefully devoured the tea and cakes kindly prepared by Pat Davies.

The Annual Dinner (or Flypass) was held at the Bath Arms Hotel, Cheddar. Your Scribe has only a confused account of the events but it would appear that there was a difference of opinion between the Club and the Bath Arms concerning quantity and quality of food and the type of behaviour expected at such an establishment. It is believed that the Committee do not intend arranging the Dinner at the Bath Arms for some time to come! As one member cheerfully remarked, 'We were thrown out of here the last time we had Dinner here in 1947, so once every 25 years seems about right!'

EDITORIAL

At the start of a new Club Year a few comments about the Journal seem appropriate. First of all may I remind you that we have to publish the old Hillgrove logs for the period 1966-1971! It would be too expensive to print them separately so they appear in the Journal when space permits. They record the activities of individuals, the caves that have been worked in the years concerned, and records of new discoveries. You may get some ideas for new trips by reading them.

Next - despite our lapses into cave 'ology' from time to time we ought to remind ourselves that one of our functions is to enjoy caving, and another one is to encourage affiliated clubs. Hence, articles covering these subjects have an equal right to publication with more serious material.

Again, when space permits, the opportunity is taken to publish articles that cover events in the past that were largely unrecorded at the time. (One tends to forget how small the various club journals were twenty or so years ago). For example, in this issue you come to the end of the immediate post war cave diving story.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

10/11/72

Dear Sir,

Increasing numbers of cavers are making use of rope climbing techniques in preference to ladders, especially on longer pitches. One of the most popular mechanical prussikers for this purpose is the Swiss made Jumar.

While these are in many ways excellent devices, I feel it necessary to draw to the attention of potential users, the fact that contrary to popular opinion, it is possible for Jumars to come off a rope while under load.

This does not apply when they are being used on kern mantel rope, and probably not when being used on a tightly laid nylon climbing rope.

However, if the rope is of a loosely laid construction - as for example the blue polypropylene of which the Wessex holds large stocks, the situation is somewhat different. Deflecting the load on a Jumar about 10° from the vertical can allow one of the main strands of the rope to slip between the edge of the cam, and the groove in which the rope runs. This jams the Jumar so that it can be moved neither up nor down the rope. Also, the cam is forced back hard against the safety catch, so that the latter cannot be unfastened to remove the Jumar from the rope. If the load remains on the jammed Jumar, the first strand of the rope soon slips right through the gap in which it's jammed, and is followed by the other strands, which may jam also, but more probably pull straight through, leaving the Jumar suddenly detached from the rope. This is both unnerving and embarrassing.

Experience has also shown that polypropylene ropes (with the possible exception of Ulstron) are very vulnerable to abrasion damage when used with Jumars, especially when a Jumar is being used as a safety lock for lifelining.

The moral seems to be, "Don't use Jumars on loose-laid ropes", and if you do, "Beware".

I. Jepson.

The Editor.

Dear Sir,

Regarding the 1972 Club Dinner, which stands out as the worst for many years considering the inadequate, poor quality food, excessive overcrowding, surly uncooperative service, and the restraints placed upon us.

May we be assured that the committee will not countenance booking another dinner in the Bath Arms or anywhere of a similar calibre, and that they will endeavour to ensure that the Club Dinner for 1973 is of sufficiently high standard to wipe out the memory of this year's fiasco.

Signed:

Black Wal
Mike D. York
Elizabeth Ansty
John Jones
Richard West
Anne West
John Ham
Mr. and Mrs. Hansford

NOTICE

The Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society have produced a film on some aspects of Mendip caving and archaeology. It is 16mm, runs for 12 minutes and features Crooks Peak, Axbridge, Cheddar Gorge, Swildons Hole and Hunter's Lodge as its main attractions. Further details, including costs, can be obtained from c/o 71 Totterdown Road, Weston-s-Mare, Somerset.

UPPER PITTS

BOX FEES ARE NOW DUES Members keeping a food box at Upper Pitts are reminded that the 50p annual box fee is now due.

MILK BOTTLES Visitors to Upper Pitts are requested to take their milk bottles home with them. A large number of bottles collect at the hut and many have to be thrown away.

NAHANNI - THE LAST, BEST WEST

Derek Ford, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

The Mackenzie Mountains are amongst the most remote parts of Canada. They lie west of the Mackenzie River and form the boundary between the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory for hundreds of miles. The southern portion of the Mountains is drained by the South Nahanni River, a tributary of the Mackenzie. For one hundred miles in its middle reaches the South Nahanni is incised in a series of meandering canyons that are as much as 4,000 feet deep. They are spectacular, the greatest river canyons in Canada.

Throughout its brief history the canyon country has been a place of mystery and foreboding. The first explorers, sailing up the River at the turn of the century, had a habit of losing their heads - literally! On at least two occasions Mounted Police search parties found human skeletons with the skulls missing. "Headless Valley" and "Funeral Range" are amongst the more inspiring place names of the region.

You've probably heard of the South Nahanni. In the summer of 1971 a much-titled captain of the British Army launched an expedition up it using motor-driven rafts. He declared that he would solve the mystery of the headless men. Staunch and true, pistols at their sides to cope with the unknown head-hunters, the gallant captain and his crew sailed into the gaping mouth of the first canyon, supported by no more than unprecedented ballyhoo and two or three supply aircraft per day. A few days later I flew into that canyon with a small party, armed to the teeth with penknives and mosquito repellent. We had come to join a party from Quebec that was quietly doing some real exploration, cave hunting up on the airy walls of the canyon.

The Quebec party was led by Jean Poirel. In 1965 he and others had parachuted into the headwaters of the River and come down the canyons in rubber dinghies. In the lowest canyon, (called 'First Canyon' by the original explorers), he had noted many cave mouths. He returned to explore them in the summers of 1970 and 1971.

First Canyon (see Figure 1) is entrenched across an anticline of textbook symmetry. The canyon walls rise to 3,500 feet above the River. For most of the way up, these walls are comprised of short cliffs interspersed with excessively steep screes. But at the top there is a Devonian limestone formation, 800 feet thick that supports cliffs that are truly vertical or overhanging all the way down. This is where the cave entrances occur. There are many tributary canyons in the limestone, too, ranging all the way up from mere Cheddar Gorges to whoppers like Lafferty Canyon, 2,000 feet deep and sheer all the way in places. These also appear to be full of caves.

In their first season, 1970, Poirel and his party reached 150 cave mouths. It was an heroic achievement. The technical problems of getting to a majority of the caves are considerable. Some could be reached by rappels from the cliff top; others were attained via a vestigial and discontinuous ledge that is frequently seen 500 feet above the base of the limestone cliffs. Some caves could not be entered at all: for example, there is a honey in Lafferty Canyon which appears (through binoculars) to be driving back into the wall as purposefully as the London Underground. It's about as big, too. But it is overhung for 600 feet above, there are no traverse possibilities and the rock is vertical and bad for 300 feet below!

Having gained their caves, Poirel's group too often learned the lesson that I know well from the Canadian Rockies. What looks like an excellent phreatic entrance when viewed with powerful binoculars turns out to be a 'frost pocket' when you have risked your neck and got there. Frost pockets are the product of preferential shattering back along a seepage crack in a cliff face. The entrances can be 100 feet high, 50 feet wide and finely arched but 30-50 feet inside, (in shadow where the binoculars can only see inviting blackness), they dwindle to nothing. More than 100 of Poirel's entrances belonged to this class of fraudulent caves.

They did find some true caves in 1970. These were usually blocked by a silt infilling that is of regional extent. The longest went 100 yards or so. But the finds were sufficiently interesting to warrant a return in the summer of 1971. The Canadian National Parks asked me to go in and assess the merits of the discoveries and I seized upon the chance.

So we joined Poirel's party, camped on the south bank of the River at the canyon mouth. There are some hot sulphur springs there to swim in. Within an hour of scrambling out of the float plane that serves as local taxi from civilisation 90 miles away, I was eating fresh bear steak and learning that a big find had just been made. This was "Grotte Valerie", located high in the North wall of First Canyon. During our stay, the combined party came up with two other major finds but Grotte Valerie is the best. I will restrict myself to a description of it, as an example of what caves are like in a sub-arctic, continental interior situation - a climate like that of north central Siberia.

Getting there is half the fun. First we had to cross the River. This was about as wide as the Thames at London and going like the clappers. Poirel's outboard motor had collapsed completely so six of us piled into a big dinghy with two oars, spades and trenching tools to use as paddles and paddled like hell in the upstream direction. We landed on the north bank 500 yards down river. Four miles' walk up the River's edge, (often going knee deep in astonishingly soft moss), brought us to the start of the climb up the wall. Poirel had found a small breach consisting of three long screes into gullies, virgin screes that were marvellous on the way down. They brought us to the cliff top, 200 feet above the cave. A strip of forest tilted at 45° led down easily to the West Entrance.

A plan of Grotte Valerie is shown in Figure 2. There are approximately 6,300 feet of passages. The cave is an irregular dendritic branchwork of gentle gradient which drained to the entrances in the cliff. The form is phreatic with elegantly vaulted, joint passages that are easily walkable for the most part. There are no running streams today. The cave is a fossil, like almost all of the others that we know in the South Nahanni country.

The passages descend gently from the West Entrance. Cave topography and climate combine to divide the cave into three well-contrasted sections, marked "A", "B" and "C" on Figure 2. Section A is the (comparatively) 'Warm Cave' B is the 'Permafrost Cave' and C is the 'Ice Cave'.

West Entrance faces South and is a pleasant, sunny bivouac site with garbage collection conveniently arranged by a family of bushy-tailed woodrats. Inside there is a short crawl, then the passage rises to head height and some nice assymetric stalactites, tufaceous but active, appear. In the first one hundred feet the temperature drops off from c.20°C. to 2°C. Things are really big at "the Cathedral", a fine, vaulted passage that is 50 feet high and 25 feet wide. The roof is decorated with hundreds of active, hard calcite, stalactites that are 2-3 feet long. Dating indicates that they are about 8,000 years old and so are growing well in the +2°C climate.

