

## CONTENTS

		Page
Club News		73
Meets		73
Mendip News	<i>Wimblestone</i>	74
The Theories of the "High Priests" of Swildon's Hole	<i>Pete Moody</i>	74
Recent Developments in Irish Caving	<i>Dave Drew &amp; Jeff Phillips</i>	81
Radio Location in Stoke Lane Slocker	<i>Alan Mills</i>	83
Tidal Data for Otter Hole (Chepstow)	<i>Richard Kenney</i>	86
Unpleasantness at the Apatheum Club, 1984	<i>John Letheren</i>	87
Northern Cave Access		87
From the Log		90

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## CLUB NEWS

### Upper Pitts progress

The finishing touches are being put to the Library. The purpose built cupboard now incorporates a screen for showing caving slides and films and the Librarian is busy transferring the library from various boxes to its new home. The extension should soon be glazed and made weatherproof and then the task of fitting out the interior can begin.

### Tackle

With the aid of his wonder jig and a band of slaves, the Tackle Warden has recently re-made 100ft of ladder. It will shortly join the Club stock, making our store up to 800ft. The materials to make another 100ft are being purchased.

### Insurance

Full details of the Club's new insurance policy are given in the AGM booklet, and will be discussed at the Meeting.

### Council of Northern Caving Clubs

After three years confusion, the Club is re-joining this body. Members wishing to visit CNCC-controlled systems should either write to the Wessex Caving Secretary or to:-

Brian Smith  
15 North Street  
Idle  
Bradford  
Yorks BD10 0RP.

A copy of "Northern Caves Access, 1976" is in this Journal and also on display at Upper Pitts.

### Shatter Cave

There are rumours that Hobbs Quarries may blast away a significant part of this unique cave, the CSCC is doing all in its power to avert such a disaster.

### Working Party on the Future of the NCA

The draft report is now published for comment. Basically it seems that the views of the Wessex, and other member clubs of CSCC, are shared by grass roots cavers throughout the country, though there are still many who say "NCA - what's that?"

### New Members

We welcome the following joint members to the Club:

Mr. & Mrs. I.Alderson, 113 Amberley Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex.

## CLUB MEETS

### Friday Night Meets

All meets except Wales at 7.30 p.m. Further details from Richard Kenney: "Yennek", St. Mary's Road. Meare, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9SS. Tel. Meare Heath 296.

November 27th	Wales (Saturday)
December 10th	August Hole
January 7th	Swildon's
January 21st	Manor Farm
February 4th	G.B.

## MENDIP NOTES

*by Wimblestone*

### **Plug Hole**

True to the adage, "Caves is where you find 'em", a Chewton Mendip building firm, Hellard Brothers, struck fresh air when excavating the site of a show swimming pool at their yard at Bathway on the Wells road. The cave, uncovered in June, consists of a rift opening into a large ensmallment with one short extension leading to a chamber 10' in diameter. Needless to say, its presence under a swimming pool was deemed undesirable by the builders and a dollop of concrete will be coming its way in the very near future.

### **Culverts Creates Jobs**

One of the more imaginative Job Creation Schemes to get off (or rather under) the ground in the West Country is the Mendip District Council's survey of the mysterious subterranean course of the River Sheppey and associated streams. Local cavers are among the recruits, lured perhaps by the thought of Nife cells and wet suits provided at the employer's expense. The River Sheppey is culverted for much of its length through Shepton Mallet and the villages to the west, and many of the tunnels are several hundred years old which has led to more than one major road collapse. The survey team are to map the labyrinth, noting its weak points and clearing any obstructions. The final plan should be of particular interest to the guests of one of Shepton's less inviting hotels - an offshoot of the Sheppey has been spotted heading straight for the centre of Her Majesty's Prison!

### **Drought Dig in Cuthberts**

Spurred on by the success of the divers at the Wookey end of the River Axe, the diggers of the BEC have been laying siege to Cuthberts Sump 2 throughout the summer drought. By using a series of three dams it has been possible to hold back the much reduced stream long enough to drain the sump pool. The diggers are removing a compacted gravel fill and think that they may have reached the "elbow" of the sump at about 15'. It will be a race against time to dig upwards through the choke before the winter rains get the better of the bailing.

The upstream sump in Wookey 24 has turned out to be the deepest yet found in the cave. It descends for over 100' and could well add the problem of decompression to all the other hazards faced by the divers. The Priddy Main Drain is certainly guarding its secrets tenaciously.

### **Manor Farm Two?**

Rumours of new finds at the bottom end of NHASA Gallery, Manor Farm, have been circulating a good deal lately. They are partly accounted for by a "promising" dig that after banging went for 50' in a half circle and re-entered the Gallery a few feet from where it had started! More interestingly, other reports tell of a low, squalid passage, found among boulders in the furthest extremity of the cave, which has been followed for several hundred feet to no definite end. Could this be the fabled connection between Manor Farm and the Great Shaft of Charterhouse Warren, or is it just another closing time tale from the hostelry on the hill?

## **THE THEORIES OF THE HIGH PRIESTS OF SWILDON'S HOLE**

*P. Moody*

In the nineteen fifties and early sixties, a theory was developed to explain the various stages in the formation of Swildon's Hole. The 'High Priests' of my title were the theorists, notably Derek Ford and Willie Stanton, who propounded their ideas in a series of articles published in the Wessex Journal. These stimulated interest in the cave and sped the rate of discovery of new passage by suggesting the best places to dig. This article traces how the theory was built up, tentatively suggests modifications which need to be made in the light of (the few) recent discoveries and rounds off by trying to provide a brief guide for cavers of the more historic digs left in Swildons.

