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<u>Asst. Secretary:</u>	I. Jepson, 7 Shelley Road, Beechen Cliff, Bath, Avon.
<u>Caving Secretary:</u>	C.W. Davies, Greycott, Caemlyn, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, Wales.
<u>Hon. Treasurer:</u>	Mrs. A. West, 10 Silver Street, Wells, Somerset.
<u>Gear Curator:</u>	B. Hansford, 19 Moss Road, Winnall, Winchester, Hants.
<u>Hut Admin. Officer:</u>	W.J. Ham, "The Laurels", East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.
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<u>Editor Volume 14:</u>	A.R. Audsley, Lawn Cottage, Church Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire.

EDITORIAL

This Journal marks the end of my tour of duty as Editor. Volume 13, as befits its number, was the subject of occasional controversy, which at least shows that the members care about their Journal. It remains a sad fact, however, that Wessex readers still outnumber Wessex authors by about twenty to one. This winter, why not give the telly or pub a miss one evening - take up your quill and parchment and treat us all to a stirring subterranean saga. I wish my worthy successor an avalanche of articles, and the rest of you, good reading and a happy new year.

CLUB NEWS

A.G.M. and DINNER

That the 1975 AGM was well attended can be judged from the fact that the barrel "bait", even though partly paid for by the attendees, was carried away empty from the village hall afterwards. The meeting was lively, the underlying theme being the continuing lack of information flow between the Committee and the general membership. As a result, extracts from the bi-monthly Committee Meetings will henceforth be published in the Journal, and it is to be hoped that members will be more keen on coming forward and giving the Committee the benefit of their opinions.

The Dinner, held in the Bishop's Barn, Wells, was not so well attended, the major reason being the build-up, over the last few years, of excessive throwing of objects, not all of which were suitable for the job. Such was not the case this year; either the main culprits were too ashamed to attend, or various warnings had had their effect. When the Guest of Honour, Oliver Lloyd, rose to speak, he was, however, greeted in traditional manner. Oliver recounted several amusing incidents from his early caving days, with (usually) anonymous companions, before the assembly turned to the more serious task of imbibing the subsidised barrel. This year's Dinner, in spite of the poor attendance, was a successful, almost "family" affair, and it is to be hoped that more members will attend next year.

Officers for 1975/76

Will all readers please note the names and addresses of the incoming Committee and Officers, published on the front inside cover of this Journal.

It will help Journal distribution if members' own address changes are notified promptly to the Hon. Sec. Where necessary, please enclose an S.A.E with any correspondence to Committee members.

Points from the A.G.M.

Honorary Vice President

One of the founder members of the Wessex, Jack Duck, has been offered, and has accepted, a Vice Presidency of the Club. This is in recognition of his past work for, and continuing interest in, the Wessex.

Upper Pitts extension

An estimate has been received from a builder, and it is hoped that construction will soon begin.

Tackle

The loss of Club tackle continues, and the Committee is to assist the Hon. Gear Curator in finding a solution which prevents this loss without making tackle too unobtainable to members.

Lamb Leer

Negotiations have been initiated with a view to Southern Caving Clubs Ltd. taking over the access agreement from the present administrators (WCC, UBSS and MNRC). The Club's right of access to the cave will not be prejudiced.

Affiliated Clubs

It was reaffirmed at the AGM that the Club is still keen to encourage affiliations from school clubs and others. The legal status of the Parental Consent Form is currently being clarified, but when this is done, we shall again be able to accept both affiliations and applications from minors.

Access to Ogof Agen Allwedd

In order to clarify the situation regarding access to this cave, the following rules apply:

1. Applications will be dealt with and forwarded by The Caving Secretary, though the Secretary or Assistant Secretary may also be approached.
2. The Cave Management Committee require (a) the name of the Club, the name of the organiser, (c) the number in the party and (d) the date of the trip.
3. Two S.A.Es are required, together with £1 deposit (cheque or P.O).

The key will be sent with one envelope, and the deposit returned later in the other. All applications must be endorsed by one of the Club Officers listed above. A full set of requirements for entry to the cave is available on request from the Hon. Sec.

Subscriptions

These are now due and remain the same, at £2.50 (£3.00 for Joint Members). Membership cards, valid for one year, will replace receipts: they may be used for proving current membership of the club, for example when applying for discounts at various stores. Locker fees (£1) and food box fees (50p) are also due. Please use the form supplied with this Journal.

Central Heating

Members visiting Upper Pitts during the week may now obtain hot water for showers and radiators by pressing the time switch situated on the left of the boiler compartment door. This will run for three hours, after which it may be pressed again if necessary. The main system (which should not be tampered with) ensures a constant supply of heat and hot water throughout weekends.

G.B Cave

The Charterhouse Caving Committee and the U.B.S.S have drawn up a new agreement regarding access to G.B. A key is now available at Upper Pitts, and basically the same rules apply as before. Please remember that G.B., like the other CCC-controlled caves, must be kept locked at all times as part of the agreement with the Waterworks. Persistent unauthorised entry will jeopardise the ease of access of all cavers to this cave.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Club:-

Paul Douglas Gough, 47 Hamilton Road, Bristol BS3 1NZ.

Richard Guy Hovil, Shaft House, Shaft Road, Monkton Combe, Bath, AVON.

Peter Larson, 42 River Street, Bath, AVON.

MEETS

Organiser

Richard Kenney, "Yennek", St. Mary's Road, Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset.

Telephone: Meare Heath 296

Friday Night Club

Saturday	January 24th	Wales	
Friday	February 6th	Manor Farm	7.30
Friday	February 20th	Lamb Leer	7.30
Friday	March 5th	Cuthberts	7-30
Friday	March 19th	G.B.	7.30
Friday	April 2nd	Swildons	7.30

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

University of Bristol Paul Esser Memorial Lecture 1976

Wednesday, 18th February 1976 at 8.15 p.m in the Arthur Tyndall Memorial Lecture Theatre, Physics Department, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol 8. Given by Dr. A.C. Waltham on the subject "Caves and Ice".

Mendip Society Winter Lectures

21st February 1976. Jim Hanwell on "Farming and the Mendip Landscape", at the Teachers' Centre, Portway Avenue, Wells, at 2.30 p.m.

27th March 1976. Mr. E.R. Price - Assistant Director of Resource Planning, Wessex Water Authority on "Water Conservation on Mendip" at the Teachers' Centre, Portway Avenue, Wells at 2.30 p.m.

LATE ITEM

Open Meeting February 14th and 15th

In December 1975 the A.G.M. of the N.C.A. appointed a special committee to take into the running of the N.C.A. and to advise on its future. To this end the committee are holding meetings in all caving regions to try and find out from cavers how they can best be served by the N.C.A. The working party will be on Mendip on the weekend of 14-15 February, and will be holding an open meeting based on Hunter's Lodge and Priddy Village Hall. They hope to meet and talk to as large a selection of Mendip cavers as possible.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1975/76

President: F.W. Frost

Vice-Presidents: M. Norbert Casteret, Rev.C.H.D. Cullingford, J.W. Duck, C.W. Harris,
H. Murrell, Cdr. P.B. Lawder, Dr. E.K. Tratman, Dr. F.S. Wallis

COMMITTEE

<u>Chairman:</u> P. Davies	<u>Secretary:</u> P.G. Hendy
<u>Assistant Secretary:</u> I. Jepson	<u>Caving Secretary:</u> C.W. Davies
<u>Treasurer:</u> Mrs. A. West	<u>Gear Curator:</u> B. Hansford
<u>Editor:</u> A.R. Audsley	<u>Hut Administration Officer:</u> W.J. Ham
<u>Hut Warden:</u> J.R. Price	<u>Deputy Hut Warden:</u> A. Vanderplank
<u>General Sales Officer:</u> R.A. Webesell	<u>Committee Member:</u> T.E. Reynolds

Other Officers

<u>Publications Sales Officer:</u> R.R. Kenny	<u>Survey Sales Officer:</u> M. Hewins
<u>Journal Distribution Officer:</u> A. Audsley	<u>MRO team Co-ordinator:</u> H.A Pearson

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

<u>Chairman:</u>	Chairman of Committee Meetings.
<u>Secretary:</u>	Internal Club policy, liason with other clubs and outside organisations.
<u>Assistant Secretary:</u>	New membership applications, C.C.C. permits for members and affiliated clubs.
<u>Caving Secretary:</u>	Issue of cave keys, C.C.C. permits to non-members.
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Overall club finances.
<u>Gear Curator:</u>	Maintenance and construction of tackle.
<u>Editor:</u>	Articles for publication in the Journal.
<u>Hut Administration Officer:</u>	Hut bookings, co-ordination of repairs and supplies for Upper Pitts.
<u>Hut Warden:</u>	Day-to-day running of Upper Pitts
<u>Deputy Hut Warden:</u>	Assists and deputises for the Hut Warden.
<u>General Sales Officer:</u>	General caving items.
<u>Publication Sales Officer:</u>	Journals and other publications to non-members.
<u>Survey Sales Officer:</u>	Cave Surveys.
<u>Journal Distribution Officer:</u>	Postal distribution of journals
<u>MRO Team Co-ordinator:</u>	Raising a rescue team from the Bristol area members.