A turn to the left leads to Stalactite Gallery, which, trends back towards the warm cliff face. The gallery is profusely decorated with small but active straws, carrot stalactites and stalagmites, including the reddest ones that I have ever seen. It ends in a big chimney that is blocked with older stuff, massive, corbelled organ-pipe stalactites and columns that have been shattered by earthquake or frost. Dating in our uranium - 234: thorium - 230 laboratory at McMaster University indicates that these grew during the period, 200,000-300,000 years Before Present. The cave is an ancient one, as its position 1,700 feet above the River would suggest.

Walking from the Cathedral towards the junction point, "X", the abundance of stalactites steadily diminishes. We are further from the entrance zone and the air temperature is dropping towards 0°C. Evidently the rock is too cold for small seepage waters to penetrate. But there are fine phreatic pockets to look at in the roof and the remains of cemented cobble fills adhering to the walls - just like St. Cuthbert's! A short distance before the X junction a regular shower bath of water has managed to penetrate the roof, causing rock fall and furnishing the moisture for the Ice Cave.

The first big ice appears at the junction, a solid floor of it decorated with ice stalagmites and dropping off steeply for 6 feet into the entrance of Section B. Air temperature is 0°C. The ice constitutes a dam, impounding cold air in the first 600 feet of Section B, which is below the level of the dam. Climbing down the ice drop, one is immediately aware of this. Temperature drops to -3½°C. The air becomes extremely dry, whereas it is as humid as any Mendip cave elsewhere. The passage is very dusty. No seepage water enters overhead and the complete absence of stalactites suggests that none has penetrated since the last Ice Age, at least. There are precipitates of gypsum and hydromagnesite extruded from bedding planes. Such precipitates would not be stable in the moist air of sections A and C.

This permafrozen passage is an excellent preserving environment. Strewn along it are the skeletal remains of 87 mountain sheep of a species common in the region today. None have lost their heads though many skeletons are disturbed, probably by later victims blundering through them. But a few are perfectly preserved in the death position, with not even a rib dropped out of place. There are male and female, old and young. Some may have come in during the winter to escape the extreme cold outside but others (young lambs) certainly entered during the summer months. Remains of one individual have been dated to 2,200 years B.P.

What the animals are doing so far back in the cave? Why they died there? Why there are few or no remains elsewhere in the system? are matters of contention amongst wildlife specialists that we have taken in to have a look. I think that the ice dam served to impound them as effectively as it impounds the chilly air of this zone of the cave.

The northern half of Section B is also interesting. It climbs back above the level of the ice dam. Immediately, calcite stalactites appear in the roof. As the passage climbs higher, they increase in profusion. They are obviously new but never as big as those seen in the Warm Cave. When observed in the summers of 1971 and 1972, many were sheathed with a second stalactite of ice. Evidently in some summers, only ice grows here; in others, the ice melts and there is normal stalactite growth.

Section C is the kind of scenic passage that most cavers will only encounter in their fondest dreams. For a distance of 900 feet, walls and roof compose a finely rounded arch that rises above a floor of smooth, unsullied ice. All rock surfaces are densely coated with a layer of hexagonal hoarfrost crystals, one-two inches deep. A million crystal surfaces twinkle in the light and the whole effect is be-dazzling.

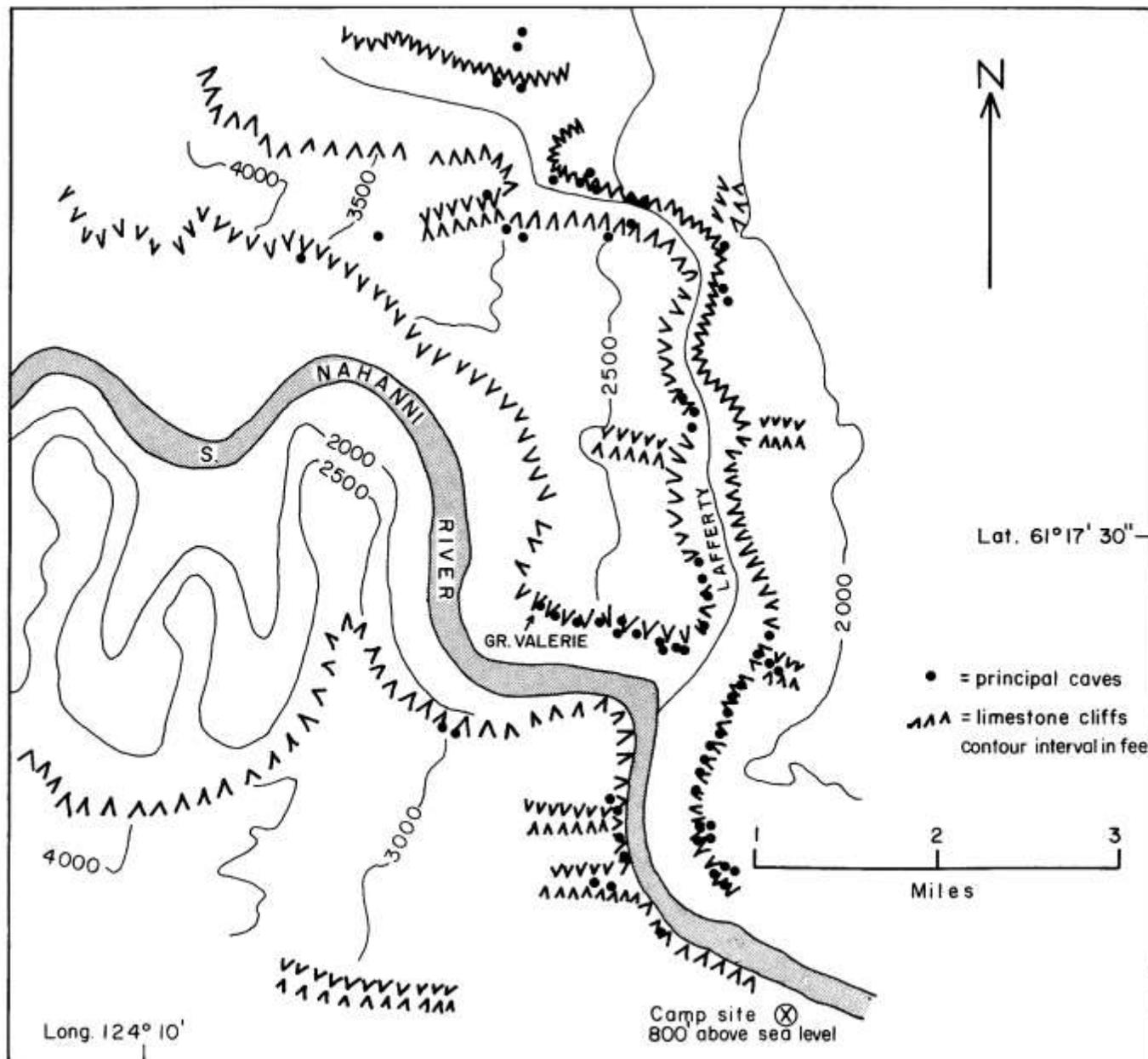
Both the hoarfrost and the ice on floor derive from the water encountered just before junction X. In summer a strong draft blows down the passage from X and out at the East Entrance, which is the lowest point in the cave. Some ornamented stalactites and a drained gourd pool are visible beneath the sheet of frost. They attest to warmer times in the distant past, as does an infilling of varved terra rossa which plugs the end of the tributary off of Section C.

Grotte Valerie is an unusual cave. Perhaps it is indicative of the character of the many others that we hope to find in this remote region. In terms of its erosional genesis it is ordinary enough, a simple, shallow phreatic system in gently dipping strata, though the cross-sectional vaulting is particularly fine. It owes its main interest to the striking climatic zonation, as I have tried to suggest in the description.

The zonation is easy to explain. During the winter, (about 7 months of the year), the external air is very cold and, so, dense. It drains into the cave via both entrance passages, A and C, driving the relatively warm cave air before it. From the convergence at X, this is pushed through the low-lying parts of Section B and up into its high northern recesses.

In summer, the external air is warmer. Gravitational drainage commences down the limb, C, which is a splendid katabatic accelerator. Warm air is sucked into the West Entrance, through Section A to X to compensate the drainage loss and, in its turn, drains down the accelerator. Section A warms up, seepage water penetrates to renew the building of stalactites there before it is vaporised by the draft and, ultimately, precipitated as hoarfrost in Section C. Nothing happens in Section B. A stagnant sump of dense air sits behind the ice barrier at the entrance there all summer long, impounding the warmer air of the northern recesses.

It is a pretty effect. When you walk through sections A and C in the summer, you are breathing this summer's cave air, progressively chilled for your taste by last winter's cold in the rock. In the southern half of Section B you sample last winter's air, whilst in the northern half you are breathing air from the summer before. This strange topo-climatic set-up has induced a true perma-frost state in one portion of the cave, a state that has apparently been maintained throughout the 8,000 plus years of post-glacial time in this region. Physical types can, no doubt, think of all sorts of ingenious observations that might be made in a situation like this. We are trying some of them. I hope to tell you more after the next Nahanni campaign; summer 1973.



