

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	43
Club News	43
Meets	44
Publication Sale - Journal Back Numbers	45
Bang Licences	46
Full of Eastern Promise - the continuing saga of Thrupe Lane Swallet	
by S. Meade-King	47
Not Now and Again, but Again and Again and Again Part II by F.J. Davies	57
The Bones from Charterhouse Warren Farm Cave Dig by R.F. Everton	61
Review	65
From The Log	66

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EDITORIAL

Forty years ago, the meeting which led to the formation of the Wessex Cave Club took place at Croscombe. By a happy coincidence, the Wessex dig at Thrupe Lane, Croscombe, chose this anniversary year in which to give up its secrets. The search for Thrupe's cave goes back to 1936, and Wessex members have been digging holes around the hamlet with scarcely a break for the past sixteen years. The final dig, of which an account appears in this Journal, was very much a last ditch effort, and it would not have been successful but for the support given it by two other clubs, the Westminster Speleological Group and the Axbridge Caving Group. Let's hope that this type of co-operative effort, which also yielded results at Manor Farm, becomes an established feature of the Mendip scene in the years to come.

CLUB NEWS

Thrupe Lane Swallet

Congratulations are due to Tony Dingle and the team of persistent diggers who have broken into the cave system at Thrupe. Although the pitches are not quite as big as some of the earliest reports, the cave is still a fairly hard trip. Details appear elsewhere in this Journal.

Stoke Lane Slocker

The farmer has gated the cave and will supply the key in exchange for a £1 deposit.

Fairy Quarry Caves

The Cerberus Speleological Society have allowed us to have 2 guest leaders for Shatter/W.L. caves. They are John Ham and Aubrey Newport, either of whom should be contacted should you wish to visit the system. Please give as much notice as possible.

O.F.D. 2.

The parts of the cave nearest the top entrance are showing considerable signs of 'wear' and some signs of damage. The South Wales Caving Club have decided that they should attempt to preserve the cave by limiting the number of parties using the top entrance. To obtain a key you must first get a letter of permission from SWCC secretary and then exchange the letter for the key from the duty officer at SWCC H.Q. The address of the SWCC secretary is:-

J.J. Rowland, 42 Laburnham Way, Littleborough, Lancs. (N.B. send an S.A.E.).

Access via Cwm Dwr is unaffected.

The S.W.C.C. are currently attempting to ensure that quarrying activities do not affect O.F.D. 2. There is a possibility that it will be necessary to retain a barrister and other consultants should a public enquiry be held. (Hobbs Quarries want to remove most of the hill in which O.F.D. lies). It is expected that the cost of fighting the case would exceed £1000. If you are willing to undertake to support the fighting fund please contact S.W.C.C. (address above). Do not send any money yet.

Council of Southern Caving Clubs

The CSCC has recently published a booklet 'Caving for Beginners'. It describes the advised method of introducing novices to the activity. Copies may be obtained from: Tim Reynolds, 40 Wells Road, Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset. The price is 15p, but add sufficient for postage.

The recent C.S.C.C. meeting approved the changes to the council constitution so that trustees could be appointed to hold the shares of C.S.C.C. Ltd. The council has an existing 'shell' company which will be transformed into C.S.C.C. Ltd. (or a company with a similar name).

At the same meeting Mike Collins (M.N.R.C.) described the work being undertaken in grilling caves and mines which contain bat colonies. He assured everyone that the grilling would not affect caves in our area. (The only place in the area where a grill is being fixed near where cavers go, is in Box Stone Mines).

Swildons History Album

The Club Committee has given the go ahead for the subscription list to be opened. The initial offer is to Club members. Any untaken copies will then be more widely offered.

New Affiliated Club

We welcome the Bournemouth School Caving Club.

Tackle

We are currently marking all club tackle and also doing a stock-taking.

Quite a lot of ladders and tethers are missing; we know that some are on 'extended' loan for digging projects etc.

If you have, or know the whereabouts of, any club tackle please return it or let the secretary know where it is.

Anyone requiring tackle for more than a single trip on Mendip should ask the tackle warden to supply the tackle in advance. If you remove ladders or ropes from the local supply at the hut you will probably be preventing someone from caving on Mendip.

PLEASE RETURN ALL TACKLE YOU HAVE

Finally your Secretary has moved. His new address is inside the front cover of this Journal.

Old Journals wanted for Resale

Richard Kenney (Publication Sales) wants Nos. 51, 60 and 75. One copy of each. Please contact him direct.

Sales of Old Journals

Sales of old Journals by complete Volumes or in other bulk quantities can be negotiated with Richard Kenney. Reasonable discounts allowed.

MEETS

Friday June 14th
Friday June 28th
Friday July 12th

August/Longwood
Manor Farm
Swildons Round Trip

All trips meet at 7.30 p.m. Names to Richard Kenney.

PUBLICATION SALES WCC JOURNALS

Current stock list

Vol. 2	Nos. 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 43	starts in 1951
Vol. 3	Nos. 45, 47	1954
Vol. 4	Nos. 57, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65	1956
Vol. 5	Nos. 66, 70, 72, 74	1958
Vol. 6	Nos. 76 – 82 complete	1959
Vol. 7	Nos. 83 – 92 complete	1962
Vol. 8	Nos. 93 – 104 complete	1964
Vol. 9	Nos. 105 – 114 complete	1966
Vol.10	Nos. 115 – 126 complete	1968
Vol.11	Nos. 127 – 138 complete	1970
Vol.12	Nos. 139 – 150 complete	1972

Prices per issue Vols. 1 - 12 £0.25 including postage.

Volume subject matter I have picked out what I consider to be the salient features in each Volume, in the issues available.

Vol. 2.

Lamb Leer Dig. Erection of Beechbarrow. Discovery of St. Pauls, Swildons. Primrose Pot survey, Eastwater.

Vol. 3.

Swildons III. Mayday Passage, Swildons.

Vol. 4.

Blue Pencil Passage, Swildons. Swildons IV.

Vol. 5.

Swildons IV, V and VI.

Vol. 6.

Eastwater Boulder Ruckle changes. Eastwater Dolphin Pot rock fall. GB Ladder Dig extension. Swildons Trouble Series and Vicarage Pot.

Vol. 7.

Stoke Lane III, IV and V. Swildons South East Inlet Series. Swildons VII and VIII.

Vol. 8.

North Hill. Stoke Lane V, VI and VII. Swildons VIII - XII, Swine-Puke Series.

Vol. 9.

Stoke Lane VIII. Swildons North West Stream Passage, Shatter Passage.

Vol. 10.

The Mossdale Disaster. Reads Survey. Shatter Cave. 1968 flood.

Richard Kenney

BANG LICENCES

The following is an extract from a letter issued by the Hon. Secretary of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs to all member clubs. Ed.

"The local police have asked me in my role of Hon. Secretary of C.S.C.C. to remind cavers of the regulations governing the use of explosives for private use including cave exploration. The most important of these regulations are contained in Statutory Instrument No. 1598 (1953) and are as follows:-

1. It is illegal for anyone to be in the possession of explosives unless they have a licence.
2. The police have the power to cancel the licence at any time.
3. If the licence specifies the use to which the explosives are to be put (e.g. cave exploration) then the explosives can only be put to the appropriate use.
4. Licence holders must keep full records of explosives acquired, used or transferred to other licence holders. These records must be available for inspection by the police.

If anyone requires further details then they should contact the Hon. Secretary of C.S.C.C., but following discussions with the police it would appear that the practical interpretation of the law is as follows:-

1. Explosive licences are issued by the Chief Officer of Police for the Police District in which a person resides.
2. It is illegal to have possession of or to use explosives unless one is a licence holder. This does not prevent the carriage or use of explosives when in the immediate presence of, and under the supervision of, a licence holder. So, **WHENEVER EXPLOSIVES ARE USED THERE MUST BE A LICENCEHOLDER ON THE TRIP WHO IS EITHER USING OR SUPERVISING THE USE OF THE EXPLOSIVES.** In this context 'supervising' means actually being present and overseeing the laying of the charge.
3. Licences are issued by the Police as a concession and they have powers to withdraw that concession at any time. If there is an accident following the careless use of explosives in caves, or if cavers are found to be breaking the law regarding the use of explosives, then it is possible that **ALL** cavers' explosive licences will be cancelled. In this context the Police have expressed concern as to the possibility of accidents occurring because other cavers in the vicinity of the charge were not aware that an explosion was about to take place. It is the responsibility of the people using explosives to ensure that no one can be injured by the explosion.
4. The word 'explosive' means the various types of gelignite, plaster gelignite, cordtex **AND** detonators.