OBITUARY

Christopher Murray

On 24th August this year the Wessex lost one of its most active members in a tragic accident in the Picos de Europa. As reported in the last Journal, Chris Murray, known and liked by everyone who caves from Upper Pitts, was killed while caving in the Cueva de Liordes.

Since early childhood Chris's home was in Litton, from where, with local friends, he first went caving. In 1972 he went to Loughborough University to read chemistry: he joined the university's caving club, caved regularly with them in Derbyshire and Yorkshire and became their tackle warden in 1973.

Chris first stayed at Upper Pitts in the summer of '73 and in November arranged Loughborough University's Speleological Team's first Mendip meet. With Chris as their local contact, the club mixed well with the Wessex members and we all became firm friends. At Christmas Chris joined the Wessex and two very successful joint Wessex/L.U.S.T meets were held in South Wales and Yorkshire in the first half of the following year.

As part of his degree course Chris had to do a year's industrial training and in July 1974 he started work at Avonmouth. Living and working near Mendip, Chris was able to come more regularly to Upper Pitts and cave with other club members.

Although always keen to try and extend known systems by digging or climbing, Chris was primarily a sporting caver. He went caving because he thoroughly enjoyed it whether it was an abseiling trip through Langstroth, Longwood under flood conditions, or a stroll through Stoke Lane to admire the formations. His enthusiasm was very infectious and his easy going and helpful nature made him an excellent caving companion.

We have all lost a fine friend.

Pete Moody.

ACCIDENT in the CUEVA DE LA VEGA DE LIORDES, PICOS DE EUROPA, SPAIN

This account of the fatality on 24th August 1975 is compiled from several sources. Dovetailed into a report written by Jim Hanwell, following an inquiry made in the area on the 26th August amongst all those most concerned, is a report subsequently written by Dr. Brian Woodward. The conclusions and comments were added after further discussion and correspondence. The document has been prepared by the Chairman of the Club on behalf of the Committee; in presenting it in this form it is hoped that lessons might be learned from the tragedy and that it might prove helpful to other parties planning expeditions to remote areas. (All times quoted are in local Spanish time, one hour ahead of B.S.T).

The group of Wessex cavers based at Fuente De were organised by Philip Hendy. Their objectives were to explore cave systems in the Vega de Liordes in the Picos de Europa at an altitude of 1860 metres. All, with the exception of Chris Murray, had completed the necessary permission formalities with the Spanish Authorities required before caving in that country. These arrangements had been made on behalf of the party by Jim Hanwell who happened himself to be in Spain at the same time with another Wessex group caving some 65 miles away. It was not known at the time that other British cavers were operating in the same area. No stretcher or other rescue equipment was taken to Spain by either party.

Peter Moody and Brian Woodward left the camp site at Fuente De on the morning of the 24th and climbed 1000 metres to a shepherds' refuge near the cave entrance where they met Christopher Murray for a trip down Cueva de la Vega de Liordes. The cave has a depth potential of about 1300 metres, the aim being to dive the sump at a depth of 250 metres which is the present limit of exploration. Woodward and Moody had descended the cave several times on previous visits to the region. Murray joined the Fuente De cavers as an independent guest whilst undertaking an extended tour of the European caving regions. He was a member of the Wessex Cave Club and held a National Union of Students Insurance for such overseas caving as a member of Loughborough University. He had not visited the Cueva de Liordes before but had good knowledge of the terrain. He was known to be a competent and experienced caver and was well equipped.

The party entered the cave at 13.30 saying they would be about eight hours but not to worry if they were later. The cave is wet and quite cold compared to most British caves, the main obstacle being a wet 40ft pitch followed immediately by a wet 140ft pitch. On the initial exploration of the cave in 1971, ladders were used and a bolt was placed at the head of the 140ft pitch. In subsequent explorations in 1973 the cave was rigged using S.R.T and the same bolt, with a secondary belay to the rope on the 40ft pitch immediately above; on this occasion a 10mm 16 plait terylene rope (Marlow) was used. The rope had been purchased by Dr. Woodward in April 1975 and had remained in his possession. It had been used once previously by four people in a nearby cave system the previous week and had been stored and transported in a bag. The rope touched two small ledges near the top of the pitch but the angle of contact was very slight and the rock relatively smooth and water worn. In the light of previous experience this was not considered to be a potential danger. All three descended the pitch and the rope showed no obvious signs of abrasion. The descenders used were a rack, figure of eight and petzl type. The sump was reached without problems, Moody dived but the sump proved to be too tight to make any real progress and, slightly disappointed, the party started back. At the bottom of the 140ft pitch Chris was the first to adjust his Willan's sit harness and he set off using his Cloggs. Moody and Woodward were still getting harnessed when there was a sudden crash and Chris was lying at the bottom of the pitch, unconscious. A very quick examination revealed no broken bones or obvious spinal injury and he was immediately moved out of the water to a slightly drier place. He had very severe head injuries and his respiration had stopped. Mouth to mouth respiration was applied and his chest harness removed and breathing started within two or three minutes, the time was 17.00. Moody then arranged a rough bed with the ropes in a small alcove and Chris was moved to this, his arms were put inside his goon suit and they did their best to try and keep him warm. The party were obviously in a very awkward situation with no way of contacting the surface, the rope being broken. Chris was losing a lot of blood and at 19.00hrs his respiration stopped again, artificial respiration was applied for 45 minutes together with external cardiac massage. No further response was noted and so Dr. Woodward concluded that Chris had died.

Chris was covered up, his sit harness was replaced and slings and krabs were attached so as to speed up the subsequent recovery operation. Moody and Woodward then curled up next to each other in an attempt to keep warm, fortunately both had wet suit hoods and gloves; carbide lights provided some heat but it could not have been the most comfortable way to spend the night.

Woodward and Moody were now trapped, being unable to ascend the 140ft pitch. Escape without surface aid was impossible. The other cavers in the vicinity were staying in the nearby refugio, this party had been examining some dry shafts in the area and were not equipped to descend very far into a cold and wet cave. They comprised Philip Hendy, Richard Websell, Mrs. Janet Woodward and Allison Hooper. They were chanced upon at the refugio by two Spanish mountaineers whose names are unknown. Having passed the E.T.A. of 21.30hrs, about one hour after dark, it was assumed that either the exploration was continuing successfully beyond the terminal sump, or that the underground party were experiencing difficulties. After lengthy discussion the cavers at the refugio decided to investigate at first light on the following day. This decision was based upon three arguments:-

- a) that the underground party were very experienced and well equipped.
- b) that it would be too dangerous to descend the track to Fuente De in the dark to alert other cavers at the Base Camp.
- c) that they had insufficient equipment to mount a useful operation immediately.

However, Janet Woodward did have a solo look round the entrance series at 22.30 but not knowing the cave she had to return.

At first light on Monday 25th August, Mrs. Woodward set off down the track to Fuente De to appraise the cavers there of the situation. She arrived at 8.30hrs. Meanwhile, Websell and Hooper descended the Cueva de Liordes as far as they could but failed to make contact with the trapped cavers. They returned to the surface to await further support. Meanwhile, Hendy climbed to a cache of additional equipment only a half hours walk up the steep rock strewn mountainside and retrieved necessary climbing aids. He returned with these at 08.30hrs. A rescue party set off from Fuente De at 09.30hrs with further equipment and reached the cave at 11.00hrs, after climbing the 3,000ft track. This party comprised Ian Jepson and Walter Willcocks, together with Janet Woodward.