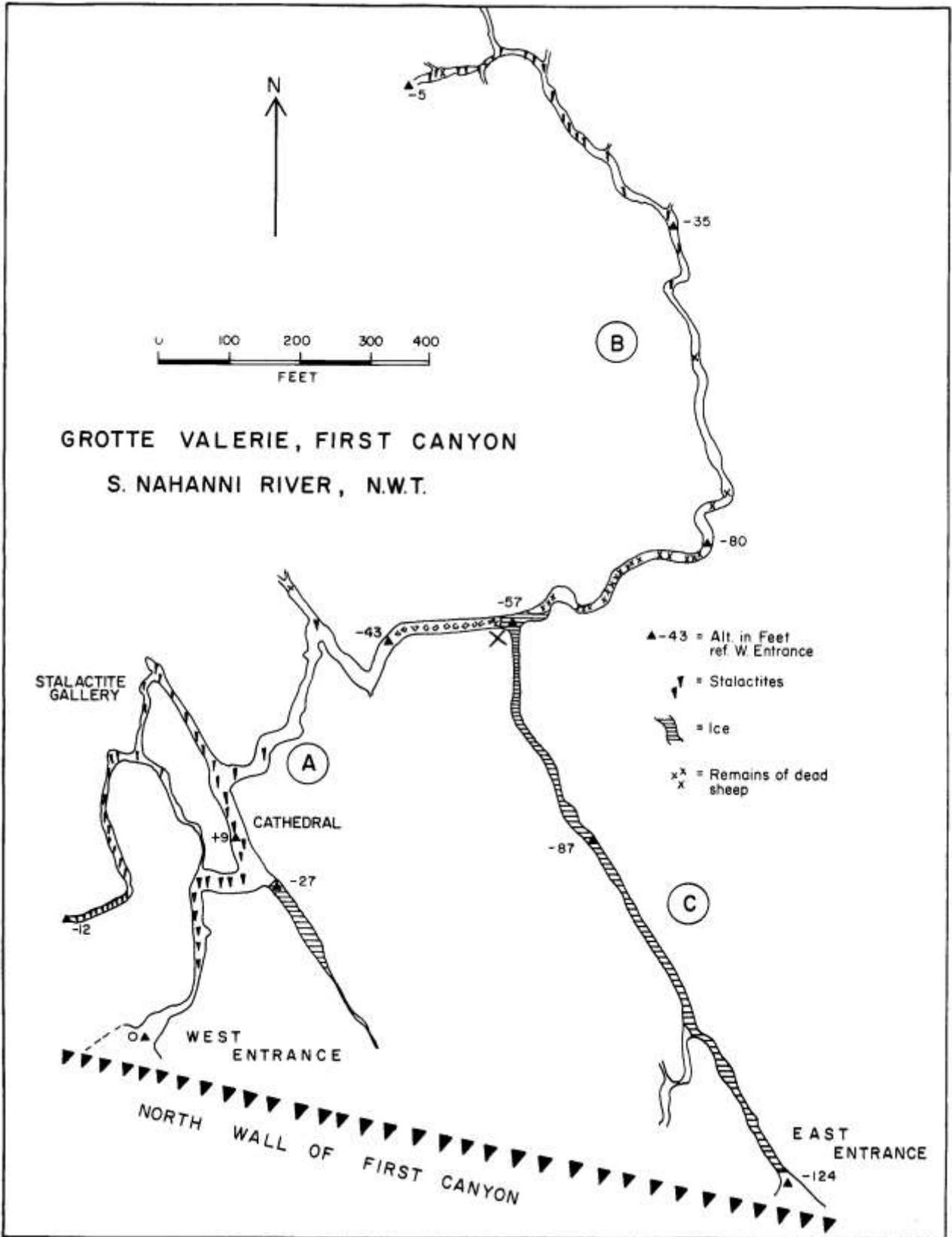




Plate 1. The eastern portion of First Canyon, S. Nahanni River, N.W. T. View looking East from the North rim of the canyon. The cliffs to the left are in the Devonian limestone and 800 feet in height. The River is 3,000 feet below the figure.

Photo by D. C. Ford.

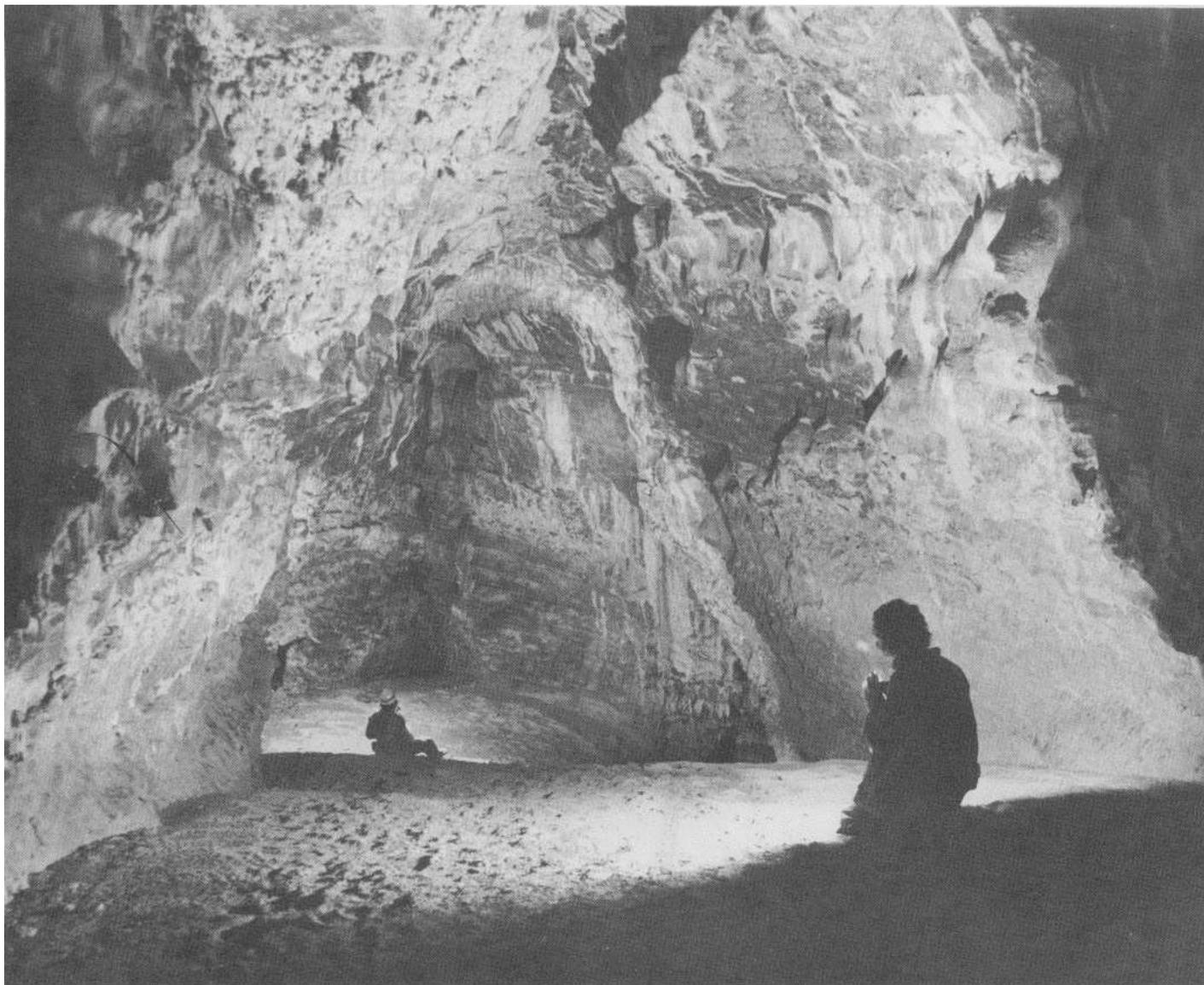


Plate 2. "The Cathedral" a finely-vaulted passage in the 'warm' section of Grotte Valerie. Many active stalactites may be seen in the roof.

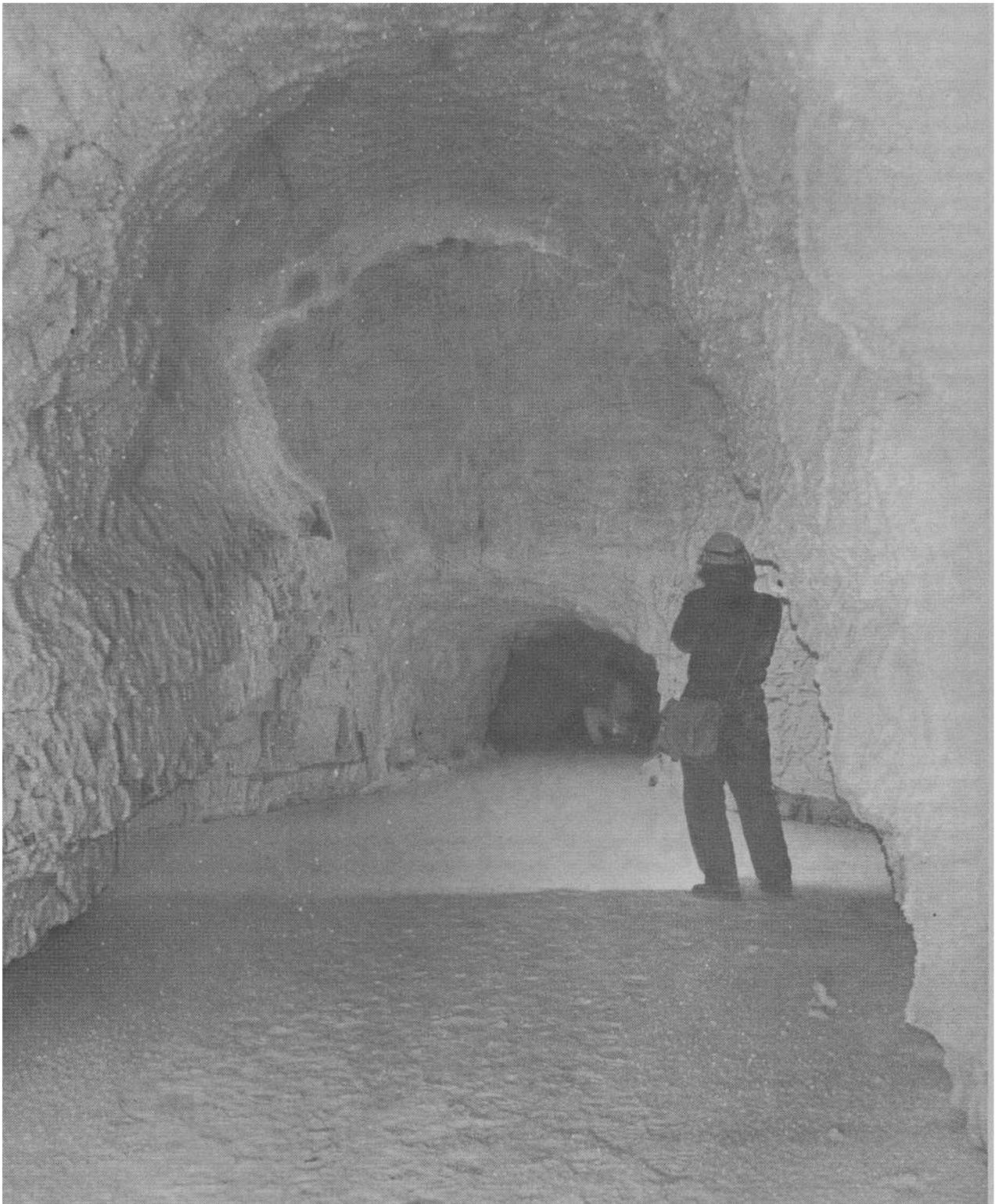


Plate 3. "Ice Gallery" in the ice cave of Grotte Valerie. The floor is of water ice. All rock and ice surfaces are coated with a layer of hoar frost crystals 1-2 inches deep. These conditions are maintained in the gallery for a distance of 900ft.