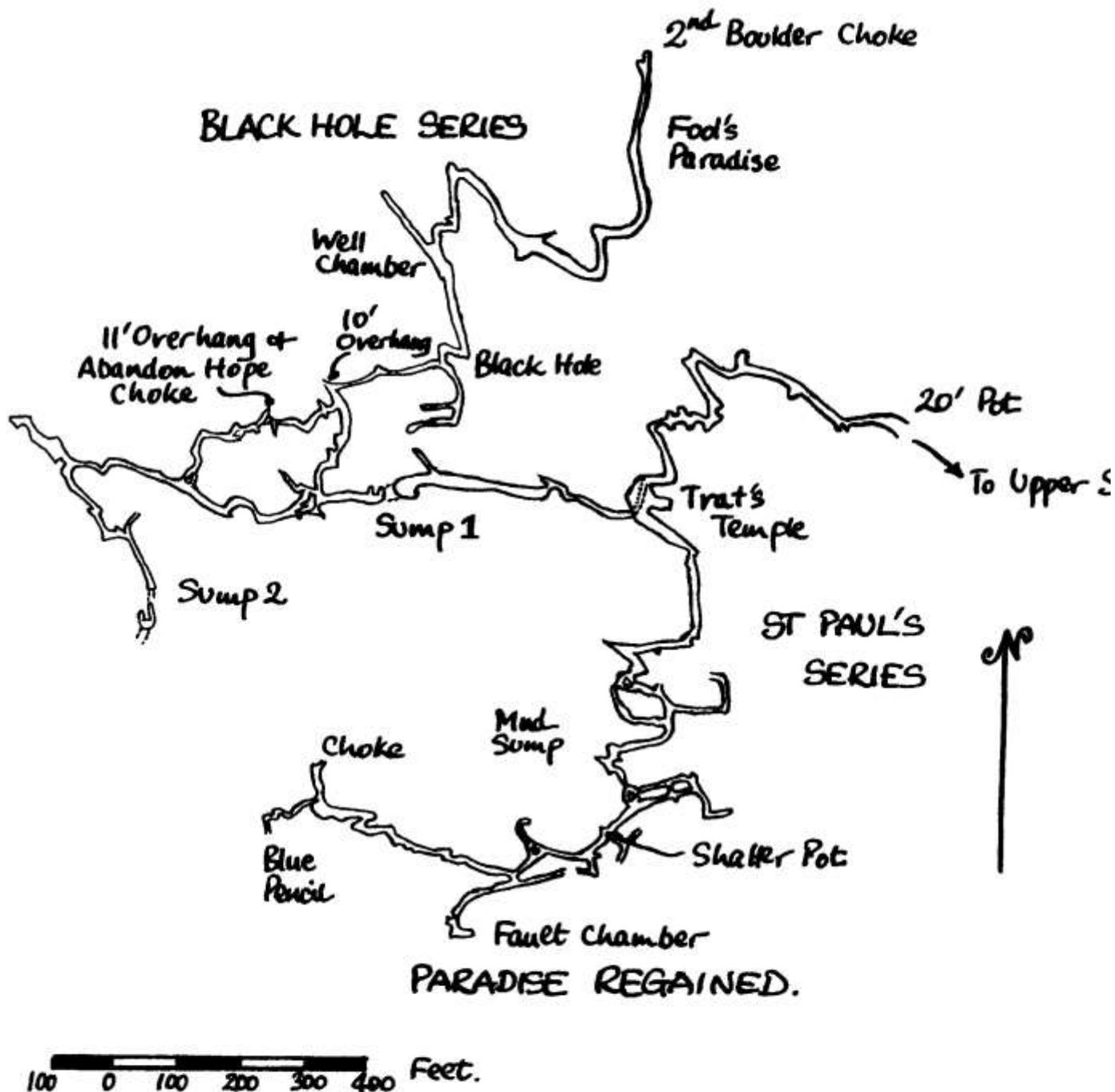
H.E. Balch predicted the existence of old abandoned passages above the active stream way, but it was not until forty-eight years after the caves discovery that any of these passages were found. All that was known of Swildons in 1949 was the Upper Series and the stream way as far as the Great Bell in Swildons III, until on 25th September of that year when members of the MNRC discovered the Old Approach Passage. In a series of trips they went on to explore the extensive passages beyond, the Black Hole Series, reaching the Second Boulder Choke on the 7th August the following year. Writing about the new series, Willie Stanton, one of the discoverers, suggested what he thought was the probable old water course of the Black Hole stream (Stanton, 1951). He believed that the stream originally flowed south from Well Chamber, went down the Ten Foot Overhang, up the opposite side and on into passages unknown from the bottom of the Eleven Foot Drop, (then known as the Fifteen Foot Drop). Later, this unknown passage became blocked and the water was forced to cut upwards, forming the Eleven Foot Drop and the Old Approach Passage. At a much later date these passages were left high and dry by the successive head ward capture of the water which formed Kenny's Dig, the Black Hole and finally Well Chamber Passage.