Hendy, Jepson and Websell descended the cave at 11.30hrs with emergency foods, spare lights and additional ropes totalling 250ft. They made audible contact with Woodward and Moody at 13.00hrs though, owing to the noise of falling water, any clear communication was impossible. After some difficulty, and great danger to himself, Jepson established that the rigged 150ft rope had broken about 40 feet below the raw bolt belay, at a point just below the two ledges. Hendy then joined him on the lower ledge. After securing an additional rope, Woodward and Moody were able to escape, both were extremely tired and suffering slight exposure after 24 hours underground. Due to shortage of equipment and manpower, recovery of Chris's body was not immediately possible, so rescuers and rescued left the cave and emerged at 15.30hrs - 26 hours after the expedition started. No equipment was removed.

On reaching Fuente De in the evening of the 25th, the following steps were taken:-

- a) Willcocks and Mrs. Woodward drove 65 miles to inform the other British cavers resident in the Ortiquero region, of the fatality. Their attempts to telephone the British Embassy, Madrid, at 22.00hrs from Ortiquero were unanswered.
- b) Dr. Woodward 'phoned the Bath Police, England at 22.00hrs, asking them to inform Murray's parents of the fatality. They live at Litton, Chewton Mendip.

- c) The Guardia Civil in Potes were informed at 22.30hrs and advised the cavers that they would let the necessary Spanish authorities know of the incident.
- d) Judith Willcocks tried to ring Mr. and Mrs. Murray at their home, but was unsuccessful.
- e) A local Red Cross Mountain Rescue Unit was located and offered assistance, they supplied an excellent semi-rigid stretcher for the recovery operation.
- f) Cavers from Lancaster University Speleological Society, staying in the Deva Gorge 30 miles distant, were informed by note.

Communications between the cavers and various authorities were made easier via the two Spanish mountaineers who had been staying at the Refugio on the night of the accident. They acted as interpreters and spent the best part of two days helping out on the surface, their help was very much appreciated.

An internal inquiry was conducted under the instigation of Jim Hanwell at Potes and Fuente De during the late morning of Tuesday 26th. Notes were made and a plan of action decided upon.

During the morning Kevin Malloy, Bob Davey, Allen Williams and Bob Jones of L.U.S.S arrived and offered their assistance and it was decided to try to recover Chris's body the following day. Jepson informed the Spanish authorities of the plans and eventually contacted the British Consulate in Bilbao. They then contacted Chris's parents (without a body or death certificate the Bath Police were in an awkward position as the earlier 'phone call to them could theoretically have been a gruesome hoax).

On the Tuesday evening the four L.U.S.S cavers plus Woodward and Hendy went back up the mountain carrying the stretcher; at the Refugio they were met by the Guardia Civil and the mayor of Posada de Valdeon (the party were camped in Santander Province but the accident occurred in Leon Province. Posada is the nearest village in Leon). Jepson kept the authorities in Bilbao and Potes informed and planned to go up the mountain the following morning with the rest of the party plus members of the local Red Cross Unit.

The recovery party consisted of the L.U.S.S team plus Jepson and Woodward. All pitches were re-rigged with new rope and on the 140ft pitch lifelines were also used. Malloy and Jepson descended the big pitch, put Chris's body in the stretcher, secured it to the rope and came back up. The subsequent recovery went very smoothly, considering the various cavers did not know each other. In the entrance series Moody, Hendy and two Red Cross Mountaineers assisted in the carry out. The whole operation lasted seven hours.

Chris's body was then carried by local villagers down to Posada where a brief post mortem was carried out. A statement was made by Woodward to the Guardia Civil and the Justice of Peace. Chris was buried in the British Cemetery in Bilbao and a memorial service was also held by the villagers of Valle de Valdeon.

The response of the local people, the Red Cross and the four Lancaster University cavers, all of whom gave freely of their time and efforts, was more than could have been expected. Without their help recovery would have been almost impossible. The Wessex Cave Club are sincerely grateful to them all.

Conclusions and Comment

In the words of Brian Woodward: "This accident shows up the vulnerability of a small party caving in a high mountain area. It is not always possible to have a fully equipped surface party to back up the underground team, but this is the choice of the cavers concerned. They should be aware of the risks and act accordingly, it is not everyone who likes large expeditions and the accompanying bureaucracy." On the same theme Phil Hendy comments: "On a foreign trip such as this, the independence of individuals

must be (partly) sacrificed for the good of the whole team. This year we were just several groups of cavers meeting at Fuente De to decide on a programme when we saw who was there, and what they wanted to do. It was impossible to have it otherwise". With hindsight, Ian Jepson writes: "It might be useful to mention the desirability of investigating local facilities for assistance in an emergency. We only found out about the local Red Cross team by a fluke after the accident. Also liaison between parties visiting an area at the same time is valuable - viz L.U.S.S - our knowledge of their presence was also a fluke!"

From these comments it must be assumed that everyone present knew that they were taking calculated risks.

Although individually well equipped, the party exploring the sump on this particular trip was, perhaps, undermanned for such an expedition. Arrangements with the cavers on the surface were not positive, in that not only was the E.T.A too flexible in the view of possible exploration, but that its timing inevitably extended into the hours of darkness, thus seriously hampering possible help or a full scale rescue in such difficult terrain. As on previous expeditions to the same cave by other Wessex parties, the cavers knew full well that the group on the surface were lacking both in numerical strength and equipment in the event of the E.T.A being exceeded.

At 21.30hrs the surface cavers (not really a back-up party) were in an unenviable position when the E.T.A ran out, it was dark, they had equipment suitable only for dry caves. With the caving lights available it would have been possible to descend to Fuente De, but only at the risk of compounding the problem with another accident in the dark on the difficult and dangerous track. Any such action taken that night would most probably have prejudiced the success of the recce into the cave planned for next morning. Janet Woodward did visit the cave that night on her own, but it was not till 10 hours after the E.T.A and some time after first light that a party ventured into the dry part of the cave with the limited equipment that they had at their disposal. Although the additional equipment was retrieved from the cache up the mountain in an hour in daylight, it would not have been practicable in the dark.

A lot has been written about the safety of S.R.T. It is taken for granted that the success of small expeditions in remote areas depends to a large extent upon its use, but one must question the wisdom of being totally dependent upon one technique. It appears that neither of the Wessex parties in Spain at that time had any ladder between them! In view of the greater abrasion than predicted for "low stretch" ropes, the whole question of suitability and testing of ropes for S.R.T is due for re-appraisal in the light of this and other recent experiences. It is not as yet considered relevant to this report to comment further upon this problem other than to confirm that the rigging of the particular pitch was in accordance with standard practice and that the rope was thought by all to be of the right specification, was nearly new and had not, as far as is known, suffered previous damage. It is intended to print a report in this Journal upon the failure of the rope when the results of tests currently being carried out by an independent laboratory are known.

The accompanying time table (one hour ahead of equivalent B.S.T) emphasises the vast difference between dealing with an emergency on Mendip, and one in such a remote mountainous area. Parties planning future expeditions must not underestimate the scale of the country, the additional problems arising out of language difficulties and less easily available communications. In this instance the nearest telephone was situated at the Parador (a hotel 300m from the base camp) nearly two hours hard walk from the refuge near the cave entrance. The hotel staff did not encourage use of this telephone and since all calls had to be routed via Potes, the nearest town several miles away, it proved to be quickest to drive there to get any outside calls put through.

24th	Caving party went underground	13.30
	Exploration concluded, party starts out.	16.00 approx.
	Chris Murray fell, party trapped	17.00
	Chris stops breathing	19.00
	Attempts at resuscitation abandoned	19.45
	Dusk	20.30
	E.T Out	21.30
	Janet Woodward visits entrance series on her own	22.30
25th	First light	07.00
	Janet Woodward descends track to alert rest of party	07.15
	Websell and Hooper reconnoitre the cave without making contact	07.30
	Hendy leaves to obtain kit from higher depot	07.30
	Hendy returns to cave with gear	08.30
	Janet Woodward arrives at Fuente De	08.30
	Ian Jepson, Walter Willcocks and Janet leave base camp at Fuente De	09.30
	Jepson, Websell and Hendy descend cave	11.30
	Contact made with trapped party	13.00
	Rescuers and rescued surface	15.30
	Party return to Fuente De	Late afternoon

During the evening

Party attempt to contact British Embassy, Madrid unsuccessfully.