Tim Reynolds,
Hon. Secretary C.S.C.C.
40 Wells Road,
Wookey Hole, Wells.

23rd April 1974.

FULL OF EASTERN PROMISE

- the continuing saga of Thrupe Lane Swallet by Simon Meade-King

The years of work which had been put into the main depression at Thrupe Lane had brought little result. The original shaft, sunk to a depth of 25', encountered a hopeless combination of solid rock and collapse debris, and this shaft, whilst serving a useful purpose, became an object of mild ridicule as further collapse around it exposed its sides.

Inevitably interest waned, and in 1972 the Thrupe team (Tony Dingle, Allan Clarke, Dave Everett, Richard Witcombe, Clive North, Terry Baker, Will Edwards and myself, later supplemented by Anne Stallybrass, Ray Cavill, Steve Spratt and Barry and Andrew Webb) began to look round for a new point of attack - a final attempt to break into the swallet system which we believed to be under Thrupe Lane. This belief was supported by several facts. Firstly of course, there was the large stream draining off the sandstone of the Maesbury ridge and the Thrupe marsh head deposits. In normal conditions the stream sinks in its bed just above the depression, but after heavy rain the depression floods to a depth of several feet. The water then pours down the old shaft in a solid sheet of water with no backing up. The resurgence has been confirmed by recent dye-testing as St. Andrew's Well at Wells, some three miles to the west and 465' below the sink. Another important factor was the history of collapse in the area, for in addition to the huge collapse which occurred in 1967 and continues to the present day, rifts have inadvertently been opened up in the nearby road. The most recent of these was exposed by workmen laying a road drain a year ago but covered before any but the local inhabitants could see it.

The corner of the rock face several yards down dip of the collapse depression seemed the most suitable place to dig. It was well away from the unstable mass which had foiled our previous efforts and it also provided two rock faces against which to brace shoring. A trial dig was begun and a depth of 12' reached. The two rock faces seemed to offer a line of weakness at the point where they met, but the other two sides were unsupported earth banks and before long they collapsed into the hole.

It was not until the spring of 1973 that work restarted. The shoring timbers were obtained from the nearby disused Somerset and Dorset Railway sidings - legally I might add - and moved across to the site over the Spring Bank Holiday. In the following months, helped by weeks of dry sunny weather, the shaft gradually increased in depth. The fill removed was surprisingly boulder free, but the many sandstone cobbles pulled out were encouraging evidence of an old stream sink at this point. A rather interesting discovery just below ground level was a V-shaped sluice built of large stones and obviously intended to divert water into the corner. An elderly former inhabitant of Thrupe confirmed this.

Digging on midweek evenings as well as most weekends further accelerated progress. The heavy sleepers proved suitable for shoring but were rather unwieldy to put into position. The shuttering between the rings of sleepers consisted of pallet boards inserted vertically behind the sleepers and held in place largely by the back pressure on them.

By late summer the shaft was nearly 20' deep and five rings of the shoring were in place, but at this stage things did not look particularly hopeful. We appeared to have hit a solid rock floor with no obvious way on. However, probing in the corner where the two rock faces met revealed the top of a choked rift about three feet wide running in under the corner. This rift was completely filled with stream debris and sandy soil, but as timbering was no longer necessary downward progress was much faster.

Not long after we began clearing out the rift one wall disappeared to reveal the roof of what looked like a bedding plane. It was not until we were down a further ten feet that the cause of this - a large piece of detached bedrock - became clear. The rock had fallen on end from the roof and effectively blocked our way on in the floor. In our attempts to circumvent this obstacle the down dip continuation of the rift was exposed. The rift degenerated into two tiny chert lined tubes which could be seen to run in for a few feet. A rather disappointing sight except for the fact that they were observed to carry a draught. By this time,

however, we had found a way down past the obstruction, and the draught was temporarily forgotten.

Up to then we had had no trouble with water, but at 30' below ground level we were well below the level of the adjacent depression, and in wet weather small streams began percolating through, bringing with them quantities of silt. Partly as a result of this, attention was focused on the end of the rift, and we decided to try and pursue the draught. Almost immediately things began to look more promising. With the removal of several hundredweight of rock loosened by a number of well-placed charges, we moved in some ten feet horizontally and could look ahead through a narrow draughting slot. The following weekend the floor was lowered and the slot enlarged sufficiently to enable us to squeeze through. Below a six foot drop the rift widened into an area just big enough to stand up in. Not very big but literally the first open space encountered since we had started digging, and it raised considerably the morale of the diggers. The joint influenced passage could be seen to continue down dip and after a few sledgehammer blows on chert obstructions, we were able to move forward another fifteen feet. It was still tortuously narrow, about eight feet high but only eighteen inches wide at the maximum, and lined with fine chert bands which made progress even more awkward and played havoc with boiler suits. Just ahead of us, however, the passage petered out and the only way on was a narrow slot in the floor. Stones dropped through this seemed to fall into a larger space below and the prospect of a breakthrough appeared. By late on the evening of Saturday March 9th, we had opened up this hole enough to allow Richard to climb down it. He dropped down fifteen feet into a three feet wide passage and after a few steps, emerged at the head of a much roomier 20' shaft. This news was conveyed to the rest of the party and we jubilantly returned to the surface to continue our attack on the next day.

All that remained to be done was to explore the open system that we had broken into - or so we thought - but Thrupe was not to give up its secrets quite so easily. The shaft turned out to be free climbable and we landed on a pile of boulders. We were standing in an enlargement of the massive joint which had influenced the formation of the whole cave to that point. A bit of poking around soon revealed the downward continuation of this joint in one corner, and when the top had been cleared, Clive slid out of sight. The rift was finely sculptured and corkscrewed down for 20'. Below this point the rift carried on down but was too narrow. The traditional stone throwing took place and a further depth of 50' was estimated.

A week later the walls of the rift were persuaded to draw back, and 50' of ladder was threaded down. Richard and Andrew Webb disappeared down it, and returned to report a passage at the bottom leading into a 50' high chamber ending in a boulder choke on the down dip side, and a draughting hole in stal. up dip. However, the pitch leading down to this, christened Slit Pot, was extremely tight all the way. Clearly, if much digging was to be done it would have to be widened over most of its length. So we began searching for a wider point to descend.

A clue to where to look was the faint sound of a running stream coming up from a point in the rift some fifteen feet up dip from the head of Slit Pot. This was the first time we had heard a stream underground at Thrupe and it indicated a link with the active part of the system.

A fortnight passed before we managed to force our way through to the rift at this point and bang a constriction in the rift itself. Steve Spratt was volunteered to descend the ladder first, and after some thrutching he passed through a tight section and quickly descended about 60'. As we had hoped, the rift opened out a few feet below the top to give a comfortable ladder climb, but our optimism was short-lived for there was no apparent way on at the bottom. There was only a choice between a squeeze into the passage we had climbed down to earlier and, on the up dip side, a mud-filled phreatic tube. This tube was examined from every possible angle and was about to be written off when Richard, kneeling in an attitude of prayer, caught the sound of a stream and not fifteen feet ahead of him.

On April 6th a party consisting of Dave Everett, Richard Witcombe, Clive North, Ray Cavill and myself, descended the new shaft, Perseverance Pot, intent on striking it rich. Strike it rich we certainly did, and after 1½ hours of scooping out liquid cowsh, Richard was able to squeeze through the phreatic tube.

Ecstatic exclamations came from beyond and we all followed through. The squeeze itself was only a few feet long and beyond it the rift soared up again to a height of 30'. A short stretch of rift passage and there was a junction; to the left a pitch dropped away between boulders, and to the right a steeply inclined passage led off up a boulder slope.

Climbing up the boulders led into a large chamber 30' across and up to 60' in height. This has now been named Butt's Chamber in recognition of the hospitality of a local farmer. The floor of the chamber was a continuation of the boulder slope, and climbing up beyond the chamber led into another chamber in boulders bearing a highly unstable look. Later estimates placed us at that point almost under the surface collapse feature, and the reason for the systematic collapse became clear.

Meanwhile Ray had explored a sandy phreatic tunnel leading off the west side of Butt's Chamber. Crawling along this, we emerged after 20' in a chamber slightly smaller than the first with two avens in the roof. But more interesting, we followed a slope to the lower end of the chamber to where a boulder fall appeared to block the way on. From beyond this fall came the roar of a large stream. At this point, due to lack of time, we decided to turn back. The marbled appearance of much of the rock in this new chamber led to it being christened Marble Chamber.