In January 1953, the second major discovery was made when Willie Stanton and others blasted their way into St. Paul's Series. Stanton noted the similarity of the passages to those near Old Approach (Stanton, 1953) but refrained from writing any speculations about their development. He did, however, decide to have an attempt at forcing the choke below the Eleven Foot Drop, which he believed would lead to a third extension. The severity of the trip, with no wet or goon suits, and the extremely muddy and aqueous nature of the choke defeated the diggers, in giving it up they named it Abandon Hope.

Two years after the breakthrough into St. Pauls, diggers passed the Second Mud Sump and Paradise Regained was opened up. Willie Stanton, returning from abroad in 1957, completed a grade 5 survey of the new series with Chris Hawkes and, in an article written in June of that year, put forward the theory that the passage between Blue Pencil and Fault Chamber was a continuation of the old water course of the Black Hole stream (Stanton, 1957). He believed further that Fault Chamber was a confluence for two ancient streams, whose routes were:-

Tratman's Temple—St. Pauls—2nd Mud Sump—Greasy Chimney—Fault Chamber.

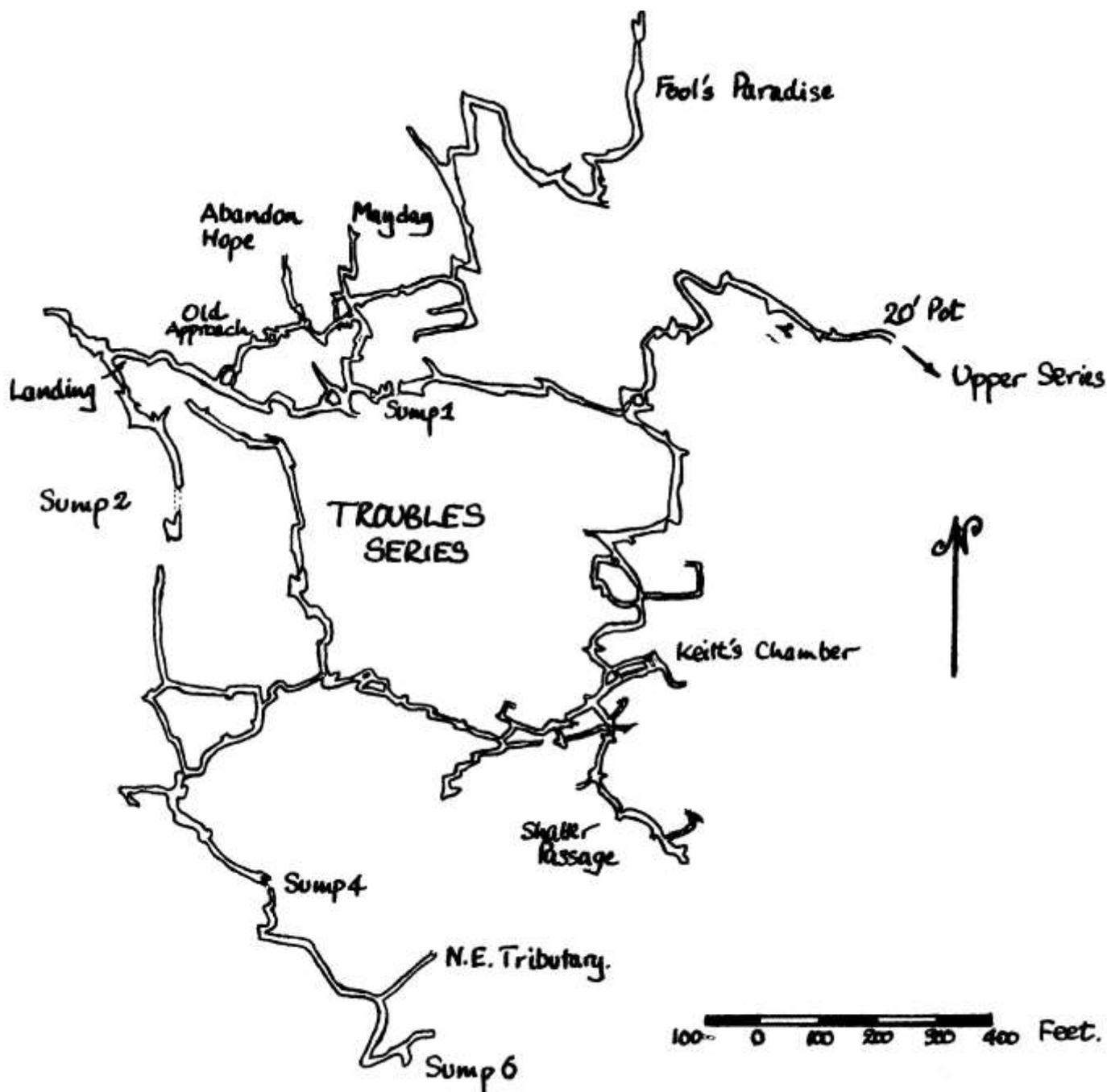
Fool's Paradise—Black Hole—Abandon Hope—choke beyond Blue Pencil—Fault Chamber.