Party attempt to contact Chris Murray's parents, unsuccessfully.

Contact made with other cavers:

The other and separate Wessex party at Ortiquero, 65 miles.

The Lancaster University team at Deva Gorge, 30 miles.

Local Red Cross Mountain Rescue.

Authorities informed:

Bath Police	22.00
Guardia Civil at Potes	22.30

26th Morning

Consul in Bilbao informed.

Inquiry into accident by J.D. Hanwell at Potes.

Lancaster cavers arrive at Fuente De.

Afternoon

Main recovery party climbs to refugio.

Chris Murray's parents contacted.

27th Rest of recovery party arrives early morning at cave entrance accompanied by Red Cross Volunteers.

Recovery of body from cave on the 3rd day after the accident. Body carried down to Posada de Valdeon by local villagers, accompanied by Woodward and Guardia Civil.

28th Formalities at Posada, Post Mortem and Statements.

29th Burial at British Cemetery at Bilbao.

Memorial Service at Posada de Valdeon.

Phillip Davies
Chairman W.C.C.

MUD SPRINGS IN WILTSHIRE

by W.I. Stanton

Templar's Firs is the name of a small copse on the floor of a shallow valley half a mile south east of Wootton Bassett, near Swindon. A small stream, Hancock's Water, flows through the copse, and on its right bank are three large mounds, about 10m long by 5m wide by 1m high. They are "mud blisters", consisting of a more or less liquid mud core contained within a skin of vegetation roots, rushes, etc. The liquid core is at least 2m deep, as can be ascertained by probing with a stake. Grey liquid mud oozes from occasional splits in the skin. In places the skin is very thin and the mound quakes like a jelly when prodded. The blisters appear to be fed, very slowly, by liquid mud rising from below.

In May 1974 a Wessex Water Authority gang, clearing the watercourse, found it blocked in Templar's Firs by a bank of grey clay that had apparently oozed up from under tree roots in the channel. When they removed this bank, grey liquid clay began to gush into the watercourse, which it rapidly filled. At one stage the mud spouted more than a foot into the air, at a rate approaching 100 gallons per minute. At the same time the adjacent mud blister began to deflate, and young trees growing in its skin waved violently, to the wonder and distress of the honest toilers in the watercourse.

The liquid clay gushed in pulses, with long pauses coinciding with the expulsion of large gobs of more solid material including decaying vegetable matter like clayey peat, sticks, stones, fossils, cow bones, and sharpened stakes. Wooden objects are decayed to a brittle consistency like charcoal.

The farmer, Mr. Hussey, of Old Oak Farm, Wootton Bassett, said that the "bogs" in the copse had always been there, and that cattle had occasionally been lost in them. There are no similar occurrences in the area to his knowledge. There is no evidence of any connection between these springs and the old canal that passes nearby, at a level about 4m higher.

The NGR of Templar's Firs is SU 078816. The mud blisters are underlain by a great thickness of Kimmeridge Clay strata. One may speculate on the chemical composition of the aqueous solution that retains the mud in suspension, preventing it from settling out in the usual way.

THE CAVES OF STEEP HOLM

by Colin Rogers

The island of Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel is administered as a bird sanctuary and nature reserve by the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust. Access to the island is strictly controlled by the Trust, who charge a landing fee, currently £1 per head. Since drawing up this report, the Trust has decided as a matter of policy to forbid all further use of the island for caving and rock-climbing purposes. The Chairman, John Fowles, has explained that the reason for this is "the obvious difficulty of bringing help there in an emergency." The following list of caves will therefore remain definitive for the foreseeable future.

The cave numbers correspond with those shown on the sketch map of the island.

(1) 200 Steps Cave

NGR ST 22756077

Length 3m

On the cliffs above the coastal slope and visible from the nearby lookout post. A small phreatic cavity formed in a haematite vein heading due west. Features outside the entrance indicate the remains of other phreatic cavities. Gull debris covers the entrance floor, but the floor material within may be undisturbed and could yield dateable material and more cavities.

(2) Nameless Cave

NGR ST 23006083

Walking along the paths on the north of the island a small rectangular building will be seen down the slope from a point some distance west of Tombstone Battery. Nameless Cave is just below the dangerous cliff top some 30 degrees to the right of the building. Entering the cave is difficult. A wire ladder may be hung over the cliff face from a tether attached to a stout elder bush some 30m above the slope of the cliff and about 20m to the east of the building where a second elder supplies a firm belay point for the lifeline. In this way the ladder may hang inside the west window of the cave and away from the 50m drop of the cliffs. The experienced caver can then use the tether as a hand line when traversing to the ladder, and step off the ladder into the cave some 8m below the cliff edge. An alternative route for climbers only can be made by traversing along a ledge to the lower entrance with the use of a 50m rope, attached to an elder bush about 30m to the east of the building and to one of several belay points around the lower cave.

Nameless Cave has a large opening at the bottom, visible from the sea, with a bush growing outside. There is an upper cavity and a few feet of passage leading to a window on the east side of the cliff. (Reference (i))

(3) Five Johns Cave

NGR ST 23056084

About 50m west of Hall Cave (see below) and 13m above low water mark.

A maypole, a good climber, or a boat at high water may be required to reach the cave that consists of two chambers and a connecting chimney. (Reference (ii))

(4) Hall Cave

NGR ST 23086082

Length 37m

About 300m from the landing beach, on the north side of the island. The entrance is 10m of shallow canal ending in a spacious chamber notable for echoes. A nearby blow-hole in the cliffs outside can produce an awesome booming sound in the chamber at certain states of the tide. The canal is easy to negotiate in swimming trunks. (Reference (iii))

(5) Jubilee Cave
NGR ST 23096082

Length 25m

About 300m from the landing beach, in a prominent haematite and galena vein on the north face of the island. A low crawl and tidal pool - easily negotiated in swimming trunks - can be followed into a roomy chamber and through a boulder pile occupying its centre. Carbide writing declares:- UBSS 1933 and RAF Locking 1975. Obscure passages from the chamber lead to various cave formations that should be especially protected because they are so few. The cave contains red ochre, straws and flowstone - on which some microflora are to be found. One small pile of old bat droppings were seen in February 1975- (Reference (i))

Areas around Hall Cave and Jubilee Cave

Features around the bay indicate that Hall and Jubilee Cave once belonged to one, much larger cave. A magnificent arching promontory of rock opposite Hall Cave suggests the back wall of a chamber, and many phreatic pockets around the area support this impression.

The floor of the bay is criss-crossed with haematite and galena veins, and to the west, several blow-holes can be seen to throw water spouts when conditions are favourable.

WARNING: Although it is often easy to walk to Jubilee and Hall Caves, a promontory of rock between the bay and the landing beach becomes impassable after low tide - or at any state of tide when the sea is rough. Although it is possible to climb above Hall Cave, it is probably advisable to leave a hand line around the promontory, should a long visit be expected. The rest of the north face is sheer and has no beach at most states of the tide.

(6) Old Well Resurgence
NGR ST 23156080

Below the old well on the north east of the island, and about 200m from the landing beach. The rocky promontory jutting out from the west side of the resurgence divides Jubilee Cave from the resurgence. A small freshwater stream trickles from a basin of rock and small phreatic cavities and veins of haematite can be seen.

(7) Landing Beach Hole
NGR ST 23206070

Length 10m

A tiny hole about 8m along the path from South Landing. A phreatic passage leads to a very small chamber. By digging and back filling it is just possible for small persons to enter and turn around. Carbide writing declares:- "Mid. Som. Nat. Hist. Soc. Discovered 31.3.56 by G.A, V.S and the rest." The cave has been an RAF Locking cave dig. No haematite was observed.

(8) Tower Rock Shelter
NGR ST 23236064

A small hole on the north face of Tower Rock. It is approximately 30m above sea level and is representative of a number of fissures of phreatic origin on the south cliffs of the island. It is formed in a haematite vein.

(9) Reservoir

NGR ST 23056054

Length 2m

Below a squat stone column and about 130m west of the Jetty on the south shore. A resurgence in a washed away phreatic chamber with haematite veins, and an open, sea-washed reservoir beneath. Red algae line the sheltered crevices and a small passage with loose stones and ochre continues at the back of the resurgence. It is possible to walk to and from the reservoir at low tide starting at the landing beach.