Photo by D.C. Ford

THE SHAMEFUL STORY OF BEDSTEAD SWALLET

by The Black Knight

I have been strangely attracted by your Journal's accounts of the doings of the mysterious knights of NHASA, and of their innumerable peasants, magic robots and wicked rivals in the fey world of speleomythology. There are areas of obscurity in these tales, but one thing at least is clear: the Knights are not averse to a little public self-congratulation now and then, nor to seeking wide publicity for their remarkable exploits.

Mark then my surprise when, leafing through the pearl-studded pages of the latest almost complete guide to the Caves of Mendip (another free plug, you lucky authors) I found it stated that NHASA (and WCC) had carried out a dig at Bedstead Swallet in Velvet Bottom in 1971. What is more, they had "endured unusual hazards"! Why, then, had not these doubtless stirring events been recorded in your pages, Sir, for the delight and astonishment of cavers from Frome to Brean Down? Suspicion reared its ugly head. Had something occurred of which Baron Benter and his men were not proud? Yes, that must be it, for was not the cave's alternative name "The Baron's Folly"?

Sir, I am a pious knight, dedicated to seeking out the truth in all its aspects. I have made extensive enquiries, and I now set before you the story that NHASA hoped to suppress.

It began, I understand, shortly after the Great Storms and Floods of July 1968, when Baron Benter, no doubt accompanied by his entourage of leaping squires, wizards, surveyors, boors, serfs and villeins, to say nothing of Healdian the Court Jester, was progressing like Juggernaut along the length of flood-ravished Velvet Bottom, commenting acidly on the puny efforts of Dame Nature. When this colourful company reached the old Black Rock quarry, the Baron's unflinching gaze was drawn to a spread of antique bedsteads and assorted iron in the floor of a flood-gouged channel, looking for all the world, I am informed, as though it had been placed there to cover and make safe some deep pit or chasm. And then a difficult decision must have faced him. Should he at once set his vassals to uncover the chasm, or should he proceed without delay to the three-day feast and orgy that would naturally await him on the completion of so magnificent an expedition? I fear the fleshly delights prevailed, proving yet again the natural injustice of this world. For had they not, the labouring masses would have been spared great suffering.

In the spring of 1971 the Baron moved again. His foresters had discovered that the bedstead site belonged to a company of stonebreakers at Ceddra (Cheddar in modern usage) and he had sent his surveyor Big Willie to treat with them. Big Willie, who in spite of his size is a timid, law abiding individual, is said to have enquired of his master if he should seek out the tenant of the land, whereupon the Baron, grinding his iron teeth, cursed all holders of grazing rights for a full half-hour before consigning him to a sennight's clearing of the Augean culverts below Benter Hall.

In due course (May, actually) digging began. The Baron had ordered the band of toilers in Cheddarhole to come forth and labour, but, it is said, such was the intolerance shown by the knights towards their inferiors that the latter were not permitted to work on the same evening as their masters. So Baron Benter, Sieurs Freefall, Skifall, Nanofathom and Barabobath spent the first evening removing sods and bedsteads and erecting a fence around the site.

Two days later the lower classes arrived, viz: Big Willie, Alan Twoacres, Wandering Will, Frank le Tower and Alan Homebrew. The evening was warm and still and clouds of midges plagued the aspirants to greatness. True to their origins they adopted simple remedies, namely the knotted handkerchief in lieu of a hat, and the flaming torches of hay tied to the ends of sticks, to rout their ravenous attackers. Anyone lucky enough to witness this charming scene would have felt that, by magic, he was back in a corner of the unspoiled rural England of long ago, an illusion enhanced by the quaint mediaeval oaths that burst from the toilers in the pit as burning hay fell on them. The lord

Barabobath, when he heard of it, believed it to be a pagan rite, a sterility dance, in view of Big Willie's published opinions on over-population.

Sir, I have already referred to the natural injustice characteristic of this world, and now I add further proof. Was it upon Baron Benter, so scornful of grazing rights that Nemesis descended in the person of Henry the lyrical swineherd? No Sir, it was not. Henry descended upon the band of humble law-abiding toilers, at the height of their battle with the midges. Observing them, he waxed instantly lyrical, questioning their sanity and parentage and stressing his unalienable right to the circumjacent grazing, employing ever and anon, mostly ever, adjectives of so fundamental and primitive a nature that many toilers fled to the bottom of the pit to hide their blushes.

These, apparently, were the unusual hazards to which the chroniclers refer. But what shocked the loyal toilers most of all was the scorn with which this peasant treated the idea that a spread of old bedsteads suggested a cave below. A hole dug anywhere hereabouts, he stated, could hardly fail to encounter old bedsteads engaged in acts calculated to increase their already astronomical numbers. Anyone who believed an old bedstead in this valley meant anything must be a nut case, he raved. The toilers thought of their master the Baron, and were dismayed.

Eventually Henry was pacified by bribes and extravagant promises and departed. The toilers deepened the pit considerably, observing an unbroken layer of charcoal six feet down among the clay. This led to anxious discussion, for it seemed that Henry was right and there had been no pit in the valley-floor deposits for the bedsteads to cover. The toilers' sleep was troubled that night.

Next week the knights reached bedrock at a depth of ten feet. There was no cave. Frustrated, they determined on a vicious trick to humiliate Big Willie and his band. It seems that the pit was within a few feet of an underground pipeline through which water ran from a spring near the Carthusian monastery at Charterhouse to the dipping wells of Ceddra, and he and Sir Barabobath, who were both connected with water supply in their official capacities, had expressed concern lest a collapse of the dig should burst the pipe and deprive the Cheddarians of their weekly wash. Craftily the knights obtained a length of cracked iron pipe and embedded it in one wall of the dig with the crack exposed. On the toilers' usual evening they sloshed water into the pit, then hid in the adjacent woods to observe and record the fear and distress of the working classes.

This time however the usual order was reversed, justice prevailed, and the knights themselves were shamed. The toilers, in their uncomplicated way, had decided that as there was obviously no cave to be found, it was no use digging, and they were humbly awaiting orders to fill in the hole. That evening they went elsewhere, and the knights, after suffering grievous bodily harm from the midges, retired in disarray. They made a final half-hearted attempt to practise their wickedness on Sir Barabobath, but he, guided by the unearthly vibrations that pass; continually between Glastonbury Tor, the Great Pyramid, and Sir Algol's magic engine, was not for a moment deceived. So they came secretly by night, filled in the hole themselves, and to complete the bribery of Henry, gave him all the fence posts. To the casual observer, the Bedstead dig might never have been, but its memory is seared like nettle rash across the minds of those who took part.

That, Sir, is the tale that NHASA preferred to forget. I thank all those who provided me with information, and sign myself, as befits an anonymous righter of wrongs!

The Black Knight

THRUPE LANE SWALLET

a progress report by Richard Witcombe

I am using the word "progress" in its broadest sense, since the fact of the matter is that we started digging at Thrupe Lane in 1968 at an altitude of 615', and four years later we are working at an altitude of about 616'! There have of course been a number of reverses and natural calamities to account for this.

The first major collapse occurred at Thrupe Lane during one night in November 1967 (contrary to popular belief, this collapse preceded the Great Flood of July 1968) and work commenced there late in the following year. The crater, about 50' across, was then filled to a depth of six or seven feet with an evil liquid manure, which dripped from a broken drain and was only slightly diluted by the polluted stream pouring in on the north side. The only feasible point of attack in the depression itself was a narrow rift in the mud on the north-east bank, where the water seemed to sink quite freely. A beach-head on the manure shore was quickly established, and a mud dam was thrown up to hold back the pool. Over the next few months, the quantity of spoil gradually began to get the better of the manure, until eventually dry land spread over the entire floor of the depression. An application for a Land Improvement Grant was mooted at this stage, but was dismissed in view of the new hazard that we were creating in one corner. A right-angle of solid rock had been encountered, but with mud in all other directions, shoring was soon required.

The next two years saw the construction of a four feet square timbered shaft, reaching a depth of 20'. At this depth, a passage was blasted through an unstable boulder ruckle, and sorties were made in every direction in an unsuccessful attempt to locate the stream. Under normal conditions, this sank in its bed some twenty feet before the collapse, and it was not seen or heard underground. After heavy rain, the swollen stream flowed down into the depression and often backed up sufficiently to pour down the shaft where it disappeared amongst the boulders. On several occasions, the depression filled almost to the brim. A whirlpool would develop over the shaft, dragging down loose timbers and debris, and vast quantities of mud. Silting was just beginning to be a serious problem, when the swallet swallowed again.