**SURVEY 1 Swildon's Hole - June 1957**

It was three years later, however, after the discovery of Swildons IV via Blue Pencil, before any determined attempt was made to dig through the choked passage beyond Blue Pencil. In July 1960, the dig went and most of the Double Trouble Series was opened by September. Stanton felt that his theory was now being borne out and in an article written in the same month, he went on to speculate about the other possibilities in Paradise Regained (Stanton, 1961). A detailed examination of the scalloping around Shatter Pot led him to conclude that the confluence of the two old stream ways had been at Shatter Pot and not at Fault Chamber as he had believed earlier. These waters had also been augmented by water from the Keith's Chamber area. The choke at the bottom of Shatter Pot was, therefore, the new "hot tip". At about the same time, Derek Ford gave his interpretations of the Paradise Regained water flows (Ford, 1961). He also tipped Shatter Pot as THE place to dig, but also emphasised the importance of the stream which cut Keith's Chamber. Ford made a further interesting observation about the westerly trend of the Troubles Series, suggesting that it might possibly be caused by a large high level inlet somewhere to the north west of the known cave.

Two extensions were made in the early part of 1961, the first, Shatter Passage, fully bore out the High Priest's predictions but the second, following only four days later was completely unexpected. Oliver Lloyd and Howard Kenney, together with two others, dug through the Abandon Hope choke and discovered a steeply ascending passage going north - away from the Troubles Series (Kenney and Lloyd, 1961). Derek Ford, an early visitor to the new extension, was of the opinion that the discovery was an independent inlet passage (Ford, 1962a) - but if this were true, where had the water which formed the Troubles come from? A major rethink seemed called for.



**SURVEY 2 Swildon's Hole - February 1961**

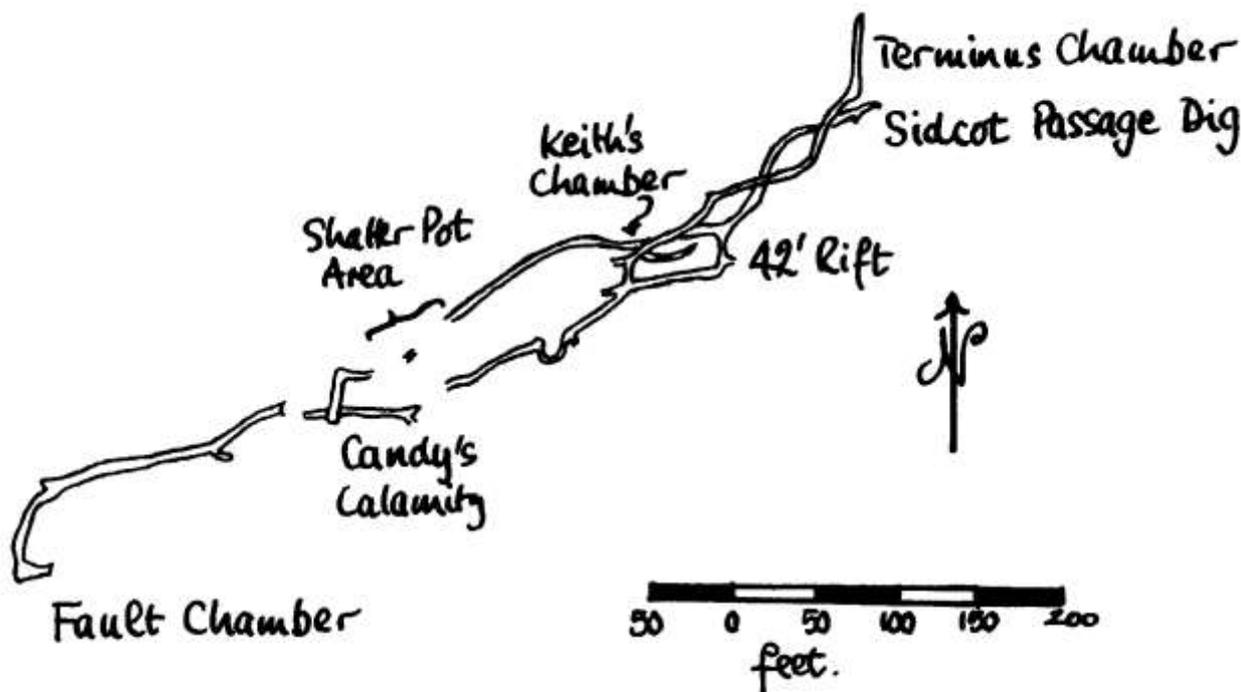
Ford's answer to the problem was set out in an article published in Journal 87 (Ford, 1962b). His suggestion was that the Black Hole stream, augmented by water from the Abandon Hope inlet, was forced up the Eleven Foot Drop and flowed along the Old Approach. By studying the old solution tube in the roof of Swildons II, he concluded that this water had been forced upwards again near the landing and hence on to the Troubles. Lloyd and Kenney dutifully dug away at one of the choked avens above the Landing and in November 1961, broke through into the theorised passage. However, the new passage also extended in the opposite direction; crossing over the present stream way and terminating at a pitch - Vicarage Pot. Was this the North-West Inlet of Ford's original 1961 theory?

From the end of 1961, extensions were added to Swildons at an unprecedented rate. On December 27th the first major, long anticipated find from Keith's Chamber was made when Bob Pyke and Steve Wynne-Roberts discovered Swynne-Puke Series. In March 1962, the passage on the other side of Vicarage Pot was reached and within a few feet the new extension swung towards Black Hole Series in a dramatic fashion. In April another extension was made from Keith's Chamber area, Sidcot Passage and then finally on 4th August the link between Vicarage Passage and the Troubles Series was made.