(10) Window Cave

NGR ST 22816052

Length 23m

About 350m west of the Jetty on the south shore at the base of the cliffs, about 100m west of the Barracks, and east of Split Rocks. Window Cave consists of a rift about four feet wide running parallel to the shore. From the entrance it is necessary to climb a boulder pile some 3m high to reach the window overlooking the sea. This is a hole in the cliff face, about 2m by 1m. Beyond the window is a small patch of botryoidal stal. and it is possible to proceed for some 17m over boulders to the rift's end. A lower level, slightly to the left, runs for about 10m and contains a salt water pool which can be reached by back-and-footing from the boulder pile. (Reference (i))

WARNING: It is only possible to walk to Window Cave at low tide. One or two places afford an easy rock scramble to the Barracks, but even then these may be isolated from the cave at high tide.

Lower down on the beach between Window Cave and the Reservoir are various freshwater seepages, and at very low tide some of the nearby rocks suggest blow-holes, or possibly cave development.

(11) Split Rock Cave and nearby fissures

NGR ST 22656049

Length 30m

About 100m west of Window Cave, and at a point on the island now known as Split Rock. A high narrow rift running straight into the cliff, 8m high, 30m long, and about 50cm wide. The inner cave opens out and shows phreatic features and a certain amount of stal. deposits. Immediately to the east are cliffs criss-crossed with haematite, in which are many washed-out fissures. These cliffs provide a route to and from Split Rock, provided it is not high tide. (Reference (i))

Just around from Split Rock to the west, steep cliffs bear veins of galena that can be traced to an area where stone has been removed from the top of the island. Near the tops of these cliffs, various pockets indicate solutional activity that might once have been caves.

Conclusion

The amount of fresh water on Steep Holm may be an indication that other caves could exist inside the island. Certainly, any amount of small fissures can be discovered and proven to be of cave type origin, but it is the possibility of something larger that excites most people.

An account of the island from the Bristol Naturalists Society Proceedings deserves a mention here. H.J. Knight states:- "On the north side of Steep Holm there is a cave running deep into the island. It is difficult of access and although above high water, can only be reached at low tide. It was visited about 1880 by two men from Weston, who brought away a number of stalactites of great size and beauty. They also saw bats in great numbers hanging on the roof. The explorers crawled through a narrow passage into a much more spacious chamber beyond. From the roof of this hung many fine stalactites, and the floor was covered with a sheet of water. "

The Society's proceedings went on to mention that in 1935, with a combined Wessex Cave Club and Bristol Naturalists team, they found a cave of similar exterior, whose mouth was entered with great

difficulty, since the cliff overhang defeated their rope-work approach from above.

The interior described by Knight, however, differed from the 1935 cave which consisted of two small chambers. From one corner of the outer chamber a steep ramp led to an inner chamber, which curved round in a crescent, so that its furthest end joined the outer chamber by a chimney; signs of large stalactites - or their remains - were absent. A sheet of stal. covered an ochre floor in the inner chamber, and this had been cut in section by the erosion of the cliff - and subsequent reduction in the extent of the cave. Embedded in the ochreous material were sub-fossil bones (one identified as Red Deer or Reindeer), and soft efflorescent stalactitic material was visible in much of the cave. The connecting chimney contained stal. encrusted scree. According to the Bristol Naturalists the cave was "... evidently an old swallet, that had been silted up before separation from the mainland." The description has been attributed to Five Johns Cave.

The Society goes on to suggest that Knight had found the cave once called "The Church" by a former tenant of the island. This "Church" could be approached by precarious scrambling, but has not been re-discovered. The third cave mentioned in the proceedings seems to fit Hall Cave.

Personally, I suspect that there is still scope for the existence of a large cave on the exceedingly dangerous north face around ST 22556075, where many large fissures exist. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to approach the area, and I have never had the time to risk entering the fissures.

Scope may also exist for the duplication of solitary caves at beach level on the prehistoric beach level above, sometimes referred to as the coastal slope. 200 Steps Cave, Nameless Cave, the fissures to the west of Split Rock Cave, and Tower Rock Shelter are indicative of this phase. The present beach level abounds with structures that look like washed-out cave systems and extend from the entrances of the modern caves.

There are no obvious signs of caves within the core of the island - such as lines of depressions or swallet holes on the surface of the land - but the new well behind the Barracks shows that a water system is developed in that region and to a height of approximately 50m above sea level. It had been assumed that the well was purely a collecting area for water from the high ground behind the Barracks, but not only is the water level remarkably stable for the catchment basin, limestone itself does not easily retain water unless under the influence of a complex hydrological network such as caves and cave type cracks.

The most obvious step to take in the further investigation of the island would seem to be water tracing. By tying strips of cloth at various resurgences, such as the Reservoir and the Old Well Resurgence, and adding an optical brightening agent, such as "Leucophore", at the new well, connecting passages may be traced through the island. ("Leucophore" is colourless and typical of the brightening agents added to various washing powders. Very low concentrations of this agent would show up at the cloth end of the system when the fabric was illuminated under Ultra Violet.)

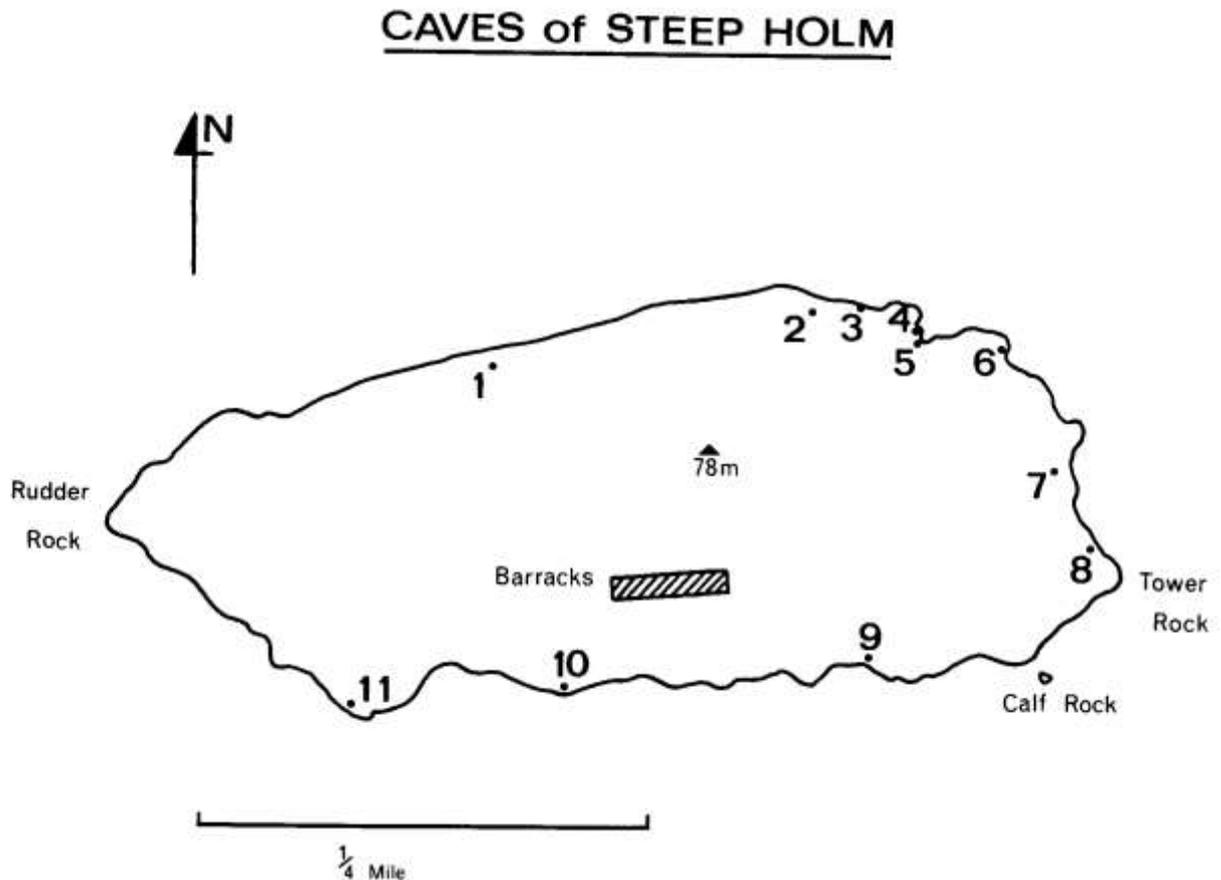
Another investigation that I would like to have carried out would involve plotting the variation of rate of flow of the island resurgences with the rainfall on the Mendips, the Brecon Beacons and at sea level. It would also involve the collecting of any true cave crustaceans from the island and a comparison with Mendip and Welsh varieties. In this manner it might be possible to trace biologically the separation of the south western limestone mass by the Bristol Channel and to discover the origins of our local cave organisms.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust, for allowing the survey to take place - especially to Peter Reese and Rodney Legg. I also wish to thank the many people who have stayed on the island and who have helped in many ways, in particular, Dave Abrahams, Derek Harris and Gay Meyrick.