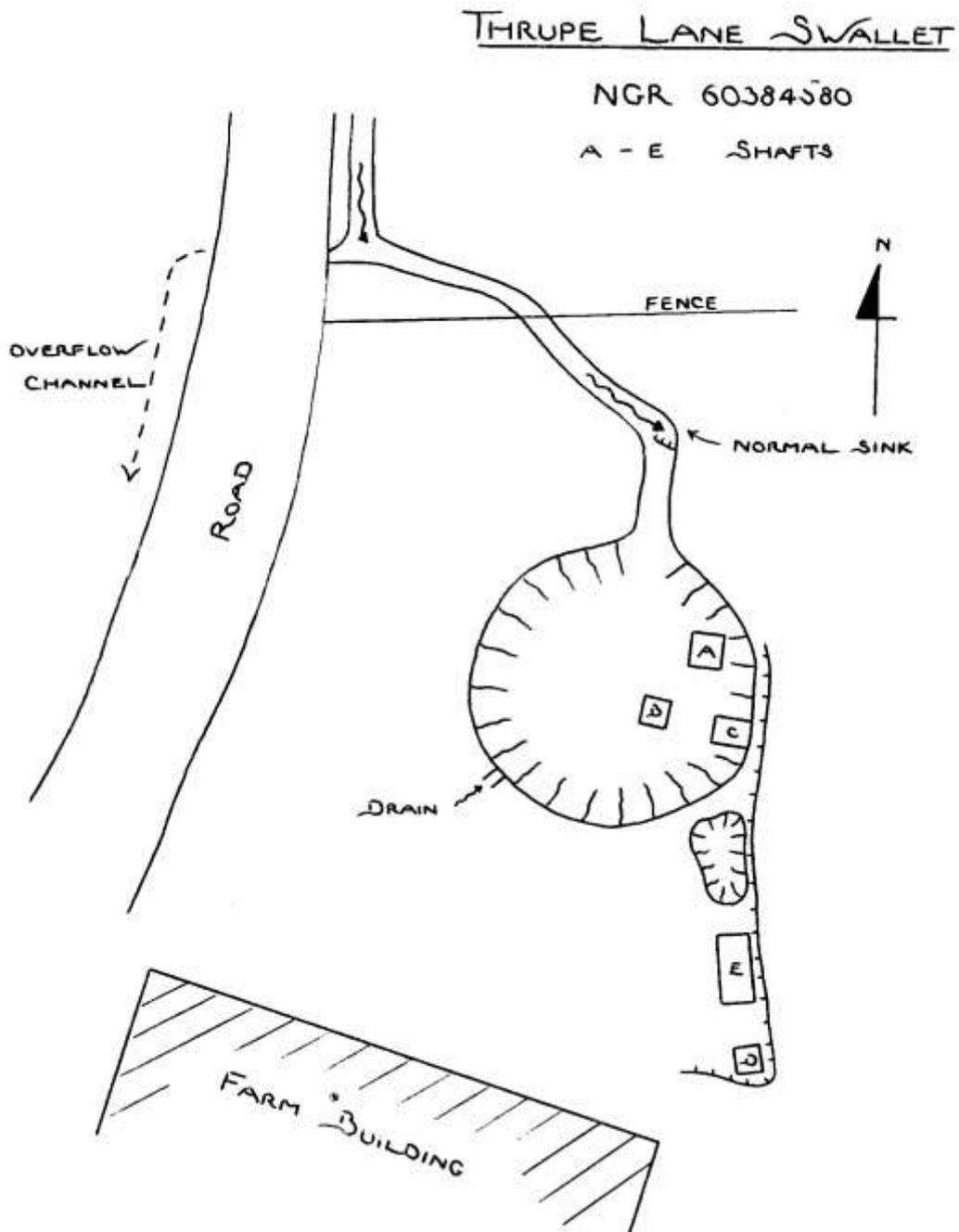
In June 1970, a second collapse occurred at the bottom of the first, deepening it by six feet and causing all the banks to slump. Two sides of the wooden shaft were exposed, and our winch, which had been sitting in the middle of the depression, was swallowed up in the mud and has never been seen again to this day. The slumping revealed more of the buried cliff face on the east side, and this was seen to be a continuation of the rock wall to the south, which had hitherto been thought of as a quarry face. The lowest point of the collapse seemed to offer a remote chance of re-entering the boulder ruckle, and with this and the possibility of recovering the winch in mind, a new shaft was begun. It was not long before the glutinous mud and recurrent floods forced the abandonment of this project. Another trial shaft under the cliff face met with the same fate.

Work was resumed in the cramped passages at the bottom of the original shaft, but it was obvious that silting would be an ever-present problem and interest inevitably began to wane. The swallet decided that it was time to make another move. In October 1971, a subsidence took place at the base of the rock face a few yards to the south of the main depression. Within a few weeks, further slumping reduced the intervening ground to a one foot wide causeway. The new subsidence was only five feet deep, but the fact that it occurred along the line of the cliff face called for a reappraisal of the dig.

The original rock face, from five to ten feet high, terminates at a right-angled outcrop ten yards south of the swallet. It seems likely that this is a natural feature modified by superficial quarrying to obtain stone for walls and farm buildings. A trial dig at the blind end encountered solid rock after two or three feet, but this obviously drops away nearer the swallet. Accordingly in June of this year,

a new shaft was started between the blind end and the subsidence, with the aim of following the buried cliff face to its logical conclusion, hopefully the first sizeable swallet cave in this part of Mendip. At a depth of ten feet it can be reported that work continues.

I must conclude this brief report by mentioning the friendly and helpful attitude of all the farmers and householders in the Thrupe hamlet. Over the years they have put up with some very impressive shock waves, besides offering us the loan of tools and the use of storage facilities. The blasting has, alas, resulted in one casualty. A young robin flew down the old shaft one day, just as Tony Dingle was closing his electrical circuit. The bird was found after the bang on a timber support in a very shocked state. It was placed in a hedge to recover, but I fear that it later succumbed. Tony Dingle, Alan Clarke, Will Edwards, Terry Baker, Simon King, and the others of the Thrupe team, offer our condolences to its next of kin.



TO COMMEMORATE THE CLOSING DOWN OF CONNAUGHT SCHOOL

by Terry Sharpe

Connaught now merges with Merrywood Secondary School and so loses its name

For some four years or maybe more I have been taking the boys of Connaught Road School and their sports master John Stuckey caving. They saw our stand at the 'Leisure and Pleasure Exhibition at Lewis' Store in Broadmead, Bristol and were so impressed that they asked their sports master to write to the Club and try to get an experienced caver to show them the ropes, so to speak. Roy Staynings was caving secretary at the time and knowing I had days off in the week due to being on shift work and having no-one else available he asked me if I would take on the job.

Well, the way things have found their own level and are flowing I shall be drawing my old age pension on a Wednesday morning and going caving with Connaught after. At first having held the interest and given the first steps of the 'complete caver' to a very tough bunch of kids we made our first epic onslaught on Goatchurch. Some had 'daps' some rugby boots and of course ordinary leather soled shoes, but most of them thought it was great and from then on caving was on the curriculum. Of Connaught, well, I liked Connaught and I think Connaught liked me, especially at Christmas I receive a bottle of sherry from the Connaught Cavers. There have been times when they have found me with my head buried in my arms sobbing. One occasion was at Cuckoo Cleeves. At school the previous day a big, fat kid pushed everyone else aside and asked in a very loud voice, "Where we going caving this week sir"? I think he had done Goatchurch three times. At Cuckoo Cleeves he was stuck on the ladder and couldn't move. I had to rescue him and I only just stopped myself from kicking his fat rump.

Each year some leave and some new boys join so each year we start off in Burrington Combe and work our way through to Swildon's Upper Series and a grand climax down the Wet Way to Sump One. This last cave trip on Thursday, July 6th we had a young Wessex member who is also at Connaught, Jeffrey Price a prodigy of Mike Dewdney-York and who from the number of caves he has done far surpasses me. However, I think he found that the luxury of caving with Wessex was far different from the rugged caving of Connaught.

We told him not to bring his wet suit.

At times if the sports master John Stuckey had forgotten to pack something it was blamed on last minute packing etc., to which, as is my wont to do, I pointed out that everything should be done the night before. Prior to our last trip I had to have a meal out with my grown-up family and a few jars (we must say a few). At midnight I decided to pack my gear in the morning !!!!

The next morning: My charger cell was not charging (my son had been charging car batteries). Oh well!. I had my carbide, electric torch and candles. The weather was good, very little water, but as we had a couple of newcomers I thought we would go down Jacobs Ladder to the Old Grotto, very good. Down to the bottom of the forty, on to the twenty, through the double pots some with total disregard jumped straight in including me. On to Barnes Loop, here time was running out for us so back out.

Here I have to report that the school had purchased some new battery lamps for a wet cave, (although the school had made repeated applications to the Club for nife cells we have been unlucky). These are the U.11 type battery and are very fragile and unreliable for rough caving and on the return trip started to fade out. We started sorting out so many cavers to a light. My own nife cell had packed up halfway down and I had my spare carbide fixed. We arrived at the "20 ft". I shinned up the ladder and started 'lifelineing' up. Halfway getting them up they started refitting their carbide lamps and called out above the roar of the stream "Sir can we have a light"? While

'lifelining' I turned my head and helmet for them to get a light, and so they put my light out. So I am 'lifelining' in the dark and the chap on the ladder has not a light either. I yelled out to some one to get the matches from my bag and then they told me that some silly b..... boy had dropped the matches in the water.

Jeff Price had a super nife cell so we sent him on out with three chaps whilst we packed up the ladder ropes etc. To add to our troubles we met two cavers down below who asked if we were Wessex, I said I was, so they said they saw our ladder and would we put theirs down when we went up.

I believe the etiquette of caving is to take the other ladder up, and lay yours. With the dying light we wished they had. However, shining our good torch astern and one dim light bringing up the rear we saw daylight; we were returning by the Wet Way. Coming out we met a party going down and a little way farther on a lone caver was watching us interestedly and asked us how far we had been. We told him Sump One and he said "what an experience". He said he was with a party but had chickened out. I thought this was unfair by the party as he should have really been taken through the Dry Way first.

About 1962 my son and myself found Swildons and strangely enough could not find the Dry Way, so we went down the Wet Way. We had at that time, I think, a Pifco U.11 battery set/carbide torch and candles. We had plastic macs for going down over the forty and usually went down someone elses ladder but never went far away from 'it'. I did make and form a friendship with Mr. Maine and he loaned me a ladder and lifeline for the forty left in a bag at the farm. I mentioned this one day just in passing to a Wessex Committee Member and from then on there was no ladder available at Manor Farm. However, before joining the Club this was how I got to know 'my' Swildons. I only know it to Sump One without a wet suit (I have one by the way) but it is 'my' SWILDONS shared with our friend BALCH.

SURVEYING WITH AN ALTIMETER

by P.R. Cousins

Over four years ago a group of Wessex members, then led by Denis Warburton commenced resurveying Agen Allwedd. Incredibly, in spite of two marriages and sundry other mishaps, the project still continues - and is steadily logging up the miles. Agen Allwedd is an instance of a cave for which a good C.R.G. grade IV plan exists (published by B.S.A.), but for which no altitude data is generally available. It was for this reason that the present grade V / VI Survey (or 'Definitive Survey') was started, and the altitude data given in the table below are one of its results.

Some two years ago, the introduction of a new team of survey assistants caused the author to make two tourist trips into the cave, and an altimeter was taken along - 'to see what it would do'. Well... it did !, but the results did not make very much sense till the survey caught up last month and the real altitudes became available.