The four day Easter holiday presented the ideal opportunity for a big push, and on Good Friday a strong team assembled in the road beside the dig. The first objective of the day was to be the pitch just beyond the breakthrough squeeze. A closer look showed the depth to be 70' but a suitable belay was lacking, everything being too loose. Clive then disappeared into an horrendous boulder choke to the right and soon reported that he had landed on a natural bridge from where a 25' ladder would reach the floor. As it turned out we were in another large rift, Bridge Rift, dropping down dip at a steep angle and carrying a small stream in the floor. After 150' a constriction prevented further progress. Small avalanches of debris were being carried through this by the stream and could be heard to fall over a pitch beyond. The rift visibly widened just ahead - obviously a case for bang.

The second push was to be towards the stream heard the previous Saturday at the end of Marble Chamber. Dropping down between the boulders through several squeezes, we emerged below the choke with a solid roof above us. The sound of the stream was much louder now, and ahead of us lay a dry waterfall some 20' deep but easily climbable. At the bottom a large stream came in from the right, and after a few more feet we came out under an aven with two streams coming down it, one from a height of approximately 30', the other from fifteen feet up.

The water from these three streams flowed away into a low oval-shaped passage, the sides of which were of clean washed orange-coloured limestone. We hurried on, climbing down a number of small pots in a very attractive and sporting streamway. After 100' or so the gradient steepened, and with a couple more leaps and bounds the stream plunged over the edge of a huge shaft. The far side was visible 25' away but the bottom was lost in the gloom and the walls soared up into the blackness above. By stepping round to the left over a buttress, we entered a large dry inlet which ran down from a boulder choke. A bedding plane passage ran back from one side of this inlet into the shaft at another point. We had insufficient tackle to attempt a descent and so we all exited to prepare for another assault.

On Easter Saturday the constriction in Bridge Rift was effectively removed. Just beyond, the rift dropped away into a deep pitch, around 80' we thought, and with the stream falling into it. The cave was rapidly developing along Yorkshire lines, and that evening a foray to Upper Pitts was made to replenish our tackle. By lunchtime on Sunday, laden with tackle, a team consisting of Andrew Webb, Clive North, Steve Spratt, Ray Cavill, Tim Lyons, and Richard Witcombe, descended to ladder this latest pitch, Avalanche Pot. To quote Richard's account:-

"We found that ten feet beyond the banged squeeze was a five foot drop onto a ledge at the head of a fine pitch. This took the form of an irregular ellipse measuring 20' by two feet at the top and wider below. The stream was augmented by very heavy drip from an aven above the pot, but a boulder jammed across the

pot divided it into a wet and less wet pitch. The ladder was belayed to a rock flake on the left hand wall and fed over the boulder. Andrew descended first, followed quickly by the rest of the party. At floor level 'below, the spray filled rift is over six feet wide. A parallel rift chamber can be entered but the way on is down through the floor into a short rift passage. The stream here turns right into a very low, inclined bedding plane, in which a meandering trench has been cut. After 30' a cross rift is encountered and part of the stream sinks immediately into an impassable mud sump. Some water flows south down the very narrow rift for 20' before disappearing into another mud sump. The rift is choked with mud in both directions and there is mud high up in the roof indicating that the water backs up considerably in times of flood. The bedding plane obviously floods to the roof regularly as the banks of vegetable matter and rich wild life testify".

The streamway below Avalanche Pot was inevitably something of a disappointment, and we pinned our hopes now on the big shaft, Atlas Pot. The Avalanche party decided to examine its outer defences. After yet another stone throwing session, Clive thought that he might be able to reach a large ledge visible 25' down on the left hand wall. He traversed across and down on a lifeline and returned fifteen minutes later to announce that he had explored a muddy passage leading off the ledge which ended after 80' in yet another big pitch - a dry one this time. It was suggested that he should try to trade this in for 1000' of streamway!

The long awaited descent of Atlas took place a week later when, with the climb down to the ledge laddered, a team descended first the dry shaft, Slither Pot, and then the main shaft. The 70' dry pitch led to nothing more than an impassable bedding plane which it is now known is very near the streamway below Atlas. The ladder for the main pitch was added on to the ladder down to the ledge and fed down through the falling water. Andrew descended first and reached the floor of the pot after a very wet 70'. A short while later, he and Richard announced the finding of the terminal sump. At the bottom of Atlas Pot the walls of the shaft close in to form a steeply descending rift passage, which after a few yards opens into a boulder filled pot some 30' deep. From the foot of the boulder pile a dead straight rift passage leads off. The stream flows along a floor and after 200' the rift suddenly terminates and the stream disappears into a gravel choked bedding plane - the present end of the cave.

The maximum depth reached was later estimated at 400', and with the resurgence at St. Andrew's Wells only 65' lower and three miles distant, a long sumped region is indicated. The joints which have influenced the cave's development are its most impressive features, and Atlas Pot in particular is an awe-inspiring sight. The stream falls over 100' from its entry point to the bottom, and with a powerful spot beam we were able to pinpoint the roof about 150' above the stream entry. The shaft, therefore, is in the order of 250' deep and it seems quite possible that in the distant past it took water direct from the surface.

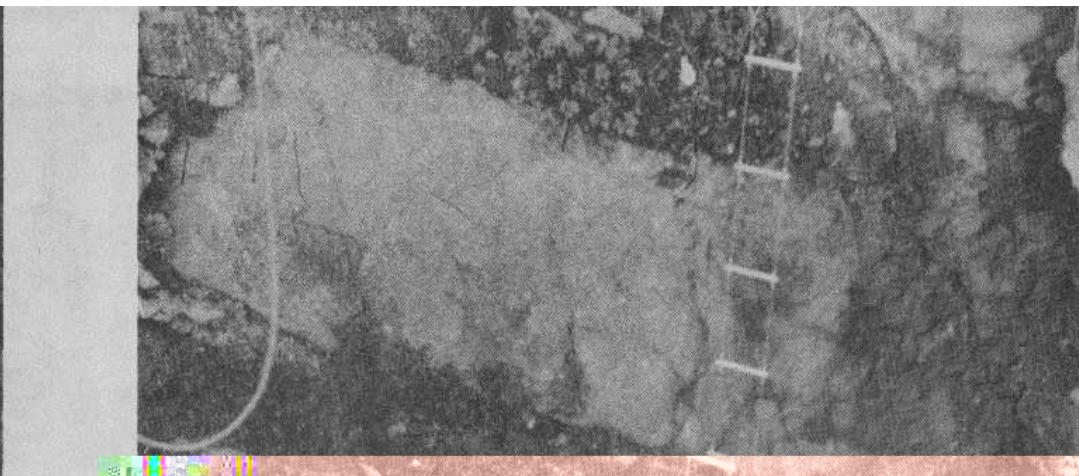
And so Thrupe Lane has gradually revealed its secrets, although there is doubtless more passage to find yet. There are several holes still to be looked at in the Marble Chamber area, as well as two black spaces high up on the walls of Atlas Pot which could possibly provide a bypass to the terminal sump. By the time this article appears in print, the cave will be open to all cavers and a permanent entrance shaft will be in the course of construction. The cave is gated but it is intended to distribute keys to all the principal Mendip clubs. In due course the cave may come under the control of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs Ltd, but it is not envisaged that any access restrictions will be imposed.

One aspect of the cave cannot be stressed too strongly - it is wet. The discovery and exploration of the cave took place in a period of exceptionally dry weather when the surface stream was sinking well above the main depression. Even in these conditions the Atlas stream was Swildon's sized. What this stream and the others in the cave are like when the main depression has five feet of water in it, no one yet knows. The two most likely danger points are Cowsh Crawl, which may well sump, and the head of Atlas Pot, where the water racing down the streamway could sweep one over the edge of the shaft.

As with Manor Farm the site is within yards of human habitation, and continuing access to the cave will depend on the behaviour of all visiting cavers. At the moment farmer/digger relations are very good in

this area and we cannot afford to lose the goodwill of any of the inhabitants. Cavers should change over by the cave entrance which is only a few yards from the road. Cars can be parked on the grass verge. Please avoid leaving any litter and do not take any short cuts over the stone walls.

I cannot conclude this account without mentioning our thanks to Mr. Keen whose field we have defiled for so many years. We are also very much indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Butt for acts of hospitality too numerous to mention, and we are grateful for the tolerance shown by all the other inhabitants of Thrupe. Finally a word of thanks to Amey Roadstone Corporation for the supply of sleepers without which the shoring could not have been constructed.