References

- (i) Shepton Mallet Caving Club Series 3 Journal Nos. 6-10 1963-1965
- (ii) Bristol Naturalists Society Proceedings 4th Series Volume 8 Part 4 1938 (p 440 Fig 38 map)
- (iii) Wessex Cave Club Journal No. 88 February 1963 (Hall and Jubilee Caves pl45)
- (iv) The Caves of Mendip 3rd Edition (p 71)
- (v) Ordnance Survey Sheet ST 26 SW and part of 26 NW 1:10,000
- (vi) Admiralty Charts
- (vii) Unpublished reports from Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society visits of 1973, 1974 and 1975



A DIGGER'S DIARY

1954 - 1964

The following extracts are taken from one of the diaries of the late Dave Mitchell of Frome, whose digging activities spanned more than twenty years and ranged all over Mendip. Dave paid literally hundreds of visits to Browne's Hole during his lifetime and the first entry in the diary is typical of hundreds that follow.

"3rd January 1954 Went out to Stoke with Mr. Browne and continued digging the shaft and hauled up 71 bucket loads from Coronation Chamber."

The next week, Hillier's Cave in nearby Fairy Cave Quarry, was discovered.

"10th January 1954 Went out to Stoke and hauled 12 loads from South Passage. While in the pub heard of new cave in Cox's Quarry and went to explore it. Found out that new cave ran under Cox's Cave.

17th January 1954 Went out to Stoke. Hauled 16 loads from the South Passage and cleared it of mud so that rail laying can commence. Went down new cave in the afternoon. Found that one end ends in a sump and we need a rope to carry on at the other."

Regular, weekly visits to Browne's Hole continued, interspersed with occasional examinations of neighbouring sites.

"17th April 1955 Went out to Browne's Hole. Dug out some more of new passage and found that it split into two. Also built up wall on one side of drive to cave. Also went to new cave found by Shepton C.C at Hansdown Farm, Maesbury."

Breakthroughs in Browne's Hole were frequent but small scale.

"20th November 1955 Dug out Sink Passage, cleared Curtain Chamber, and cleared out South Passage and entrance to Alfie's Room. Water in upstream gone down to about 18". Went through and found another 50' of passage. 3 tubs brought out.

8th July 1956 Hauled 13 tubs from South Passage. Got mud back from first chamber to Curtain Chamber. Found another 30' of upstream passage. Blasted in Parade."

Mr. Browne's diggers gave a public display of their work in September 1956!

"29th September 1956 Entered a lorry in Frome Carnival. Won first prize and the Jennings's Cup."

Dave could do little caving during 1957 as he was working away from Mendip for most of the year and he had no transport of his own. In 1958 came National Service which saw Private Mitchell of the Somerset Light Infantry posted to Germany. By 1959 he was managing to fit in some digging while on leave.

"4th January 1959 Went to Asham Wood and assisted M.N.R.C in a dig at a rock shelter (Hell's Ladder). Bones and pottery have been found."

In company with the M.C.G he visited other parts of Mendip.

"3rd August 1959 Continued digging with M.C.G at Cooper's Hole, Cheddar. Also helped to explore new rift cave found at Cheddar (Canyon Cave). Very unsafe and dangerous through loose rocks."

At the end of 1960, with his army service over, his digging activities regained their former momentum.

During a five year period he made over five hundred entries in his diary, many of them recording solo digging trips to Browne's Hole.

4th September 1960 Continued digging at Browne's Hole. Hauled out and sorted 10 tubs. Found a few fragments of bone. All water cleared away except for Upstream Series. Remainder of cave dry for time of year.

26th September 1960 Spent an evening at Mere Head Quarry. Did some digging in a small but promising rift.

18th December 1960 Went to Pitten Street Swallet with A. Cowley. Sank shaft for 10' through silt and found way into stream passage. Way on blocked by rock. May be possible to by-pass. Stream in existing passage can be heard.

15th January 1961 Carried on with work at Browne's Hole. Digging out a rift on Stock's Corner. Hauled and sorted 8 tubs, and found one bone.

Continued with work at Hunting Lodge Swallet and went down a further three feet. Total depth is now 30'.

Also did some work with A. Cowley at Pitten Street Swallet. Forced our way further along choked stream passage and can now see an open passage beyond.

14th April 1961 Evening trip to Pitten Street. Smashed up rock in original stream passage. Had to abandon effort owing to large rock in roof showing signs of settlement.

23rd April 1961 Spent a whole day on excavation at Browne's Hole. Sorted two tubs left from previous trip. Also hauled and sorted 16 tubs, finding one tooth and a skull. Finished final excavation in Deer Passage.

9th June 1961 Paid a visit to a hole which had fallen in at Holwell. We descended down a vertical rift to approx. 90'. Further progress stopped by rocks which have fallen in. Natural rock shaft but not very promising.

24th September 1961 Continued excavation with M.C.G at Blackmoor Swallet. Progressed approx. 10'. Definite signs of old mine workings e.g shot holes, old timber, clay pipes. Excavations held up by large roof fall after breaking into old shaft.

29th October 1961 A. Cowley and myself spent some time excavating the Annexe. Effort rewarded by breaking into an extension with fine formations and a nest of cave pearls. Re-sealed entrance to await photography.

26th November 1961 Work started on Vincent's Swallet. Fence repaired and digging commenced. We removed boards and excavated down through black sludge until we found rock forming the walls of a rift. A small hole was found under one wall.

24th December 1961 A collapse in field, shown to us by Mr. Stock, resulted in entry being gained to a - new cave, Christmas Cave. Exploration took us approx. 70' deep. One passage not yet explored. On this trip one piece of pottery and many bones were found.

27th December 1961 Evening trip to Christmas Cave where more bones were found. Also found was an extension of Stock's Chamber and a promising hole at the bottom of Cowley's Creep.

28th January 1962 A trip to the Terminal Rift of Stoke Lane was again attempted and this time we

succeeded. Off the Rift we got into a maze of boulders which strongly suggests a way through to Christmas Cave."

In 1962 Dave paid his first visit to the Warren Farm area, Charterhouse, where he was to finish his digging days twelve years later.

4th February 1962 Looked at a shakehole which fell in on Warren Farm. Digging carried out for a short spell by Allan and myself. It looks very promising.

4th March 1962 Spent a day at the M.C.G cottage where much work was done at the dig on Warren Farm. Dug down approx. 15' and encountered choke of small loose stones. Very promising.

15th April 1962 A visit to Warren Farm where no trace of previous shaft could be seen owing to new collapse. A new shaft was sunk and after a day's digging we by-passed the previous shaft by about 2'. Nothing found. Shoring placed in position for future dig.

8th May 1962 Evening dig at Hunting Lodge Swallet where much debris was removed. A small rift was found high up in wall of main pot. A stone dropped down it fell to a depth far greater than the main pot.

19th June 1962 Evening trip to Elm Cave. After re-opening the entrance to water chamber it was found all water had disappeared. After a good look around a dig was started which allowed an entry into a further chamber. A way on can be seen through loose rocks.

2nd September 1962 Digging started at Knapp Hill Swallet, near Wells. After a little work a hole was uncovered which led to a narrow rift in bedrock. A stream can be heard running below the rift.

25th November 1962 Trip to Amey's Quarry where a small cave had been found. Permission was given by the manager for us to undertake some digging but nothing further was found.

3rd March 1963 New dig started opposite Browne's Hole. After digging down approximately 3' bedrock was struck. Digging along the rock face revealed nothing further so the dig was called off.