The altimeter was an Ex-R.A.F. type previously used by Denis in Eastwater which could be read to the nearest 10ft and had an adjustment for barometric pressure. However we did not have a barometer, and the readout obtained was simply a number related to some unknown datum. The procedure adopted was to read the altimeter - after the customary tap - at points whose altitude was known both on the surface, and in the first part of the cave. In theory these would establish not only the datum, but also whether the barometric pressure was stable, or fluctuating - the same points were intended to be used both on the inward journey, and coming out of the cave. The conventional procedure would of course be to use a second altimeter or a barometer, stationed at a reference point and regularly read by an assistant. We did not have a second instrument; and although the time of each reading was taken, this information was not of significant use.

The data presented below have been adjusted by the addition of a constant figure for each trip such as to make the mean of the two readings for Ogof Gam equal to the actual altitude. This is an arbitrary procedure chosen to show clearly the spread of readings within the cave.

It can be seen from the table that the first trip was spoiled, probably due to barometric fluctuations - British weather! However the data for the second trip are satisfyingly consistent. If the first trip data are rejected, the altimeter can claim a precision of ± 10 ft for most of the cave from our second trip. It is cautious to note however that Agen Allwedd may be a special case, a cave with predominantly large passages and probably several airways connecting to the surface.

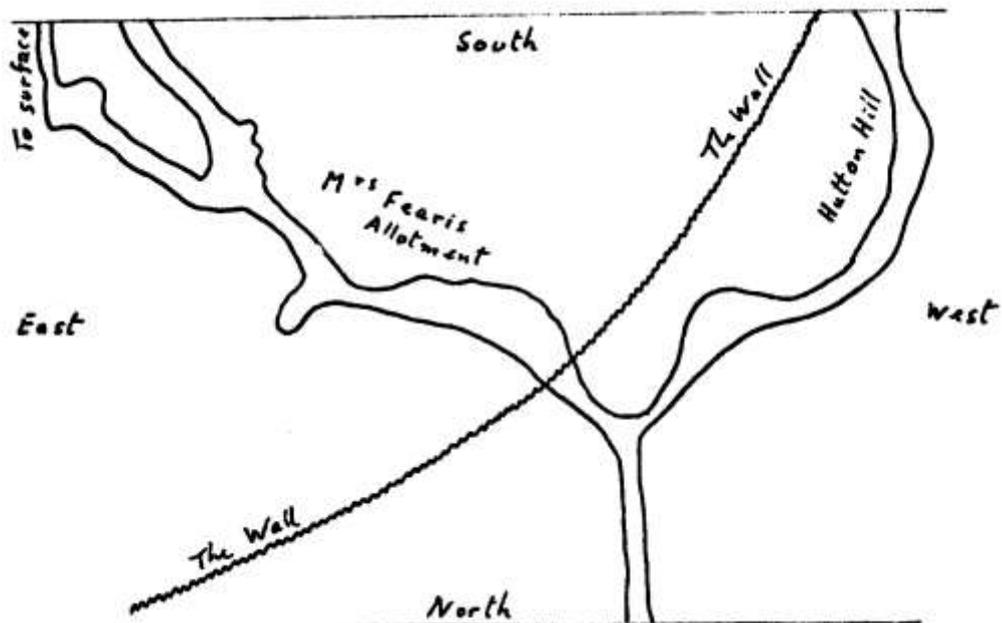
In the past altimeters appear to have been rejected for cave surveying - though some work is understood to have been done by Derek Ford in Canada. It would appear that in good conditions useful information can be gained very rapidly; simply a reasonable coincidence of readings at several sites within the cave is required. In the authors opinion the technique has potential value in those large British systems for which only a grade IV plan survey exists, and principally, altimeters would be of value on continental expeditions when time for surveying is limited.

ALTITUDE READINGS

SITE	Altitude	TRIP I	- RETURN	TRIP II	- RETURN
White Walls	1138 ft O.D.	1094 ft	1174 ft	1160 ft	-----
Eglwys Faen	1154	1119	1179	1175	1165
Ogof Gam	1184	1164	1204	1190	1180
Dry Oxbow	1162	1159	1174	1175	1165
J. Main Stream P.	1121	1129	1144	1130	1130
Flood Passage	1067	1054	1084	-----	-----
Second Boulder Ch.	1080	-----	-----	1080	1080
Keyhole Passage	1080	1064	1094	1075	1080
North West Junct.	1001	975	1030	980	990
Coal Cellar J.	1053	1025	1060	-----*	1055
Turkey Pool	1098	1055	1095	-----*	1085
Hawkins Horror	1134	-----	1125	1120	(turn)
Terminal Chamber	1178	1165	(turn)		
* party		travelled via coal cellar and summertime			

Hutton Cavern No. 2: A Plan of 1833

See article on Page 200



HUTTON CAVERN NO. 2: A PLAN OF 1833

by Trevor Shaw

Chris. Richard's recent article in the Journal concludes that the cave rediscovered under Hutton Hill is the second of those known there to Beard in the 19th century; i.e. the one discovered on 4th January 1833. He quotes also an entry for 15 January 1833 in Beard's manuscript notebook, to show that the cave was surveyed at the time: "Paid John Heal of Shipham for Dial(l)ing the Second Cavern at Hutton Hill ,5/-".

This original manuscript survey still exists in the possession of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and is kept among the Beard MSS (bundle DD/SAS R29) in the Somerset County Record Office at Taunton. A freehand copy at reduced scale is reproduced on page 199- The plan is drawn in pencil on one sheet of paper 33.5cm wide and 20.1cm high. The paper is watermarked "R. Alford 1831" and is stained with yellow cave mud. It is titled "The Fissure of the Bleadon Cavern" in ink on the back; also on the back are a few very faint pencil notes. There is no scale and the north point is at the bottom of the page. A separate strip of paper with the list of bearings and distances and some figures for depth is also in the Beard MSS at Taunton.

The title being the Bleadon Cavern, makes one at first suspicious of the identity of this plan by John Heal with the cave under discussion. However, comparison with the recent grade 5 survey (Richards, 1972, p (117)) shows that they are the same, because:-

- a) the land on the south east side of the wall is marked as 'Mrs Fearis Allotment'. Beard's note book for 26 April 1833 (quoted by Richards, 1972, p116) refers to "the boundary wall in Mrs. Fear's allotment in the parish of Bleadon".
- b) the boundary wall runs in the same direction and in the same relationship to the cave.
- c) the general shape of the cave is similar.

Comparison of the 1833 plan with the new one confirms that the new Lower Series had not been known at that time. It shows also two passage extensions surveyed in 1833 but evidently not yet rediscovered. One of these runs approximately south-west from a spot near the present entrance; the other continues towards the south-east from a branch near Footprint Chamber and is marked as leading 'To surface'. Richards (1970) notes a "choked foot of shaft" at this point.

It will be interesting to see whether these 'lost' extensions can be re-entered and also whether another surface depression remains which may correspond to the former entrance.

Richards, C. (1970) The Lost Cavern of Hutton - Its Rediscovery a preliminary account; Axbridge Caving Group & Arch. Soc. Newsletter, Sept. 1970: 115-118.

Richards, C. (1972) Hutton Cavern: a reconsideration in the light of recent discoveries; Wessex Cave Club J., 12 (142): 110-118.

FROM A DIVER'S NOTEBOOK

by Graham Balcombe

Note After the first cave-dive, at Keld Head (Journal No. 142), there followed a period of much-needed kit improvements and of learning the fundamentals of diving, mainly in the "dangerous water" of Keld Head itself, a procedure hardly to be recommended for circumspection if not to be condemned as outright folly. This was the period when enthusiasm outran discretion, enthusiasm which managed to survive the onslaughts of bad weather which frustrated many an attempt to dive in the cave either by direct action or by the after effects of heavy rain in turning the river to a rich sepia making exploration impracticable, enthusiasm which only just survived the long and wearisome journeys with tandem and trailer over the Pennines from Bramhope to Ingleton and back.

These notes are extracted from jottings made at the time of two of the week-end diving trips.

2-3 June, 1945. Weather prospects not good but a party was arranged on speculation of a chance to dive. We had to make our own way to Ingleton but Reg Hainsworth could help us up to Keld Head. On Saturday in Lower Wharfedale the rain streaked down, but a phone call to the other side assured us that conditions were not too bad. Next morning at Westhouse the skies were grey at six and by eight it was raining steadily. The party divided according to its means of transport and joined up again at Keld Head where in heavy rain we got cracking.

Visibility was good: I mean that the water was pleasantly clear and it was with a measure of glee that from below the surface I spied the probe, lost on the previous occasion, where it had been dropped a few yards away. The entrance slope did not seem so intimidating or steep this time - what a difference it makes to see the next step clearly! At the bottom, the point last reached was clearly the river bed. My eyes were not yet dark-adapted and the Ceag lamp plus the filtered daylight were inadequate to make out the extent of the place.

Now the probe is the centre of navigating arrangements: A stick to poke around with, carrying a white streamer to test for current direction, a compass, the light and its battery, and (for lack of better position) the rope reel - Aflo MK. 1 in later terminology. With its aid I went upstream, due west, along a level sandy bed sprinkled with small blocks. Soon I came to the end of the first line and tried to pass the knot. My fingers were so numb that after five minutes struggle I was no nearer success so decided to pack it in. Taking a look round I could see the Gothic arch of the fault-rift ahead, scalloped from top to bottom. I was still maybe 20ft underwater and the arch was about eight feet base to apex. The sight of a solid passage, however limited its extent might prove, was encouraging, for to be in an unknown expanse of water, with just an occasional flake or block jutting out of the murk is rather intimidating. I turned the rope off under a block and went out. I was very cold but after a spell of walking about with the cuffs off I warmed up a little but cursed the inclement weather for its lack of cooperation. Then Reg Hainsworth noticed the surface beck was flooding. The water was only 200 yards up valley and we raced up to see it. Down the river bed came swirling and frothing a stream of dirty brown water, licking its way down the beck bottom, engulfing the deeper hollows with a rush, swilling out bits of the bank in its passage. One moment a dry stream bed, the next a 4- to 6- inch deep stream. The wave swept on, never halting, at a good walking pace, then split at Keld Head to empty its scum froth and muck into our pool, which despite a 9-inch rise on its own account had remained clear.