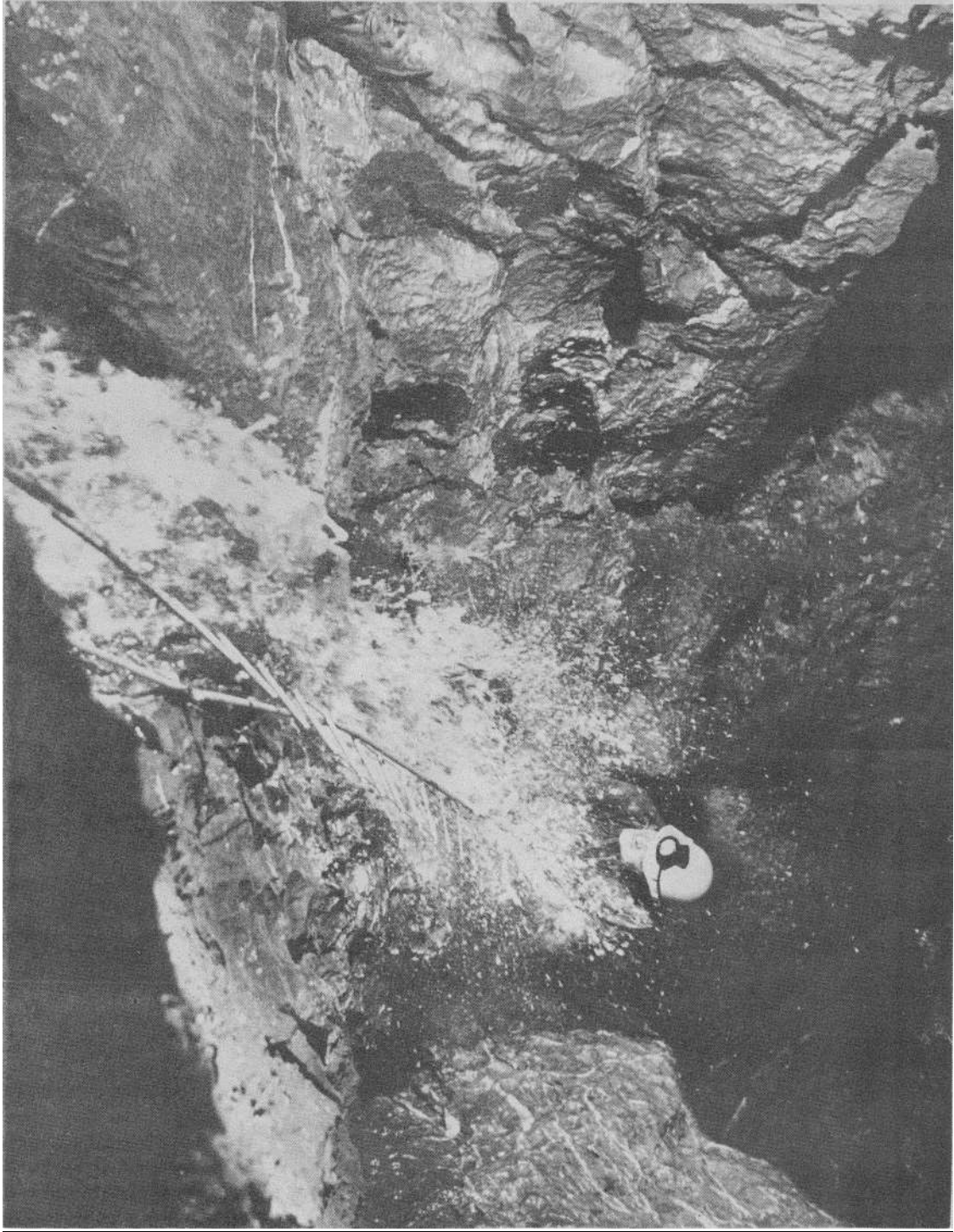


The old shaft partly exposed by subsequent collapse (R.G.Witcombe)

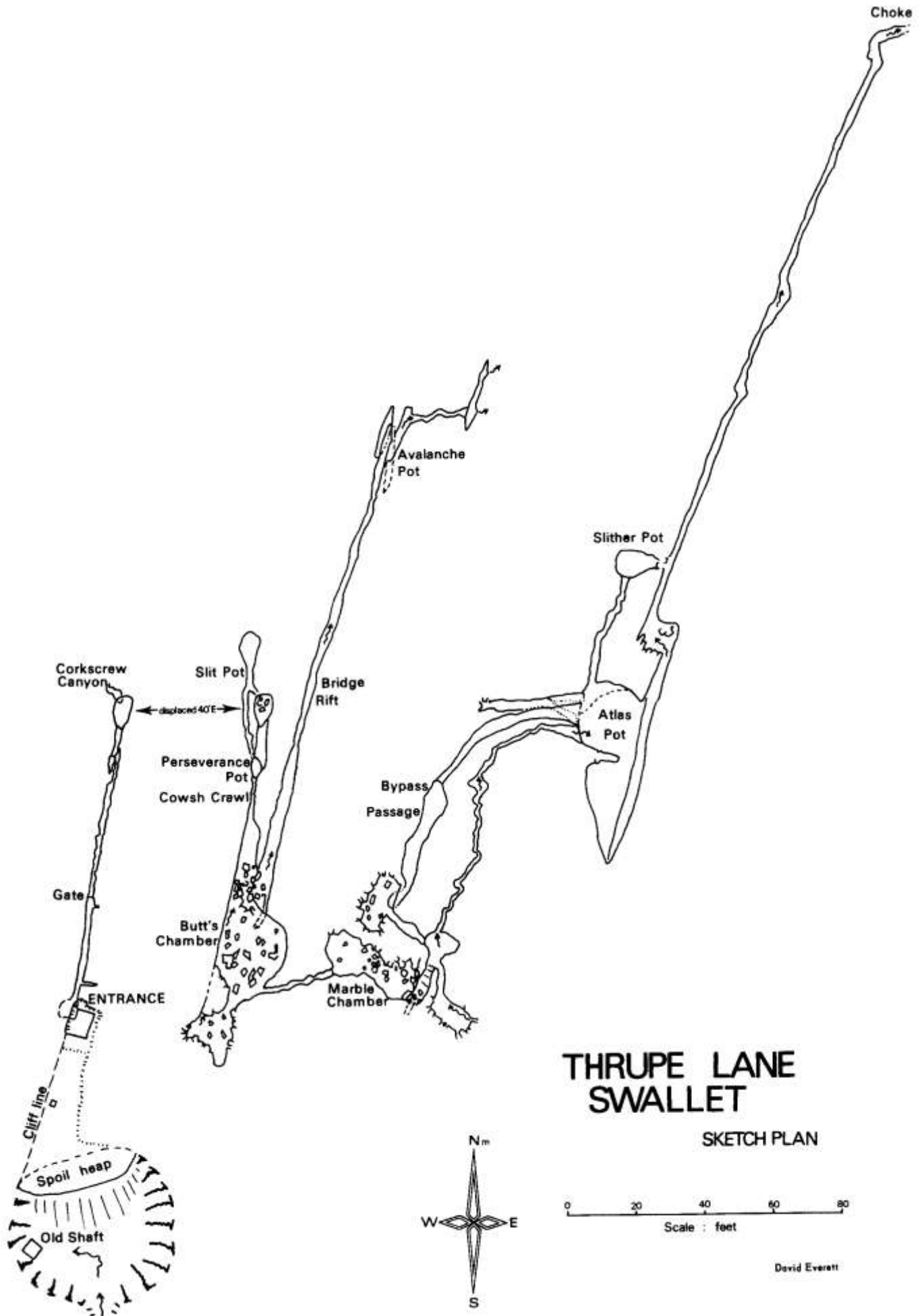
The new shaft against the cliff face (S.Meade-King)



Cowsh Crawl (C.North)

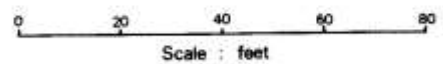


The head of Atlas Pot (C. North)