5th May 1965 Trip to Knapp Hill Swallet where much downward progress was made. Many large rocks broken up and removed from the hole. The stream which we could previously see is now running across the bottom of the hole and sinking again. A further stream can still be heard below us.

21st May 1965 Trip to Stoke Lane to investigate a hole in Treasure's Quarry. The hole was entered without much difficulty and proved to be very small and approx. 25' long. The passage did not contain any formations.

9th June 1965 A day spent digging in the by-pass passage in Cooper's Hole. Fair progress made. Difficult digging owing to a hard mixture of calcite and mud. New dig started which has produced a number of bones which I have saved.

7th July 1965 Further visit to Knapp Hill Swallet where with the aid of explosives we went down through 4' of solid rock. We have now reached the stream and it is not as large as we had hoped. The rift still continues down becoming larger.

23rd July 1963 Evening trip to Stock's Cave to blast rock in boulder pile. A party of two descended Stoke Lane to await the blast. This blast was clearly heard in Tributary Passage. The rock in Stock's Cave was dealt with but it left the rift in a dicey condition."

Dave's digging continued in a like vein, without any slackening of effort, until his untimely death in 1975. In common with many Mendip characters he had a fascination for the mysterious art of dowsing, and a

final extract from his diary describes a typical "experiment" in Cheddar Gorge.

18 August 1963 A very successful day was spent at Cheddar where 15 tubs were removed from Cooper's. This resulted in cutting off the top of the mound in the main passage.

A water divining friend spent the day with us and found for us an underground stream. This stream was found to come from Pride Evans Hole (directly below), under the garage and coach park, between Cooper's Hole and straight into the bank. It was then followed straight to Great Oone's Hole where it followed the directions of the cave. It was then picked up in three places in Gough's Show Cave."

These diary extracts have been reproduced by kind permission of Mrs. G. Mitchell.



Dave Mitchell's shoring at Charterhouse Warren Dig, 1974

REVIEW

Ordnance Survey Maps - a descriptive manual by J.B. Harley.

Published by Ordnance Survey 1975. Price £5.50.

The author was or is Lecturer in Geography at Exeter, and has also written The Historian's Guide to Ordnance Survey Maps published 1964 price 85p from Stanfords, Longacre, London.

Why review books on maps? Well - you know the cry "Caves are where you find 'em" - there is another one - "Caving is what the Editor gets in his mail bag" - but don't expect me to read a review of Auditing by CHK!

Over 60 years have passed since the last full and authoritative description was published. In our post-war world we have had to make do with brief descriptions of the different scales. This work of 200 A4 pages plus samples is extremely detailed but easily read, and it certainly meets the needs of the interested amateur.

It starts by describing the National Survey and then the National Grid - passing then to a detailed description of each scale in use. This is followed by a chapter on the archaeological and other special maps. The survey accuracy is then considered and is followed by Appendices listing the abbreviations in use and a note about Edition numbers. The select bibliography is extremely detailed and could happily keep one busy chasing Librarians for years. Then follows the Index and specimen plates of all their products.

Let us examine the 6" as an example. The headings for this map read:-

- General Description
- County Series
- National Grid Series
- County Series (format, referencing and marginalia)
- Ditto NG Series
- Landscape at 1/10,560
- Minimum dimensions for detail
- Elimination of minor details
- Minimum distances between parallel lines
- Conventional Signs
- Contours, bench marks and altitudes
- Antiquities
- Boundaries and administrative areas
- Buildings
- Communications
- Names
- Rocks, cliffs and slopes
- Vegetation
- Water features

The Index is well designed and one can attack it from a particular scale or parameter. The latter will lead you back to the different scales on which it is employed. Unfortunately there is no mention of caves.

The specimen plates are in general well chosen and those for the 1/1250 show an inner suburban area and secondly an outer suburban area. The former has a featureless double track railway crossing it, so I still don't know if a switched diamond crossing can be accurately identified!

The problems of publishing up-to-date maps are well dealt with, and one can easily follow the revision sequence. Tongue in cheek or not the stiff covers are printed with the 1/25,000 of the Dartford area - which is far older than the current 1/50,000 2nd Series.

Available from most progressive public libraries.

R.R.K

CAVES ON ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS AND PLANS

Further to my review of the new 1/50,000 maps I have had a reply from the OS which contained the following information:- The OS have a hierarchy of Committees whose function is consultation between the department and the principal map users. The ones that are in touch with the public are "The Map User's Conference (Large Scales)" and a similar "(Small Scales)". The Central Council for Physical Recreation is represented at these meetings, and the National Caving Association is in membership of the former body - so there you are. I would suggest that Welsh members try their luck and see if it is possible to get OFD onto the 1/50,000.

R.R.K

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Having moved conveniently close to Mendip, I decided to attend the 1975 AGM to get first-hand impression of Club politics. The CSCC/Wessex attitude toward the NCA has been a frequent topic of discussion in Birmingham, so I looked forward with much interest to see how the policy of putting the individual caver first was reflected within the club.

I have stayed at various Wessex huts infrequently but regularly in the past eight years, and have noticed that with a few notable exceptions those elevated to the committee acquire a somewhat aloof air. Therefore, I was disappointed that Wally Willcocks' motion to restrict the proposing/seconding system was defeated. If those seeking office needed to make themselves better known to the ordinary club members the dual purpose would be served of making committee members more approachable and of drawing peripheral members more into the affairs of the club. This would be better than "moaning at members" - after all, few people share Mr. York's talent of being insultingly imperious without causing lasting resentment.

I do not wish to imply that any committee member is unworthy of his post, but, particularly in view of the opinions vigorously argued by the Wessex, its own officers ought to be prepared to widen the base of their support.

Yours sincerely,

J.M. Darville

FROM THE LOG

7th September 1975 SINGING RIVER MINE

Pete Moody, Jeff Price and Adrian Vanderplank. Pete dived flooded adit in the Chocolate Canal and pushed 15' in a NW direction and 20' in a SE direction - no go. Then I dived the Stream Passage to the air-bell found on 22.7.75, and then out.

AVDP

10th September 1975 WARSOP MINE

Marion and Barry Gay, Barry Wilkinson and Keith? Descended 440 yd shaft by QRT (Quadruple Rope Technique) - this technique is very fast and much safer than SRT! (about 30 secs). Spent about five hours inspecting the system. Dig progressing at one point at about 12 yds every week, removing the passage to a width of 240 yds. The dig is controlled by a small group called the N.C.B.

Anon

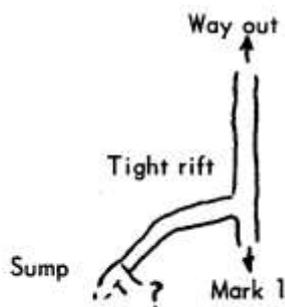
20th September 1975 SLUDGE PTT

J. Price plus lump hammer and star drill to make several holes for bang. Only one very short hole was made due to feeling very knackered through lack of help.

JP

20th September 1975 CUCKOO CLEEVES

Adrian, Alison and Pete. Looked at the rift leading off Giant's Stairway just below final climb to Puke Rift. Very tight and muddy - small passage appears to lead off from the bottom but we were unable to get down to it. It's parallel to and probably connected with Puke Rift. Also looked at the inlet down by Mark 1. The water in the final pool was very low and it was possible to get into it for some way. Straight on the passage appears to sump in a choke but there does seem to be something going off to the left. The bend is extremely tight and we were unable to get round - need to look at it headfirst next time. Had a grot around the upper series before coming out.



September 1975 SWILDONS

A. Mills (non-member). Having found no one interested in a trip to Swildons 9 on a Tuesday afternoon, I decided it was time to investigate the air-bell in 9, claimed by J. Cobbett to be a by-pass to 9. Having arrived on site alone - NOT TO BE RECOMMENDED - I removed lead thus making it easier to find the air-bell since one sticks to the roof etc. Approximately 15' to 20' in I emerged in the air-bell. Having scabbled up the rift for 10' I came to two passages, both of which ended, at 6' and 3' respectively. Thus finding no way on I made my way out of the cave.