After waiting half an hour to see what effect it had on the rising, and it had none, I went down again (after the usual trouble with the neck-band) and quickly reached the reel, and soon had the old rope out and the new one in the guide. The water was getting murkier, for the arch was no longer visible. But the compass and detector still worked so I went through. What happened after this I am not too clear, but after scrambling over some large blocks and going on for some time, I realised I was

going up. Was this the end of the sump? The gas-bag swelled and I blew off some gas and heard it break at a surface. Excited, I looked and groped around for a way up. I do not remember how I got up, but did reach surface and saw a stream-passage, no bigger than a bus, arched as below, and with white stalactites and a boss on the wall. The walls were everywhere overhanging. Dropping back to the streamway and picking up course again; still west; I went on and on, over patches of sand and more fallen blocks. The drum tended to catch but this was no longer acceptable as an excuse to turn back; soon I got used to freeing it.

Travelling light is delightful. When you find a gaping hole, find the bottom, then lightly step in, then ever so gently you sink to the bottom like an air-borne feather. Again, it is comforting when clambering over a pile of loose blocks to remember that one weighs hardly anything at all. However, it is not all fun and games, for twice in making way against the current, the current won and swung me round so that I had to drop flat, pick up the route again and have another shot.

Somewhere further on I discovered more surface and tried to reach it. I found a steep sandbank (I think that was the place), tried to climb it but got switched off it by the current. Picking myself up, I found the rope had gone slack and after pulling in a bit, thought for one awful moment that it had parted. It had not, for the compass told me to about face and not go sneaking home like that, so the rope tautened again and finding a pile of blocks I climbed up to the surface and rose to look out, but merely crowned myself on the roof above. I was at the end of a chamber. What was beyond I cannot remember, but the way went on underwater, so I followed it. By now the water was very murky, the way went fairly steeply down and the rope was nearly out. I gave up and detached the drum not expecting to return for it and hardly expecting to draw it out.

The return journey was especially enjoyable. After the line had corrected a few mistakes for me I began to have faith in it and soon there was a faint light patch ahead, growing bigger and brighter, eventually the entrance slope became defined and climbing it was delightful, fine yellow stones piled up in pleasant daylight. It seemed unduly bright, but once out it soon became obvious that in reality it was a drab and dreary world to which I had returned and the rain was still pouring down; the stone from which I had embarked, then some 3 inches above water, was now nearly a foot under.

The impressions left by this, the longest dive so far, seem to have an especially elusive character. It is difficult to remember the sequence of events, there are quite big gaps in the recollection, and things imagined tend to be equated with real events. I suppose this will pass as we become accustomed to the new environment, but it gives warning that, in the initial stages at least, a diver's observations may be very unreliable.

Well, we were all wet, attendants probably more so than the diver, the main difference was that they were wet from the bottom up, he from the top down, so we skipped the undressing, packed up as quickly as possible and made for Westhouse Farm. As a dive it had been fairly successful, as a cavern-hunting venture we had drawn a blank but at least we now had some sketchy information about the last 60 yards of the Keld Head rising.

4-6 August, 1945. For some while now we have enjoyed a spell of fine weather, but have been unable to take diving advantage of it since further progress calls for better lighting: Aflo Mk. II was taking shape but held up by non-delivery of the batteries. After weeks of delay I gave the suppliers a real rousing at all levels and got down to making the battery-box hoping that the drawings supplied were Issue D, so to speak. It was galling to be penned up in the rafters in my improvised loft workshop while outside the sun was blazing down on what, according to weather forecast, was to be the last day of the warm spell.

At last the batteries arrived and the construction was done. Collecting for packing began, with its inevitable trail of odd jobs. Up again on Sunday with the lark (our tame skylark is the 7 a.m. buzzer

on the alarm clock, much more reliable than the little blighters in the field next door), the outfit was ready for the road by mid-morning. I tried to weigh the trailer but a 60-lb max. reading was too little to register the wheel loads; the whole thing would be about 150 lbs. Still, the weather remained good, though cooler, and the much-abused tandem had its gears available again and by eight p.m. we reached Ingleton, loaded on yet more gear and with the help of two lusty pushers climbed the Dent road to Keld Head. We camped on the Scar side of the road and got in just in time to avoid the rain.

Next morning the team assembled by the rising and I climbed into my gear. There had been changes. The new neckpiece was a success; the plug for the entry port in the chest of the dress also worked: For once the goggles did not leak: The gas joints were tight and the lamps switched on according to plan. Could it be that at last we were getting the measure of things? The only thing at fault was the diver, who was windy and wished himself anywhere but at Keld Head. Once underwater, however, everything was so lovely that all apprehensions were soon forgotten and peering down into the blackness I switched the light on and - behold!- the way down lay bathed in light, showing up the gap in the bedding, the steep boulder slope, the golden gravel at the bottom which seemed only a step or two down. I went down gaily. I did not count the steps but they were far more than two. There was the familiar hug of the water as it drove the dress close on me and pressed on my ears. At the bottom I hung around to get my eyes accustomed. The place is dominantly a bedding plane cave and strangely enough I was quite unable to find the archway and lost myself in a northerly direction among fallen blocks. Realising this I turned back west and picked up the trail of gravel patches which marks the main current course. The cave was still predominantly bedding plane and at one point ran near the surface, the light beam gave its presence away as it doubled back in re-reflection for otherwise it was almost undetectable. Undoubtedly the first chamber, so I did not bother to go up.

At about 40 yards the route turns north and soon I found the old line-drum. The old line had broken when we attempted to pull it out, so I rolled up the residue, made off the new line, which was almost run out, and returned to base for a new line. It was on this trip I saw three fair sized fish, trout I think, one a long way inside and in total darkness. Maybe my light blinded it, for I nearly touched it. It appeared quite normal, probably a visitor.

After a long lunch break I was dressed again; gas was getting low so I followed up the line without delay and located the end. The breathing set did not seem to be going so well, I attributed it to the absorber being on its second run and to the high rate of working. Thus I was breathing quite heavily as I groped around for the new rope end to be tied onto the old, when suddenly the respirator choked, its resistance shot up to an impossible figure and from experience I knew the pipe must have kinked: Rapidly I passed my hand over it but there was no sign of kinking. Alarmed, not knowing what the trouble could be, but knowing I could not last long in that condition, I tried more gas, just in case, The working cylinder must have been very low for equalizing the pair to increase the flow, I could hear the rush of gas but did not realize how much had gone in.

Breathing was still hard as ever and I looked up for possible escape, but could see none. In desperation I tried the tube again and again found it OK, but suddenly the resistance dropped to normal and the bag discharged with a rush, blowing the mouthpiece partly out of my mouth and away went a bagful of gas and in came a lot of water both into me and into the absorber. It was no end of a relief to get back to normal breathing, but I still did not know what to expect. Would wetting stop the absorber action? I had memories of breathing trials when breathing became so violent I could not retain the mouthpiece. I stood for a moment debating whether Aflo would be more hindrance than help, then took it with me to the bank. It seems that wet soda-lime is quite effective. I had to equalize cylinders once, perhaps twice, en route, and when the attendants checked pressure they found it zero-zero.

That night, re-living in a nightmare the grim experience of the day, the cause of the blockage suddenly struck me: It was so absurdly simple. Since last using - and getting used to - my outfit I had fitted a mouthpiece tap, a fact which in the strange underwater world had not registered, and I must have accidentally knocked it part shut and later equally accidentally knocked it open again. But this is just personal tittle-tattle, in fact what progress has been made since the line-drum was first left behind? Quite a measure, but mostly in the matter of equipment and experience. The dress is now a vastly superior proposition, and goggle-leaks are done away with, and we have lights. In experience I have gained a lot - and I know I have a mouthpiece tap! Objectively, we know fairly accurately how far we have penetrated and have a better knowledge (though still slight) of the form of the cave, and we have found fish in the dark region of the cave.

There were no effective dives at Keld Head after that disturbing trip: bad weather foiled every attempt, then World War II ended and we left Yorkshire, soon to have our sights on other targets, like Ffynnon Ddu and Wookey Hole.

FROM THE LOG

2nd July 1972 UBLEY WARREN SWALLET

A. Bentley, S. Thorne, A. Jarratt. More digging. Vast amounts of bang debris removed using a canvas bag and rope system.

A.R. Jarratt

6th July 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

J. Walford, P. Moody, T. Jarratt. 150ft of vicious passage, going up at a steep angle with tight bit at end - not passed, found in new series (Journal 142, page 121). The aven at the end was climbed to a dangerous boulder fill with a view into a large chamber (or passage?) beyond, 30' long, 15' diameter. This could not be entered but should possibly yield next trip. (Ed: leaves Desolation Row at a point half way between the right angled bend and the junction leading to the "aural connection").

A.R. Jarratt

17th July 1972 CUCKOO CLEEVES

R. Robinson, G. Pickford, N. Taylor, P. Moody. Edited:- More work done in the MK. 1 dig.

22nd July 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

P. Moody, A. Jarratt. 7hrs 50mins. Went to Desolation Row, did some climbing and digging - found nothing - still can't get into chamber. Don't much feel like going back again.

A.R. Jarratt

23rd July. SWILDONS HOLE

R. Harper, J. Penge to Swildons IX with intent to climb avens. Aven 1 in IX at end of VIII by-pass. Up over muddy bank for 20ft can see passage going off in bedding plane if can get in. Aven 2. Just upstream of (?)8,, Climb up for 40-50' into roof of streamway reveals a passage 6' x 3' going up at 45d. as far as the Nife cell can see. In order to enter this a "bold step" is needed onto a jammed boulder. Very many loose boulders present.

R.C. Harper

23rd July 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

Pickford, Jepson, MacCormack and Stead to NW Stream Passage, aven hunting. Many were found, of great variety and some of great interest. All loose or loosish. We shall return sometime,, Main items of interest are an aven on the left, about 100' from entrance pitch, going upstream, and the avens in the cross rift in Heavens and Hell. 4½ hrs.

30th July 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

J. Penge, C. Gledhill. Went back to VIII to look at the aven of last weekend Climbed up and pushed vast amounts of rubbish into streamway. We then rigged a climb up out of small chamber. On right hand side we noticed a small rising tube. After removing a small amount of mud and stones we gained access to a very loose tube which rises up to a stal bank. To the right of the bank it carries on rising through what appears to be more passage but which is choked by unstable boulders. To left more carried on but tight. Avens rise from the chamber before the tube.