THRUPE LANE SWALLET

SKETCH PLAN



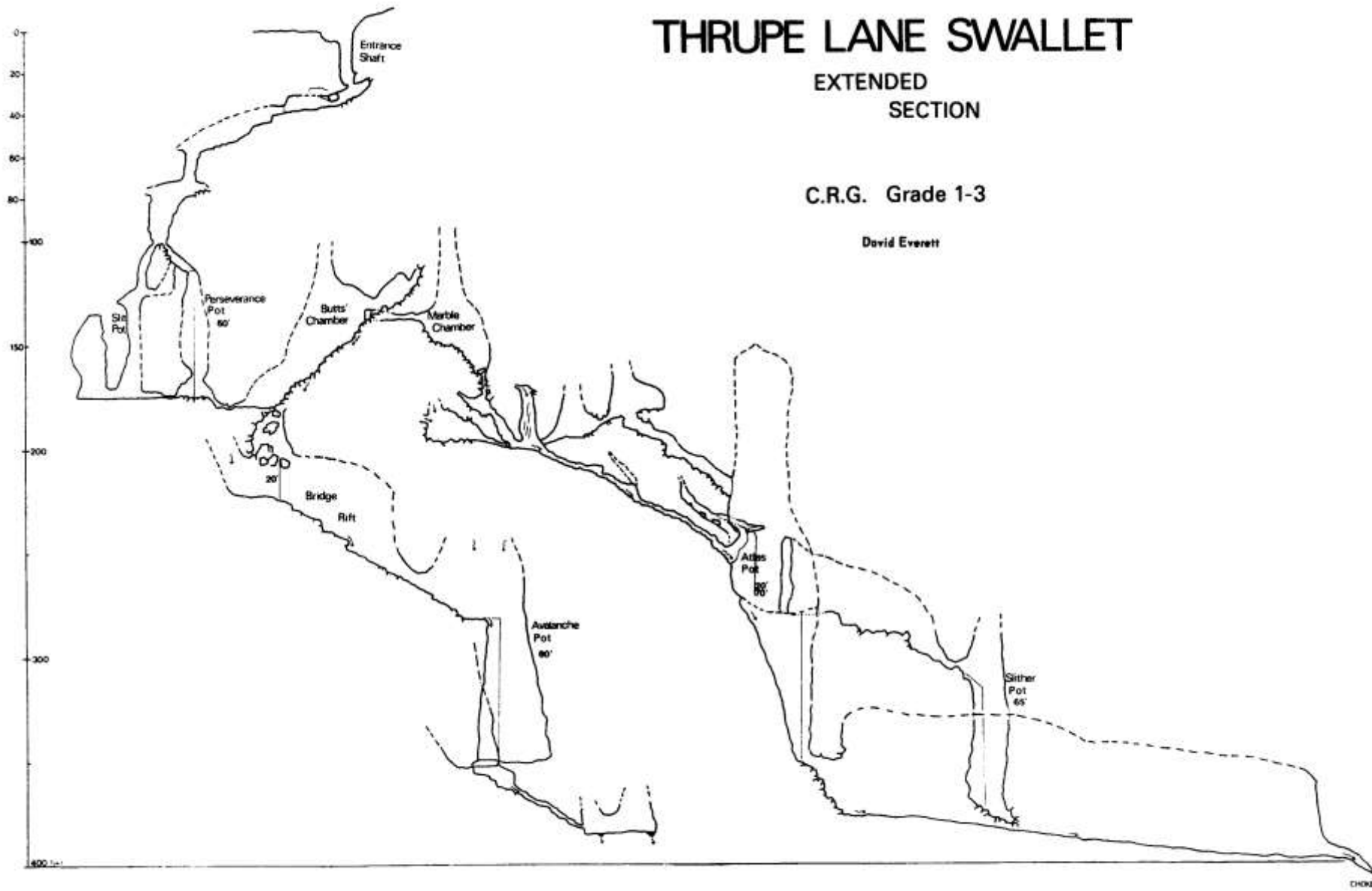
David Everett

THRUPE LANE SWALLET

EXTENDED
SECTION

C.R.G. Grade 1-3

David Everett



NOT NOW AND AGAIN, BUT AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN

Part II by Fred Davies

Our first two tries at progress in the Cowsh Series had provided a mere 10' or so of new cave, but those I felt were not the most interesting of the possibilities. They just were there so had to be tried.

Close examination of the roof above Maine's Aven showed it to have a narrow crack running approximately north/south. Water flowed out at the north end where it was about 3" wide. At the south end it was 6" or 7" wide and a lamp seemed to light up a well stalled enlargement 4' or 5' up.

So on the 2nd August 1970 the siege started. The exact composition of our party I cannot now remember but we put 1lb of plaster onto the west wall of the crack, liberally tamping with mud scraped from the sides of Ken's Crawl. We ran our wire along the crawl and down Bladder Pot before detonating it from a cap lamp battery.

The record of further trips now begins to read like the pages of a calendar - trips were made and charges fired on the 9th, 21st, and 30th August, and the 6th, 13th, 19th, and 21st September. Each charge allowed us to reach 6" higher up into the crack until on the 21st September I found I could squeeze up past a large block detached by our last charge and into a man-sized opening above. I was facing west, my head turned to the left, and could see only a continuation of the crack less than 3" wide all round. With a great feeling of disappointment I carefully turned preparatory to climbing back down to the small and slimy ledges above Maine's Aven. Just another 10' of new cave I thought.

As my head turned towards the north - the rift is narrower than the length of my helmet - a great sight came into view. A horizontal enlargement led off to the north and the sound of falling water. It was too small to pass, but charges placed there on that day and again on the 27th September, opened it enough to let Ray Mansfield and myself squeeze through on the 4th October, while a cursing Brian Woodward pleaded that we should not go too far. After 10' we found ourselves at the bottom of a 2' diameter 7' high space. Mud and sand on the floor was covered by a carpet of writhing red worms, whilst an 8" diameter hole in the roof gave us a limited view of a continuing vertical aven. We felt we were really going places.

More bang opened up the hole, and on the 11th October Ray, Brian, and I, with I think, "Satanic" Mills, climbed, or rather squeezed, up into the aven above. It is, if anything, even smaller in cross section, with the water entering from a 2" crack in the north wall at floor level. It can be climbed to a total height of about 20' to a flat roof with several tight cracks going horizontally.

Of great interest to us was a perfectly circular 6" diameter hole going north some 10' up. A lamp showed only black space, a great sound of falling water came through, and stones thrown carefully through could be heard falling a considerable distance beyond. Work started with fresh enthusiasm.

Charges were fired on the 11th, 18th, and 25th October, but the tube ran through a vein of calcite and this seemed to absorb the shock of bang after bang. 3lbs of plaster was fired, and only an inch of crushed calcite could be scraped away afterwards.

On the 15th November other parties again affected our Cowsh trips. We had by now settled into a steady routine. Underground by 9.00 a.m. on a Sunday, Ray and I would travel through Paradise Regained and Blue Pencil to meet Brian Woodward in IV after he had free-dived down the streamway. With this early start we were regularly on our journey out of the cave before 1 p.m. We met the body ruckle, yes, but it was travelling the opposite way to us and so was easy to pass. We became very light-hearted over these journeys - familiarity and its usual result.

Once, Brian, reaching IV ahead of us, climbed Cowsh and pulled the rope up after him. We, unable to find him in IV, assumed he had not arrived, and we were on our way out and up Blue Pencil, planning a

search of II, when he, red-faced, arrived on our heels. Almost the bitter bit!

On the 15th November as we came up the cave, we passed a large and motley crowd at the Twenty. They ignored us, but at the entrance we were informed by someone that there was a great rescue in progress, the M.R.O. had been called, and the great men would soon be present. We returned to the Twenty and applied the rescuer's friend, a right foot boot, very firmly on the fat person who claimed to be "too tired". He later loudly complained of having been "bullied", but he was out of the cave quite quickly.

We were now half a body length into the calcite squeeze (it is still damn tight), and in a contradictory way, things seemed to be moving faster.

The 22nd November and the 3rd December saw more attacks. Then on the 20th December we split our manpower. Ray Mansfield and Tony Knibbs went down early in the morning and placed a charge, and the glory came to Martin Webster, Brian Woodward, and myself, who that afternoon were able to hammer and crowbar a way into the great space beyond.

El Krapitan is an aven 18' high and 10' in diameter. Water cascades down its north wall and sinks in the boulder floor, but one's lamp does not seem to light much as the black greasy rocks reflect very little light. Our point of entry was 7' up the south wall. After several abortive attempts I succeeded in reaching the top. A crack, amid the falling water, gave most help in the first 10', and as the aven then narrows down it is possible to reach across and obtain friction grip on the opposite face. The climbing does, however, follow the general pattern of Cowsh climbs, best tackled by bridging facing out. Strange but true. We left a fixed rope hanging down this climb and it has now been in regular use for over three years - thanks be for rot-proof artificial fibres. If that fixed rope goes a re-ascent may be difficult as I remember noticing that the large boss that provided an excellent hold on the first ascent has somehow disappeared. I suppose someone else used it as a hold.