In a letter to the editor of the Wessex Journal Derek Ford refuted any remaining possibility that Vicarage Passage was the major NW inlet forecast in 1961 and modified the grand theory by suggesting that the Black Hole stream originally flowed from somewhere in the Well Chamber area to Vicarage in a very northerly loop. Mayday Passage and Abandon Hope being captures from this passage.

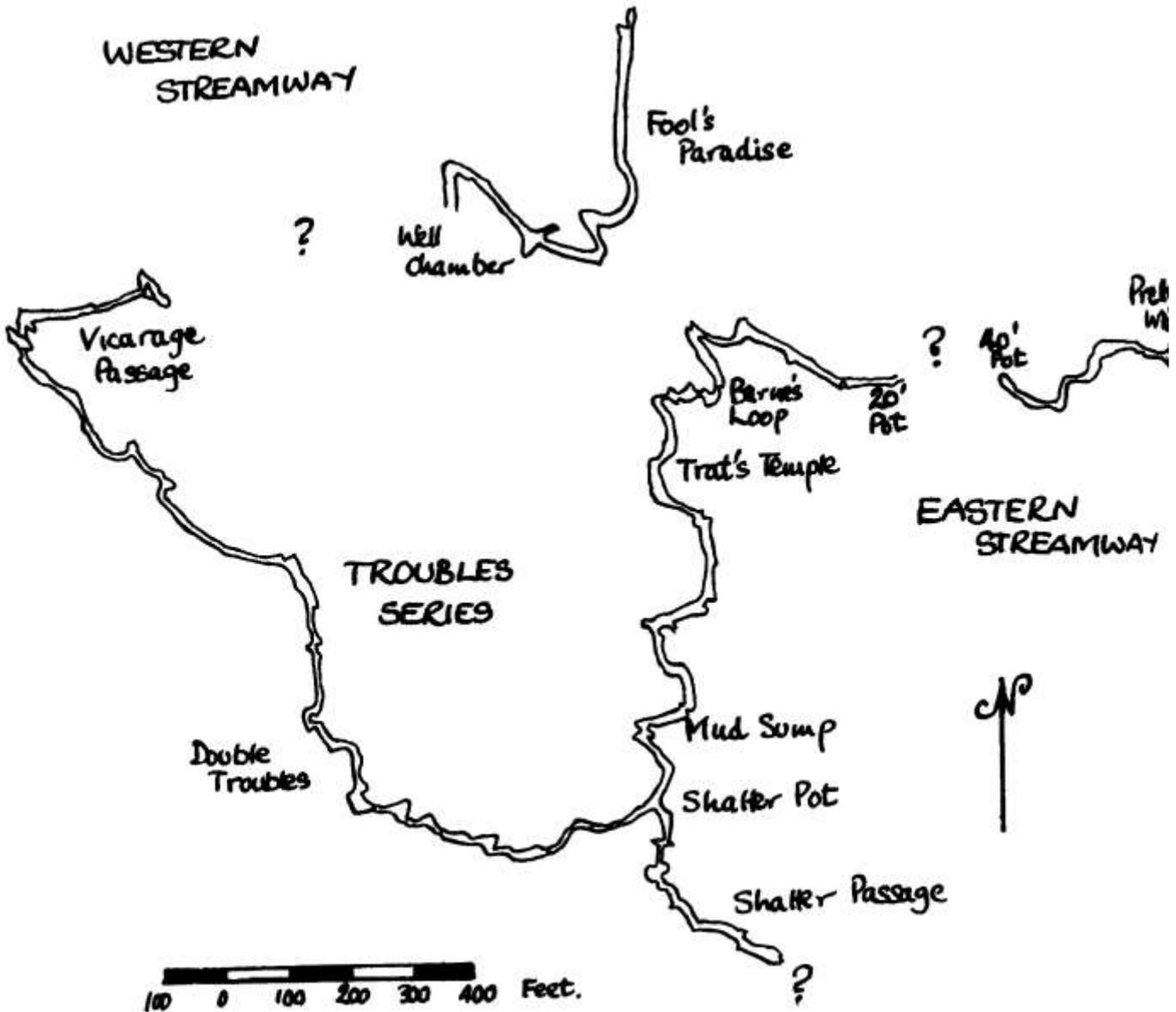
For a couple of years discoveries were less frequent, although 1963 did see a further extension of Vicarage towards Black Hole. In 1964, Willie Stanton presented a grade 6 survey of the Shatter/SE Inlets area of Swildons. The accompanying article (Stanton, 1964) emphasised the possibilities of the Sidcot Passage choke and tipped, as Ford had done in 1962, the wet dig at the end of Shatter Passage as being most promising. Derek Ford's magnum opus, "The sequence of development in Swildon's Hole" was published in the Wessex Journal in 1965 (Ford, 1965). Ford recognised three separate stages in the development of the cave. Very briefly these were:-

1. **The First Cave:** A stream flowed from the SE Inlets by way of Candy's Calamity and, later, the Greasy Chimney to Fault Chamber, where the water was forced upwards into passages unknown. *See Survey 3(a).*



### **SURVEY 3(a) The extent of the First Cave known in 1965**

2. **The Second Cave:** This consisted of two stream ways, one from Fool's Paradise flowing via Well Chamber, Vicarage, Troubles and Paradise Regained to Shatter Pot, where it met the second stream which, having abandoned the First Cave, followed the route of the present stream way from the Well Chamber to Tratman's Temple and thence through St. Paul's. The combined flow was then along Shatter Passage, from thence the route being unknown. *See Survey 3(b).*
3. **The Third Cave:** This consists of the modern stream way and is linked to the Second Cave by passages which captured the old stream, notably Mayday and Abandon Hope. Confirmation of the importance of Shatter Passage in the flow of the Second Cave stream way came the same year, when the favoured wet dig went and the passage as far as Shatter and Pirate Chambers were discovered.