AM

WESSEX CAVE CLUB RULES

1. That the Club shall be called the Wessex Cave Club.
2. That the objects of the Club shall be to promote the sport and science of caving by:-
 - a) Initiating newcomers into the best tradition of the game.
 - b) gating caves that are likely to be despoiled.
 - c) publications.
 - d) organizing gatherings to explore or excavate.
 - e) by arranging for Members to visit caves in districts other than their own.
 - f) erecting and maintaining huts where members can stay while cave hunting.
 - g) maintaining gear for the use of members.
 - h) maintaining for the use of members a library of books, literature and maps.
3. That the Club shall consist of Honorary Members and Ordinary Members who may be of either sex.
4. That the President, Vice President and Honorary Members shall be entitled to exercise all the privileges of ordinary members, including the rights to stand for office and for the committee, and all voting rights. The President and Vice Presidents shall retire annually and be eligible for re-election.
5. That the affairs of the Club shall be conducted by a Committee which shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Gear Curator, Assistant Secretary, Caving Secretary, Editor, H.Q Warden, H.Q Officer, and three other members who shall retire annually and be eligible for re-election. These posts are honorary and must be filled by members of the Club. Any member standing for office or for membership of the Committee must be nominated by two members of the Club. The Committee shall fill any casual vacancies.

The Committee may appoint any member of the Club whether they be a Committee member or not to carry out any duties that the Committee consider necessary.

The Honorary Secretary of any properly constituted group within the Club shall be eligible to attend 3 Committee meeting in an ex-officio capacity, and may nominate a substitute to attend any meeting which he cannot attend personally.

An Honorary Auditor shall be appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting.

6. The election of the Committee shall be by postal ballot. The end of the Club Year shall coincide with the date of the A.G.M. The A.G.M and the Annual Dinner shall normally be held on the third Saturday in October.
7. That any person desiring to join the Club must be nominated, by two members and elected by the Committee. All applicants for full or joint membership or members of an affiliated club, who are under the age of majority, must obtain the permission of his or her parent or guardian, who will be required to sign a special form supplied by the Club. Adult members of an affiliated club must sign a form accepting the provisions of Rule 10.
8. That the subscription for Ordinary Members shall be £2.50p per annum due at the start of the Club Year, and every new ordinary member shall be required to pay an entrance fee of 25p. Any member whose subscription has become more than three months overdue shall be named in the next Journal, and if within one month the subscription has not been paid, the member's name shall be removed from the list of members, and notice to this effect shall be sent to the member.

The subscription of a member joining near the end of the financial year may be deemed, at the discretion of the Committee, to cover the subscription for the following year. Married couples, may become joint members paying an annual subscription of £3.00. They shall enjoy all the amenities of the Club, except that they shall receive one copy of each Journal issued, and one vote only. A membership card shall be issued to any member.

9. Charges for the use of Club facilities shall be regulated by the Committee.
10. That every person, whether a member of the Club, member of an affiliated club or non-member, making use of the services of a guide or guides, or taking part in any activity or expedition organised by the Club, or in which any member of the Club shall take part, shall do so at his or her own risk, and that he or she, or his or her legal personal representative or assigns or dependents shall have no claim or right of action against the Club, or any member thereof in respect of any damage, loss or injury (including death) sustained notwithstanding any negligence of the guide or any members, or the body of members of the Club.
11. That an extraordinary general meeting may be called at any time by the Honorary Secretary when required to do so by the Committee, or in writing by ten members of the Club. Two week's notice must in all cases be given. Such a meeting may not pass a resolution, but by a simple majority of those present may draw up a resolution to be voted on by postal ballot within one month by the members of the Club.
12. That members using the Club's Headquarters shall leave it in a tidy and clean condition.
13. That no alteration shall be made to these rules except at the A.G.M or by special resolution passed at an E.G.M called at the request of the Committee. Alterations in subscription rates shall be effective from the date of the meeting at which they are passed.
14. Any person, or affiliated club whose membership is deemed to be undesirable by the Committee may have membership suspended by the Committee until, and not longer than the next A.G.M, at which the member or affiliated club concerned shall have an opportunity of being heard. A three-quarters majority of the members present at the A.G.M may expel such members or affiliated clubs.
15. That the Committee shall have the right to refuse the use of Club possessions to members, or affiliated clubs, when they consider it desirable in the interest either of the Club or the member or affiliated Club concerned, but the member or affiliated club concerned shall have the right to appeal to the Committee against this decision.
16. That caving clubs or societies attached to educational establishments for minors or youth organizations may become affiliated to the Club on the approval of the Committee and subject to the inclusion in the rules of the club to be affiliated certain rules as approved by the members of the Wessex Cave Club and compliance with regulations as laid down from time to time by the Committee of the Wessex Cave Club for the time being.

The subscription shall be one quarter of the subscription of an Ordinary Member of the Wessex Cave Club for each member of the affiliated club.

Each affiliated club shall have one vote and receive one copy of each Journal and other Club communications.

NOTE: The concession given by this rule is normally intended for minors under 18 who are not wage earners and who are still pupils at the educational establishments concerned or active members of the affiliated youth organizations. Adults attached to an affiliated club will normally be expected to join as full members.

17. That members of affiliated bodies may become Ordinary Members of the Club when their application has been approved by the Committee and the annual subscription has been paid. The entrance fee shall be waived for members joining the Club in accordance with this rule.
18. That notices of motions for discussion at the Annual General Meeting shall be received by the Honorary Secretary not more than two weeks after the posting of the notices of the meeting. Such notices of motions must have the names of the proposers, and be circulated to the members at least seven days prior to the meeting.
19. That at each A.G.M, the Club shall decide on the sum of money that is to be placed for that year in the Hut Sinking Fund. This fund is to be used only for major repairs, extensions, additions to or replacements of the Club Huts. The administration of the fund is in the hands of the Committee.
20. No part of the Club's funds shall be at any time be distributed by gift, division or bonus in money, to or between any of its members. On dissolution, surplus funds shall be applied in or towards the advancement or science in the fields of Spelaeology, Archaeology or Geology, or any of them.
21. There shall be four trustees of the Club. The first trustees shall be appointed by the Committee and the freehold, leasehold, shares and other property of the Club shall be vested in them to be dealt with as the Committee shall from time to time direct by resolution (of which an entry in the minute book shall be conclusive evidence). The trustees shall be indemnified against risk and expense out of the Club property. The trustees shall hold office until death, or resignation, or until removed from office by a resolution of a General Meeting of members who may for any reason which may seem sufficient to a majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting remove any trustee or trustees, from the office of trustee. If by reason of any such death, resignation or removal it shall appear necessary to the Committee that a new trustee, or trustees, should be appointed or if the Committee shall deem it expedient to appoint an additional trustee or trustees the Committee shall by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed the new trustee or trustees. For the purpose of giving effect to such nominations the President is hereby nominated as the person to appoint new trustees of the Club within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustee Act 1925 and he shall by deed duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the Committee as the new trustee or trustees of the Club and the provisions of the trustees Act 1925 shall apply to any such appointment. Any statement of fact in any deed of appointment shall in favour of a person dealing bona-fide and for value with the Club, or the Committee be conclusive evidence of the fact so stated.

REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO AFFILIATED CLUBS

1. All members of affiliated clubs must comply with:-
 - (a) Rule 16 and other rules of Wessex so far as they apply to affiliated clubs.
 - (b) The Hut regulations and the orders of the Hut Warden and Assistant Hut Warden.
 - (c) The orders of the Tackle Warden when using Wessex tackle.
 - (d) Such sundry regulations or decisions that the Committee may make from time to time.
2. Members of affiliated clubs do not become, and must not represent themselves as, members of Wessex.
3. Each affiliated club shall produce to the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Wessex a copy of its rules on request.
4. Each affiliated club shall send to the Assistant Secretary of Wessex in October of each year a list of members of the affiliated club, giving names, addresses, and ages, and the same particulars of any new member within one month of election shall be advised to the Assistant Secretary of Wessex.
5. Each affiliated club may have use of Wessex tackle, and Wessex Club accommodation only by advance application to the Hut Warden. No guests of affiliated club members will be allowed these facilities.
6. Each affiliated club shall receive one copy of each Journal and other club communications (see Rule 16). But affiliated clubs may make advance annual orders for additional Journals at a price to be agreed at the time.
7. Members of affiliated clubs shall receive, as far as possible, the same access arrangements to controlled caves as full members of Wessex.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

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Compiled by P.R. Cousins

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