The top of El Krapitan is extremely constricted. A low crawl leads north, and we had to push our way past a layer of gravel for 15" to a space big enough for two men to work or four to simply sit. The water came from a small hole 3' up the left (west) wall, whilst a tight rift continued north from the right-hand side of this chamber. Forcing one's head into the hole on the left you find a sump pool, about 3' long and 18" wide. A crowbar pushed into the water stirs up a layer of black stinking ooze - the Shit Sump, bowdlerized by some to Stink Sump.

Preferring the cleanliness of the right-hand rift, we attacked this. Charges were fired by various personnel on the 20th and 27th December. The New Year started well, with two parties going down the cave and up Cowsh to fire charges on the 3rd January, another on the 17th January, and finally on the 24th January came a great leap forward.

Ray Mansfield, Brian Woodward, Steve Wynne-Roberts and I were underground at our usual early hour. A few minutes pushing and hammering away the debris of the last bang and Ray Mansfield was able to pass through into yet another aven. A very easy climb for 15' gave access to a low north/ south rift. South was very tight, but north led through a low crawl into the biggest open space yet discovered. A rift about 20' long, split into two by a rib of rock, could be climbed for 30'. We spent some time looking around and found one baffling feature.

At Shit Sump we had the impression that the water entered the sump from the north-east, and as our rift led north-westerly we had expected to intercept the contaminated water of Priddy Green again. Our new discoveries, however, showed no sign of carrying contaminated water, and in fact this is one of the cleanest parts of the whole cave and only carries water in very wet conditions when a small stream enters at floor level at the most northerly point.

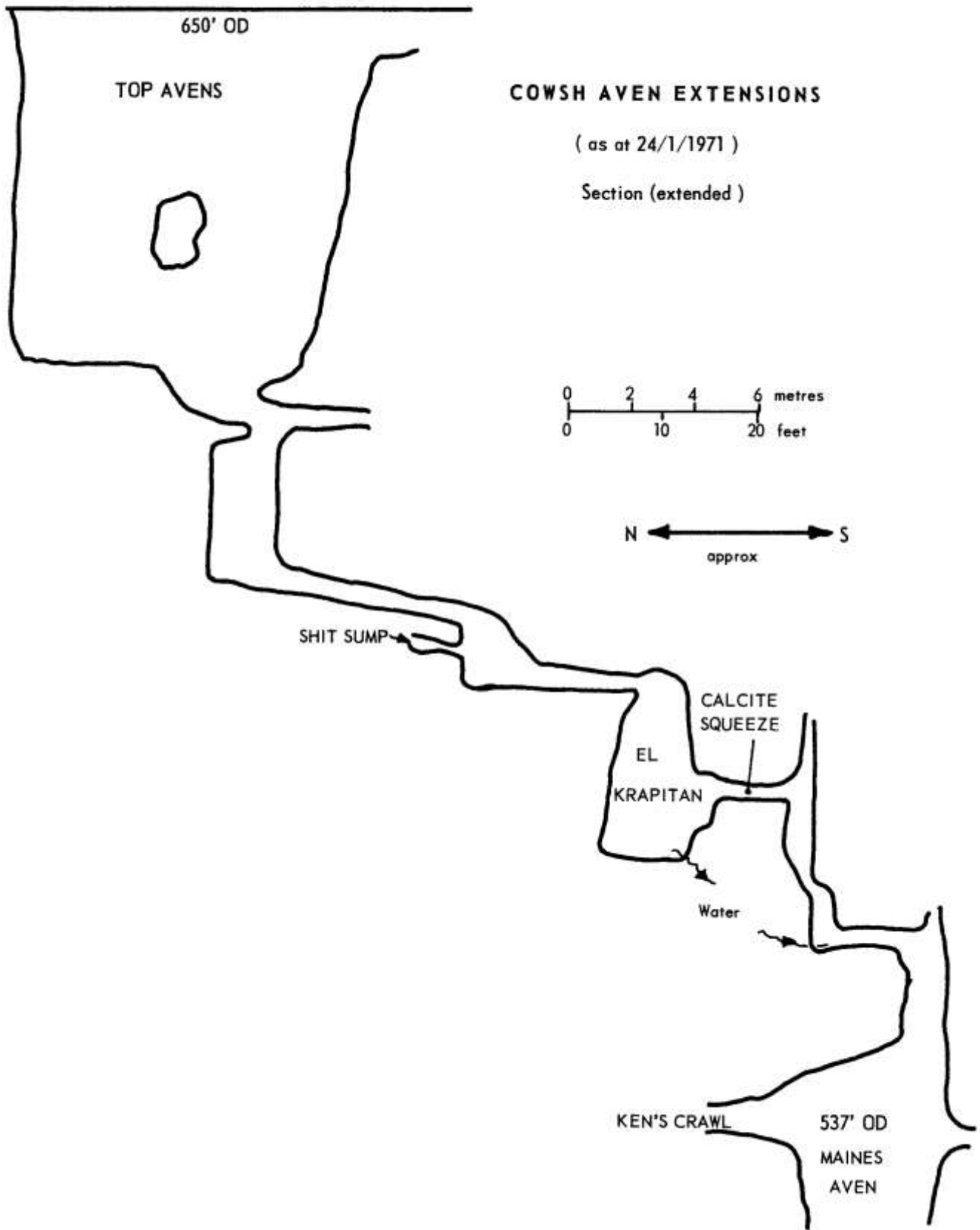
We started out of the cave in a puzzled frame of mind - "Where do we go from here?" was very much our question. It did not seem as though these Top Avens could lead us on to Priddy Green Swallet. The

question was driven pretty firmly from our minds about 1½ hours later. Others may also remember the date - the 24th January 1971 - for we of course came past the end of the Ox-bows just as the first news of the presence of Mr. Dudley Soffe came out. We were kept busy for quite a few hours after that!

So a fairly definite break in our progress occurred which forms a natural break for this story. The accompanying sketch is based on measurements I took on a trip with Robbie Harper, using a Suunto Compass and Fibron tape. As the section shows, the passages are largely vertical or very short and so I did not use a clinometer. The levels are above O.D. as related to the Stanton plan and should be taken in conjunction with the following data also from the Stanton plan.

Entrance of Priddy Green Swallet	780 O.D.
Lowest point of Priddy Green Swallet	688 O.D.
Swildon's IV Streamway	350 O.D.
Top of Maine's Aven	537 O.D.
Top of Top Avens	652 O.D.

Thus we were then about 300' above the IV streamway and 40' below the bottom of Priddy Green Swallet. This WIS plan of Swildon's, however, showed us to be nearly 200' south-west of that promised land. We now began to ask questions about the reliability of this figure and a lot of our more recent activities were prompted by this query.



THE BONES FROM CHARTERHOUSE WARREN FARM CAVE DIG

R.F. Everton

This cave dig was started early in 1972 in a depression known to have taken water in times of flood. Both animal and human bones were recovered from the rift, together with shards of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery.

Shortly after the dig started, an air space was seen in the western extremity of the rift and, looking in, it was seen to be a small tributary passage. In the silt, which almost filled the passage, a human mandible was seen to be protruding. Sensing the importance of this find, the infill was carefully removed, and a large number of human bones were recovered.

On examination, this assemblage was found to be an almost complete skeleton of a lightly built male, of about 30 years of age and 178 cms. (5ft 10ins.), tall. The skull was missing, only a fragment and some upper teeth remained to show that it had been present. Although there had been considerable disturbance of the skeleton, the bones remained sufficiently aligned to indicate that the body had probably been put into the passage feet first, as a complete body, and not as a collection of dis-articulated bones. The assigning of a date to this skeleton was difficult at first, as only one shard of Samian pottery, (Roman pottery of the first century A.D.), one flint flake and a few food bones, were found with it. On closer examination of the material sent to me, a piece of iron stained "stal" was noticed, which had rust coloured "blips" on the surface. Intuition whispered - "Roman Boot nails". X-ray examination of this "stal" showed unequivocal evidence of Roman boot nails, with typical domed heads, square sectioned shafts and clinched ends. This was the confirmation needed to date the body as Roman, probably of the first century A.D. He was buried with his boots on.

Planned excavation in this part of the rift was prevented by it's burial under many tons of rock and debris which was deposited there when the overhanging roof of the more eastern part was stabilised. In spite of this serious setback, much more bone was recovered both before and during later digging.