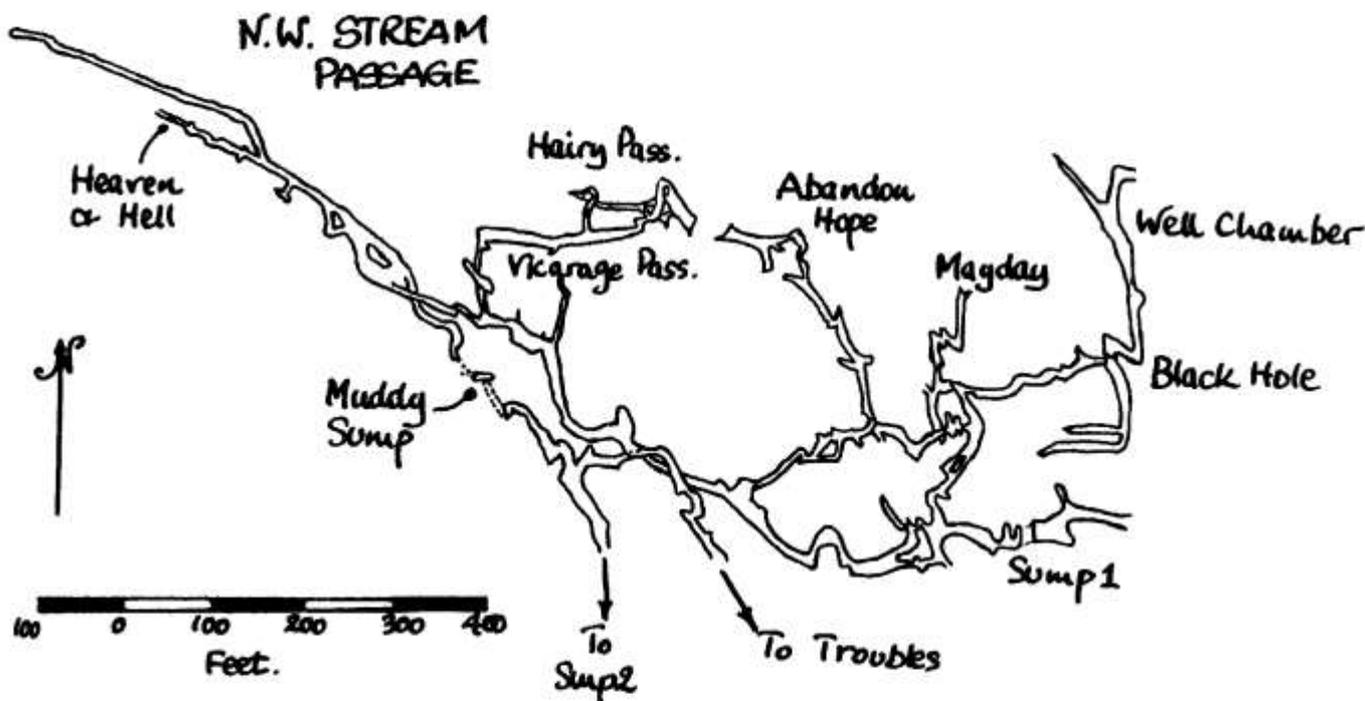


**SURVEY 3(b) The Second Cave Streamway (Ford 1965)**

In 1966 Tim Atkinson extended Ford's theories to incorporate the new discoveries (Atkinson, 1966). Two possibilities for the final development of the Second Cave were outlined; either the stream reaching Pirate Chamber made its way into Shatter Chamber and hence to Swildons VII, in which case the modern streamway on to Wookey is following the course of the old Second Cave; or the stream continued at a high level and Shatter Chamber represents a stage in its capture. If the second possibility occurred, Pirate Chamber should give access to a high and dry passage independent of the modern stream way. In the same article Atkinson rejected the belief that the Fault Chamber Avens found by the SVCC, which rise 150ft above the chamber floor made nonsense of the First Cave as set out by Stanton and Ford. From descriptions obtained he concluded that the finds were recent developments and that the old stream way from Fault Chamber is to be found at a lower level.

Since 1966 few discoveries have thrown any more light on the development of the First and Second Caves and interest in the cave seems to have waned. Dave Drew's chapter 'The Caves of Mendip' in the recently published "Limestones and Caves of the Mendip Hills" provides the latest writings about Swildons' development (Drew, 1975). Although being non committal about the chances of Pirate Chamber, presenting evidence for both the possibilities outlined by Atkinson, he did come up with the controversial idea that NW Stream Passage, found in 1966, might be a drawdown from the Black Hole water with Heaven and Hell connected with Vicarage Passage in the region of Hairy Passage. I believe this to be very unlikely. Hairy Passage is a minor development, the stream it carries from the Vicarage dig, after being augmented by water from an inlet in the phreatic area to the west of the main Vicarage passage flows through impenetrable cracks before resurging near the foot of the pitch into NW Stream Passage. The suggestion that a passage lies hidden in this area which originally carried the Black Hole stream 600ft to the north west to cut Heaven and Hell seems improbable.