C. Gledhill

1st August 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

G. Pickford, A. Vanderplank. The round trip was uneventful, with all the ducks fairly low, until we reached the twenty on our way out. Here we found that no ladder was in position. I climbed the twenty and upon reaching the top found both our ladder and lifeline missing. Fortunately I caught up with another party and was able to borrow their ladder to get Adrian up the twenty. I then left Adrian with the other party and came out in great haste to try and find the ladder thieves. They had gone when I reached the Green and the gear had not been left with Mr. Main or in the barn. I had a description of the possible culprits and I went to The Belfry to phone the Law. During my conversation with the local sheriff the phone line was hit by lightning. This gave me a bit of a fright and Jock said he could see sparks coming out of my ears! Just not my day.

G. Pickford

9th August 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

R. Law, A. Mills, P. Moody. Down the streamway measuring the sumps to the nearest inch. Sump 1, 3'. 2, 25' 5". 3, 34' 9". In wet weather Sump 1 will probably be 6" longer. Going towards Sump 4 we found a Swildons stream size river of farm effluent entering from Cowsh Aven. The air downstream was singularly lacking in oxygen and Sump 4 was a sight to behold. Plans to measure the sumps further downstream were abandoned and we made our way out. Back at Priddy Green we saw a.....and coloured vehicle parked there, the owners of which were strongly suspected of stealing tackle (see 1-8-72). After looking through the windows for any Wessex tackle we went back down Swildons to the 20ft to see what ladder they were using. We found an areldited ladder with no club markings so lacking any evidence with which to challenge them we returned to the Green. We then decided to try and trap them so off down Swildons we went again. The plan was to leave a Wessex ladder at the 20ft and then wait back at the "vehicles" to see if they would remove the ladder. Unfortunately we met the suspects already on their way out at the Water Chamber, so after letting them pass us we hurried out by the Short Dry Way and arrived back at the Green. The proceedings then began to become more like a cross between a James Bond movie and a Brian Rix farce when Jock Orr arrived in the Batmobile with a powerful pair of binoculars. Leaving a ladder plainly visible on the front seat of Al's car we retired to the New Inn and awaited the arrival of the suspects. Unfortunately who should arrive but the police, leaving his car parked near the others. He went into the farm to talk with the farmer. At last the suspects arrived and after looking at Al's car and the police van they went into the barn to change. Obviously they were not going to try and steal anything while the police were there so we drove round to the farm to ask the police to go away, nicely of course. At this moment the policeman returned so we drove back to the New Inn and watched him drive away. The "cavers" then came down from the barn but were now probably

very suspicious, anyway they declined to take the bait and after emptying their carbide on the Green they drove off. We shall have to trap them next time.

P. Moody

19th August 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

P. Davies, I. Jepson, G. Pickford» This was our first banging trip at this site (Vicarage Passage). 4lbs laid by Phil and detonated with a satisfying thump. Fumes hanging about in Vicarage Passage, made a quick retreat necessary. A very good trip approx 4 hrs.

20th August 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

P. Moody, E. Harper, Go Pickford. Edited: - Fumes still present. Debris removed. Squeeze shortened by 7".

26th August 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

P. Davies., J. Jones. Edited: 4½ lbs bang set off in Vicarage Passage dig.

3rd September 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

P. Davies, G. Pickford to Vicarage Passage dig. After much clearing and hammer and chisel work I was able to make the squeeze "Greg size" just. The passage beyond is of a similar size to the approach to the squeeze and it becomes too tight after about 35ft. However the end is now an easy dig in loose stones and mud with a 6" airspace. At the present end the passage widens to about 15ft at the same height.

6th September 1972 SLUDGE PIT

D. and R. Gordon to sump to lay concrete in dam.

September 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

Edited: - T. Lyons, G. Pickford to Aven 2 (see July 23 & 30th). Boulder choke pushed which led to another unclimbable aven.

8th 13th 17th 20th September 1972 SLUDGE PIT

Edited: - R. & D. Gordon concreting the dam at the sump.

26th September 1972 GOATCHURCH

Professor E.K. Tratman, Aubrey Glennie, Mary Hazleton, Rog Robinson, Barry Wilkinson. Party explored the cave.

4th October 1972 SLUDGE PIT

A very large boulder at the head of the pitch has moved considerably and is now perched precariously immediately above the descent. The rock which is at present supporting this boulder is breaking away from the wall and it appears likely that the whole structure may collapse in the near future.

D. Gordon

7th October 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

B Woodward, P. Collett, B. Churcher, P. Moody. In XII we blasted a passage across the Sump 12

pool hopefully going to XIII but probably going to Sump 12B. Brian investigated a sump beyond the Sump 11 pool. It went down fairly deep but with no line reel he had to return. It's probably a connection with Sump 11.

P. Moody

17th October 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

J. Walford, P. Moody, Speedy trip to XII. Then up to Victoria Aven to Desolation Row, found 20ft of suitably horrible passage on the way to the final chamber. Here we decided that Tony Jarratt's proposal to blow up the boulders in the roof in order to get into a chamber/passage seen by him on previous trips was just a cunning scheme to block off the final chamber for all time. So instead we excavated the boulder choke in the final rift. Within an hour we had discovered the way on (suitably small and horrid but with draught and scallops). Unfortunately we could not get into it as a large boulder remained jammed in the rift although we could see over it and very nearly get through underneath. A large charge of bang was fired on the boulder and we returned to XII. The bang of 7-10-72 in Sump 12 bypass had made the approach Collett size so we laid a charge on the new constriction. Reached the surface after a 7hr trip.

P. Moody

15th, 18th, 20th October 1972 SLUDGE PIT

R. & D. Gordon. Edited:- Looking good and more carrying to the sump.

22nd October 1972 SWILDONS HOLE

B. Woodward, P. Moody. In XII Brian found that the flood bypass? to sump 12 needs another bang but prospects do not appear good. In the final chamber in Desolation Row instead of finding thousands of feet of new passage we found the boulder still blocking the way on and 3lbs of bang splattered around. As one stick was leaking nitroglycerine and still had the det in it care was used to collect up the charge and we fired this from a safe distance. Evidently only one of the two charges laid on the 17th had gone off. After this disappointment we returned to the surface. Due to smoke and general fog visibility was down to 6ft at the Forty. 5½ hr trip.

P. Moody

22nd October 1972 RHINO RIFT

R. Pyke, M. Thompson, F. Davies. By descendeur and Jumars. Cave bottomed in about 20 mins. A good deal slower coming out, as Mike's jumars persisted in coming adrift halfway up all the pitches.

FROM THE HILLGROVE LOG

30th May 1966 AUGUST HOLE & BLACKMORE SWALLET

Giles and West to August for more work on the Main Stream Sink. The result of yesterday's bang by Gannicott and Co was v. satisfactory - it took us about ½hr to remove it all and fix today's charge. Today's bang was a single 1 lb charge of Gel which shook up the 3 members of the MCG who were working in the oxbow at the end of the rift to satisfaction.

On our way back from August Hole we stopped off at Blackmore Swallet and hauled two bucket loads of fill out the hole for the MCG. Blackmore looks very promising and the surface mechanics are excellent.

50th May 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

Reynolds and Gilbert to Hairy Passage, Swildons to look at effect of Saturdays bang. Window enlarged just sufficient to squeeze through and look up passage sloping upwards at 45d. It is a man size for 6ft, and seems to continue, but view is restricted at that point by a light calcite curtain. Neither Tim could get round the bend after the window, but anyone young and fit and thin could,

especially if they took some more bang to remove a bit of roof. The floor of the passage is smooth and rippled by a trickle of water. P.S. The pipe is still back.

2nd June 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

M. Gallagher and N. Clatworthy to Hairy Passage. Mike Woodings banging of the window proved to be just sufficient for M. Gallagher to enter the streamway. About 8ft up from window there is a hump in the passage on the left and a stal curtain on the right. The passage is about 50d. to horizontal and just big enough to keep ones arms by ones side. Just above the hump the passage widens to the right making it about 4ft wide. By removing the stal curtain I was able to squeeze just far enough to see that there were no side passages. 6ft up it narrowed again and a few loose boulders blocking the passage could be seen. The hump will have to be banged before it can be passed and then the boulders could probably be removed by pulling them. Time 4hrs.

4th June 1966 AUGUST HOLE

C. Pickstone, G. Pilkington, D.Tringham to August Hole in scorching heat. Bang at bottom rift - prior damage not extensive but in all 6-7ft progress made during last fortnight. Fast trip out with one delay due to deladdering Fault Pitch and then hearing voices at the bottom. Out at ¼ to 5.

8th/9th June 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

Mike Wooding and John Dolman pushed the end of Hairy Passage. The window was passed and the stal curtain smashed and then passed to give a 50ft passage (clean rock) with some formation. The end was dug in clay but was not passed, although the way on was seen. (Note:- Cavers visiting this part of the cave should remove more of the stal curtain as the inclined rift is!!! tight). Time taken 5¾ hrs.

J.D.

12th June 1966 AUGUST HOLE

P. Giles and S. Causer to August to continue work on the Main Stream Sink. After clearing away the debris resulting from the last two bangs we laid and fired another 1 lb charge of plaster gel. The situation prior to todays bang seems encouraging.

P.M.G.

18th June 1966 SWILDONS HOLE

D. Tringham and E. Cox (BPC) to Swildons IV - fast despite large parties below 20ft pitch. Sump 4 looked at, but no weights - so no dive! - up to Sump 3 then out via Troubles. Abseil down pit found awkward due to wet clothing. Out of cave by 7.30 (4hrs). (Noticed hollow floor by Blasted Boss has been broken).

19th June 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Giles and Lloyd to August. Today it was possible to reach a mini-rift going off to the right. This rift provided a ready-made site for the bang. The bang was successfully fired and it was heard in Longwood Main Chamber.

P.M.G

25th June 1966 AUGUST HOLE

Cousins, Reynolds and Dave Smitt (BEC) to bang at the Stream Sink. The previous bang had shattered the rock in the vicinity. We cleared the debris and then had to knock down the stal flow above the dig which had become dangerous. We then placed the bang in the rift and retired. The bang went off with a satisfying thump and we retreated out to the surface. There we met Giles, Gannicott and Holland who were going down as the second shift.