In the bank of dark earth below the Romano-British burial, two almost complete skulls "fell out" of the "wall". Both were female. One, Skull I., was relatively small with a decidedly infantile appearance, but whose age at death was about 20 to 25 years, as indicated by the number and wear on the teeth. The other, a larger skull, Skull II., was between 16 and 18 years old, distorted by pressure of the earth around it. There was a deep abscess-cavity surrounding the root of the erupting right wisdom tooth. In spite of the differences in size and shape of these two skulls, there were some similarities. Both skulls had multiple (between 9 and 10), sutural bones in the lambdoid suture. Sutural bones are small irregular discs of bone which fit into the join between two parts of the skull, in this case, at the back of the skull. These sutural bones are situated in exactly the same position in both these skulls and are probably equal in number (Skull II has a part missing on the left side), in which case, it would be strong evidence of a familial tie between the two.

Many more human bones were found as the dig proceeded and included an assemblage of bones of an infant of about the time of birth, it may have been still-born. There was also an assemblage of bones of a young male of about 16 years of age. In-fact, apart from the Romano-British man, over 300 human bones and fragments were found, (table 1.), which represented another 27 persons of varying ages and of both sexes, (table 2).

There were two phases of digging, as far as the archaeological material was concerned:

The earlier phase, in the western end of the rift and the later and still active phase, in the middle of the rift, where the shaft is going down. In the western end, many of the bones were intact, i.e. Romano-British man Skulls I and II and many long bones, whereas, in the more eastern part of the rift, the bones were more fragmentary. The question arises, how did these bones get into the rift? Were they derived

from burials, actually in the rift, as the Romano-British man undoubtedly was, or were they derived from burials outside the rift and washed in by flooding, or, were they deposited in the rift after the flesh had decomposed, i.e. after exposure, (cf. Hay Wood Cave burials. Page 19. Proc. UniV. Bristol Spelaeol. Soc. 1972. 13 (i) 5-29). Some modern primitive peoples still use the process of exposure for the disposal of their dead. One North American Indian tribe built platforms, 8 to 10ft. high upon which their dead were placed. Other peoples in mountainous areas, exposed the dead to the eaters of carrion, the residual bones were then broken up and disposed of in convenient holes. Iron age burials are less common than Romano-British, and on many archaeological sites, of Iron Age date, fragments of human bones are found. This may be evidence of exposure of the dead (or merely carelessness), the bones being fragmented either accidentally or by design. Further evidence of exposure comes from a recent dig at Bradley Hill, Somerset, where fragmentary human bones, some bearing multiple cut marks, mainly at the articular ends, possible evidence of disarticulation after partial decomposition, were found mixed with animal bone, in an Iron Age pit. (R.F. Everton. In prep.) Some of the human bones from the eastern end of the dig at Charterhouse Warren Farm, including a mandible and two fragments of leg bones, had been gnawed by rodents, a sure sign of exposure before burial. It would appear that this site is of some archaeological importance but more evidence must be obtained before one can definitely say that Iron Age man practised exposure of the dead before burial, in the Mendip area.

There was little evidence of disease processes to be found in the bones apart from an example of osteomyelitis of the lower end of a leg bone, and evidence of injury to the right temporo-mandibular joint of a jaw (hinge). One fifth meta-tarsal bone (5th, toe), was bowed in the middle of the shaft, possibly due to the pressure of a sandal thong. Finally, a most interesting feature, there was a small, almost adult pelvis, about 20 years of age. I would like to think that this small pelvis is associated with the small Skull No. II, in which case, the stature would be, at a guess, about 4ft. 6ins., not quite a dwarf, but rather on the short side for a 20 year old. There is absolutely no evidence for this association.

Other archaeological material recovered consisted of an excellently preserved shale bracelet, a bronze ring and numerous Iron Age and Romano-British pottery shards. This material, belonging to the first century B.C./A.D., in the absence of stratigraphical evidence, is all we have to date the site and cannot be taken as absolute.

Apart from the human bones, much animal bone was recovered. Some of this is obviously food refuse, having been chopped or sawn, much is fragmentary, possibly due to mechanical effects of the moving rocks. The animals represented were, Horse, Cattle, Sheep and Pig, of varying ages, as well as dog, Roe deer and Red deer. The Deer were represented by shed antlers and limb bones and as we know, Red deer roamed the Mendips at the turn of the century and probably even later, as they still do in the Quantocks, the presence of Red deer bones is no evidence of antiquity. In fact, none of the animal bones need to be very old, as this convenient hole would make a depository for dead animals and has probably been used as such for generations of farmers and their predecessors on this land.

I have not yet fully worked through the animal bone material, except to determine the species represented, I hope to be able to complete the examination in the future.

TABLE 1.

HUMAN BONES FROM CHARTERHOUSE WARREN FARM DIG

- 1) An almost complete skeleton of a male aged about 25 years. Romano-British
- 2) An assemblage of bones from a male of about 16 years. Romano-British or Iron Age
- 3) An assemblage of bones from an infant of about peri-natal age
- 4) One femur from an infant of about 6 to 12 months
- 5) An almost complete skull of a female of about 20 to 25 years This is of small size and may be associated with the small Os Innominatum.
- 6) An almost complete skull of a female of about 16 to 18 years.

BONE	Number of pieces	Number of individuals represented	
		MALES	FEMALES
SKULL FRAGMENTS	7	-	-
MANDIBLE FRAGMENTS	8	3	2 and 3 sex?
STERNUM	5	-	-
RIBS	7 complete, 45 frags.	-	-
SCAPULA	5	-	-
CLAVICLE	4	-	-
HUMERUS	1 complete 8 pieces	4	3
ULNA	3) & 5 frags	2	1
RADIUS	4)	2	2
FEMUR	1 complete 19 pieces	11	4
TIBIA	8	7	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF BONES AND FRAGMENTS		280	

TABLE 2

WESTEND			
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS			
MALES	AGE	FEMALES	AGE
11	ADULT	4	ADULT
1	25 Years	1	20 to 25
1	16 Years	1	16 to 18
One infant of about peri-natal age.			
One infant of about 6 to 12 months			
TOTALS 13		6, and two infants	

TABLE 3

EAST END			
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS			
MALES	AGE	FEMALES	AGE
2	ADULT	1	ADULT
1	About 20 years	-	-
One infant of perinatal age (skull fragments).			
One infant ? age, ?sex. Represented by a piece of parietal bone			
TOTALS 3		1, and 2. Infants	

Postscript

Since writing the above report, Dr. Everton has identified "Bos primigenius", the giant ox. This animal stood 5-6' at the shoulder and has not hitherto been recorded later than the Bronze Age. On the specimen found there are chop marks on the horn core, made by a sharp-edged metallic instrument.

Dr. Everton is a member of the Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society.

Ed.

REVIEW

Ordnance Survey Map 1:50,000 First Series

This long awaited new map is at first glance a disappointment; further perusal only enhances the feeling of dissatisfaction with a gimmicky and poorly designed piece of cartography.

The scale of 2cm:1Km. may be convenient for metrication. In Anglo- Saxon terms 1¼":1mile is scarcely an improvement on the well-tried and much loved One Inch maps.

The O.S. explain on the cover of the new map that all they have done is to enlarge the old 1" edition, put in minor corrections and incorporate "a number of new features which according to market research, will be welcomed by map-readers". One wonders which section of the market was researched!

So, we have all the detail of the 1" map, enlarged by 25%. Consequently, the lettering has been increased to scale, and still obscures certain detail. (I also note in passing that lettering is a bit patchy, especially the typeface used to indicate antiquities). Perception of detail is obscured even further by the widespread use of orange and red. Buildings are now orange stipple (instead of the old grey) and contours are of the same colour. Hence the contour system tends to get lost in built-up areas.

Paths are still shown as black dashes (---) This apparently, is not enough. Public footpaths are shown as red dots (...), public bridleways as red dashes (- - - -) and roads used as public paths as heavy red dashes with alternate dots. (- - - -[ed. can't reproduce]). It all gets very confusing on a map of this scale, particularly where contours are close together; the National Trust areas are still shows as areas bounded by thin red lines - it gets even more confusing. Imagine if you will a conglomeration of these paths and NT areas in an area of rough pasture (.....) traversed by a parish boundary (.....) with perhaps a few rock outcrops thrown in. The mind reels!

To dwell again on the subject of contours, the vertical interval is still 50 feet, but the OS in their wisdom now express this in metres! Thus the contours from sea-level are labelled: 0-15-30-46-61-76-92-107-122-137-152-167-etc. For some reason submarine contours (in feet, fathoms or metres) have been omitted from this series.