In 1972 WCC members dug through a series of chokes beyond the previous limit of exploration in Abandon Hope and discovered a very major passage typical of that seen in Vicarage and Paradise Regained. Subsequent surveying showed it to be very close to the Vicarage dig and the explosion of quarter of a pound of plaster gelignite at Vicarage was plainly heard in the new extension. Unfortunately, the discovery did not come to Dave Drew's attention in time for any reference to be included in his chapter but it does now seem very likely that Derek Ford's theory of the northern loop of the Black Hole stream is wrong and that Willie Stanton has been right all along for, in the extension, there is no sign of any development going towards Well Chamber. It appears that the action of the water from the avens in Abandon Hope has buried the old watercourse leading to Vicarage and superimposed markings showing a southward flow. Confirmation of this theory could be made by pushing Mayday since it now seems certain that it is an independent inlet. See Survey 4.



**SURVEY 4 The Vicarage/Abandon Hope area 1975**

There are now very few sites in Swildons being dug on any regular basis; the general feeling among Mendip cavers being that the potential for new discoveries is inadequate to justify the vast amount of time and labour the digs require. However the optimistic digger always believes that with the new few shovelfuls of spoil a breakthrough will be made so, for those few individuals I shall conclude this article with a brief digger's guide to the main chokes preventing the full exploration of the First and Second Caves.

### The First Cave

The First Cave is choked upstream in two places. Sidcot Passage choke, tipped as a good bet ever since its discovery, is an enormous U tube. The fill, gravel and sandstone pebbles, so the argument goes, could only have reached this point so far into the cave if the passage beyond were open and free from obstructions. An enormous amount of effort has been expended clearing the choke and, hopefully, most of the fill has been removed from the downward section. There is plenty of room at the working face, the fill is dry and easy to dig and there is plenty of stacking space back down the passage. The only snag is the large number of helpers needed to chain the buckets of spoil up the U tube, to be dumped fast enough to keep up with the digger. In complete contrast is the second First Cave choke - situated beyond Terminus Chamber. It is a much more remote site, the digging space is extremely cramped, all the spoil has to be dragged back through a tight U-tube and the dig is prone to flooding (the water being very difficult to get rid of!). The only incentive to dig there at all is the relative openness of the passage beyond, for an airspace exists over the gravel fill and one feels that if the water and stacking problems could be overcome, a breakthrough would not be far away.

The downstream end of the First Cave is believed to be the silt choked aven found by the UBSS, I don't know of anyone who has tried to dig it. An interesting question is whether the passage continues independently of the rest of Swildons, or is linked to it perhaps somewhere along the Priddy Fault? Either way, I expect there is plenty of passage to be found beyond the choke.

## The Second Cave

The eastern streamway of the Second Cave is known for most of its length, but cavers have yet to extend the western stream way upstream of Fool's Paradise, Black Hole Series, where a boulder choke has blocked the way since 1950. The fifties saw many attempts being made to force a route through and occasional attacks are still being launched today. Although there are doubts about the existence of a defined swallet for the still active Black Hole stream, the boulder choke is still well below the surface and a fine extension could well be added to the Black Hole Series if a concerted effort was made to get through the choke.

The link joining the Black Hole Series directly to Vicarage and the Troubles has still to be made. Abandon Hope and Vicarage are very close but it may be some time before they are connected. Both digs are VERY muddy, although there is some slight chance that it might be possible to drain the Vicarage end by blasting open a soak way. Very few cavers are enthusiastic enough about the resulting round trip to want to dig at either site. The usual response from a press-ganged digger on seeing the Abandon Hope choke for the first time is that they never wish to see it again. Perhaps the MRO should insist that anyone who becomes trapped by mistakenly abseiling down Vicarage Pot should dig their way out to Abandon Hope!

The downstream end of the Second Cave has deservedly received most attention since its discovery. The way on is blocked by enormous, unstable boulder ruckles in both Pirate and Shatter Chambers. Pirate Chamber is the more frightening of the two, but may well lead to a really major discovery; whereas Shatter Chamber seems destined only to link with Swildons VII. Any such connection will provide yet another round trip permutation but it is unlikely to prove an easy, or for that matter, a safe route into the lower stream way.

If Pirate Chamber does lead into a high-level continuation independent of the modern stream way, it may be possible to find a drawdown passage connecting to it somewhere in the lower stream way. The avens in Swildons VII & VIII can be ruled out, for several have already been climbed to over a hundred and fifty feet above the stream way, with every indication that they continue towards the surface. The boulder chokes in VII are more likely to connect with Shatter Chamber but they all seem rather impenetrable. The real chance is Thrutch Tube, an aptly named passage, in Swildons IX. This is initially very similar in form to Blue Pencil and the Damp Link passages, it was pushed very hard in 1973 but the passage discovered, after an initial short horizontal stretch, went steadily downwards, before becoming choked with mud. It may well be only a short down dip section of the passage, but nevertheless, it will be a very difficult obstruction to pass.

The downstream chokes of the First and Second Caves present the ultimate digging challenge to the Swildons enthusiast. It is these digs which should lead to the major discoveries, but with so little progress having been made in the last decade, one feels that it may be many more years before cavers are able to follow the ancient watercourses any further downstream. There must surely be plenty of interesting passageways still to be discovered elsewhere in Swildons - however, always bear in mind the motto:-

“Caves (and cave passage) be where you find 'em”.