Improved features of this new map are hard to find, but are present. Two that can be found are the depiction of Motorways in blue (with numbered junctions) and the indication of disused rail lines and old railway tracks. Woods are now plain green (You can no longer tell the predominant type of tree) and orchards are represented as rows of green dots. New local government boundaries are also shown.

In conclusion, a disappointing 65p's worth, not up to the Ordnance Survey's previous high standard. I shall be using my old One Inch maps until they fall apart, I'm afraid.

P.G.H.

FROM THE LOG

2nd March 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Bob Ellinor and Pete Moody to Desolation Row. The blast of Dec 31st had opened up the terminal choke (in the Desperation Extension) admirably. Unfortunately the depression 6ft long and 1ft deep which had been scoured out in the floor had filled with water to within a couple of inches of the roof. At the end of the pool the choke continues but unless it dries out in the summer it will be impossible to dig. We had a look at sump 12B before leaving XII and it may well repay a dive.

P.M.

16th March 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Tim Large (B.E.C.) and Pete Moody to Vicarage. We took down a plastic bucket intending to bale out the pool which leads to the Crange/Shepton dig, but when we found the passage completely sumped to a depth of four feet we abandoned the idea. A very thorough examination was made of all the passages between Vicarage Pot and the sump. After some work among the boulders on the left hand side of the passage Tim managed to open up a small descending passage leading off into solid rock. As it was impossible to determine whether the passage went or not when explored feet first I went down head first and found 1/ the passage didn't go 2/ I couldn't turn round 3/ I was stuck. A quarter of an hour later we resumed exploration of other side passages. We found one other passage of interest, a small phreatic tube which dropped vertically for thirty feet before levelling off. A squeeze prevented further progress but a small stream could be heard beyond. What is surprising it that no one appears to have been down the passage before even though its open for all to see.

P.M.

17th March 1974 CUCKOO CLEEVES

Bob Ellinor, Al Mills, Derek Stead, Geoff Marshall and Pete Moody. Bob and I dived the lake found on Feb 23rd. It's between 15 and 20ft deep and has a mud floor. A possible way out at the far end was not pushed after a load of boulders collapsed into the sump. The way on from the lake is probably to be found up the aven and not by further diving. The corner at the start of the passage leading to the lake was banged by Al. The trip was notable for the casualty list; Numerous cuts and bruises, one black eye and one eye so full of mud that it required hospital treatment later. God, what a cave!

P.M.

22nd March 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Alison Hooper and Pete Moody. Alison managed to pass the squeeze at the bottom of the phreatic tube found on the 16th. Four feet beyond a slot 5-6" wide gave access to the streamway which appears to flow from right to left. The volume of water seems smaller than the stream at the end of Hairy Passage. (W.I. Stanton in his article "More of the Darn Place" WCC Jnl. No. 94, Vol. 8 p. 41 mentions the passage in question -- the only previous reference that there appears to be -- it's described as an impassable crack!) After digging out the squeeze so that anyone can now pass it we returned to the surface. At Vicarage Pot Alison pioneered a speedy route down -- ignoring the rope hand line one slides down the stal for 10ft and falls free down the remaining 15ft to the bottom of the pot. Care must be taken to avoid the fixed spikes, broken legs and skulls. Alison managed it with grace and skill and only a few bruises.

P M

24th March 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Alison Hooper, Chris. Murray, Bob Ellinor and Pete Moody. Bob and I made several dives in the First Mud Sump in an attempt to reach the Shepton extensions. The dive is very muddy and unpleasant; we didn't manage to pass the sump but on the final dive Bob reached an air bell in a cross rift which, according to the survey, is about halfway through.

P.M

31st March 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

R. Barnacott, A. Newport and I. Jepson. Having failed to recruit one more person to make a worthwhile digging party we took an extra mattock and spare handle to Sidcot Dig. Removed a token 7 buckets of spoil - lost enthusiasm and exited with much limping and gripping from Strawberry who'd hurt his toe. Cave heaving with slow-moving weegees. 3 hrs.

I.J.

31st March 1974 CUCKOO CLEEVES

Chris Murray, Alison Hooper and Pete Moody. A determined effort was made to push the avens above the lake. Chris managed to traverse across the lake at a height of 30ft and reached a choked passage on the other side. Half an hour was spent trying to climb an aven immediately above the ledge. The aven was very narrow and choked with loose rock. By poking ones head into the passage one could pull the rocks out. Care was required to make sure you got your head out of the aven before the rocks fell. After many near misses the way on was open and it was possible to climb up to about 40ft above the lake. Unfortunately the roof of the passage was composed of tons of jammed boulders -- no chance.

P.M.

April 6th 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Rich Bainbridge and Pete Moody. We had a look at the dig in IV which we attacked last year. It has been full of water all winter but during the recent dry spell the water level has fallen 10ft and it should soon be possible to start digging again. We tried to get the syphon working but with only the two of us we found it impossible.

P.M.

26th April 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

A quick trip to IV to see if the dig was worth pushing on the weekend. There was still about 9" of water in the dig.

P.M.

4th May 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Chris Murray, Pete Moody. Chris free dived to 9 and I went on to 12 and "dived" Sump 12B. It's hopelessly choked nine feet in.

P.M.

5th May 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Alison Hooper, Pete Moody. Finally managed to reach the sump Mike Boon discovered at the end of Damascus in 1960 (see SMCC Occ. Paper No. 5 p. 6l). Boon reported the sump to be only 6" high but it appears to have been scoured out since then and is now quite roomy. Went on to Sidcot Passage and dug for an hour or so at the terminal choke. We were helped by Ray and Ken of the MNRC who we met in Keith's Chamber.

P M

11th May 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

John Willman, Alison Hooper, Pete Moody. I managed to dive through the First Mud Sump and reach the Shepton's discoveries. Laid a line through the sump ready for tomorrow's trip. Went down to Sump 2 to wash off afterwards.

P.M.

12th May 1974 SWILDONS HOLE

Bob Ellinor, Pete Moody. Swildons First Mud Sump. We dived through the sump and went on to the second sump which stopped the Shepton in '71. It looks fairly hopeless and we agreed that it was not really a diving proposition. The dive back to St. Pauls proper was decidedly unpleasant, the sump is horribly tight and muddy. A diving line was left in but it's well hidden in case an idiot attempts to freedive the sump under the impression that it leads to Paradise Regained.

The trip was also notable for the gear that Bob managed to borrow for the trip:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Boots : Ian Jepson | 4. Gloves : Alison Hooper |
| 2. Wetsuit : Rich Gordon | 5. Demand valve : Pat Cronin |
| 3. Air : Martin Bishop | 6. Nife Cell : Pete Moody |

The only piece of equipment which was his own was a diving knife!!

P M

25th May 1974 EASTWATER

Phil Hendy, Ian Jepson. Laddered Dolphin, abseiled Twin Verts, poked around in Terminal Rift for a little, and then proceeded out via Dolphin, getting lost in Harris's Passage and subsequently in the Ruckle. 4 hrs.

I.J.

26th May 1974 THRUPE LANE SWALLET

Pete Palfree, Phil Hendy, Aubrey Newport, Ian Jepson, with Tony Dingle, Rich Witcombe and assorted others. A fine and sporting, if rather strenuous hole. 5 hrs.

I.J.

Oh bless the shiny 'lectric light'
With spotlight beam a-shining bright
It does the gentle caver please
And lets him find his way with ease
But should its contacts all unknit
Or belt undo on nasty pitch
Then it's a misbegotten, foul and gruesome, useless heap of scrap metal!

Anon.

CAVE ACCESS

Reynold's Cave

This cave, situated in Chelm's Combe Quarry, is about 400' long and 100' deep. Access is restricted and controlled by the National Tower Testing Station. Permission can be obtained by writing to the Station Manager, National Tower Testing Station, Cheddar. All trips are led and no more than four persons per party are allowed. Electrics only should be used.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Agen Allwedd

The downstream sumps in Aggie have at last been conquered. Martin Farr of the S.W.C.C. dived a series of three sumps, the last of which was 1000' long. Beyond lies 1500' of fine streamway including a 25' cascade.

Flower Pot

A consortium of B.E.C., Salisbury and Cotham diggers have had a quick breakthrough at a site near Hollowfield Swallet. After about 36 hours work, they entered 300' of phreatic passage ending in a draughting slot. The cave is already achieving notoriety for the glutinous qualities of its mud.