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## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IRISH CAVING

*Dave Drew & Jeff Phillips*

In the past few years there have been many sizeable new discoveries underground in Ireland. This article does not purport to be a full catalogue of all the new finds but simply a brief account of those finds in which the authors were involved. After several years in Ireland, Wessex's two Irish representatives have become sufficiently infected with the ways of the country to adopt a manana attitude to surveying new caves. Manana has not yet arrived, hence the lack of any surveys of any level above grade-guinness to accompany this article.

### County Galway

East of Galway city, the countryside of County Galway is a limestone plain with low relief and a very non-karstic look to it. However, largely by accident, a large number of caves have been discovered in the area stretching from Kinarva in the south to Tuam in the north. Over fifty sites have been explored but only one, Ballyglunin Cave near Monivea is of any length. This cave is fully described in Irish Geography for 1973 and hence only a summary is given here.

The cave, nearly a mile in length, consists of five parallel stream passages linked by low dry crawls. The cave extends beneath the large sluggish river Abbert with which it seems to have no genetic connection at all. Most of the cave lies only a few feet below the river bed yet there is no leakage at all. All the stream ways end in sumps and the resurgence for the water appears to be some 14 miles away on the shores of Lough Corrib. All in all a remarkable cave with the added attractions of rats and eels.

### Co. Clare

(i) McGanns Cave. This very ancient resurgence cave, now fossil, is located south of Ballyvaughan and is unique in Clare in its speleological interest and in the fact that it contains hibernation pits dug by bears. The original cave was a single tunnel 660 feet long but a new series of passages running parallel was found in March 1976. The prospects for a major extension to this cave are bright, although as it is now a show-cave access is limited.

(ii) Eastern Poulacapple - everyone who has visited Clare will know the Cullaun suite of caves draining the western flank of Poulacapple hill. All except Cullaun V run to the risings of Killeany and St. Brendans Well near Lisdoonvarna. Cullaun V, which was extended by 500 feet in 1973, drains south to the distant risings at Fergus River. The Knockavaureen ridge (Polcahermann and Poulawillan and eastern Poulacapple are also thought to feed the Fergus risings. Only one cave was known on eastern Poulacapple - Gragan West, which flowed south hugging the shale-limestone contact. The authors have spent a considerable time investigating the possibility of extending this system towards its rising five miles away.

A further 4000 feet or so of cave was found in the headwaters of the Gragan system, including a new and dismal entrance to Gragan itself consisting of a half mile crawl in water. Downstream Gragan Cave leads via a long unpleasant crawl to a sump. In the summer of 1975 the 'sump' was found to be a long and very awkward duck leading into a further 1000 feet of cave running due south. This extension ended conclusively in a massive slab breakdown and that seemed to be the end of any hopes of marching down a master streamway to the risings.

However in autumn of 1975 a small hole in the ground half a mile south of the end of Gragan was enlarged and gave access to the middle of a respectable sized stream cave. Upstream leads for 3000 feet before splitting into tight tributary passages. The majority of the water was found to come from a small surface sink (H3). Amazingly the cave has no connection with Gragan although they overlap by some distance and then run parallel at the same height and only a few feet apart.

Downstream, 2500 feet of stream way leads to a very low bedding plane through which a large stream rushes, making further progress psychologically if not physically repellent. The cave was named Doonyvarden and the sketch map shows the current situation.

This area of Clare is perhaps the only region left with great potential for new caves. As with the Cullaun caves, the caves of eastern Poulacapple simply refuse to link together to produce one large cave and thus a series of very arduous, constricted caves exist, few of which have been convincingly pushed to a definite end.

There are only two other major caves known that are thought to be feeders to Fergus River. Poulawillan has been extended on several occasions - on the last occasion by Lord and Parker. Its length is now probably well over a mile, crawl almost all the way. Nearby is Polcahermann, another highly unpleasant mile of tortuous passage again not definitely 'finished'.

The total length of new cave passage discovered on eastern Poulacapple in the past few years is approximately two miles.

### County Monaghan (Carrickmacross area)

Tiragorvan Cave. On Christmas day 1973, an upstream sump was discovered in this area. It was dived by Parker a few days later and found to lead to 400 feet of streamway terminating in a boulder choke. During the following summer the sump was lowered to enable non-divers to enter the extension.

A number of other caves have also been inspected including the well known Finn McCools and its resurgence but without significant finds. A quite sizeable sink at Dry Bridge warrants digging but as yet is untouched.

### County Fermanagh

Swanlinbar area, Cavan border. In 1974, during Parker's traditional Christmas visit an extension was discovered to Polnaclanawly on the high limestone plateau above Swanlinbar. The cave consisted of a series of wet short pitches in a cherty rift. A further 25' and 15' pitch were discovered to a sump. A passage was also discovered leading over the head of these new pitches and terminating in a 110' pitch to a short rift.

### Noons Hole

One of Ireland's most famous caves, Noons consisted of a 270' pitch from the surface leading to a dismal, constricted stream way a few hundred feet in length. This ended in a sump which was dived by Farr and Solari into Arch Cave III. On a practice SRT trip a draughting crawl just before the sump was pushed through a boulder blockage into a large, partly abandoned stream passage.

"Down scallop" of the entry point, 3000' of large passage leads to a sump and boulder choke very close to Arch Cave, making access to this cave for non-divers a real possibility.

A further 2000' of passage was discovered upstream of the entry point, leading to a sump in a narrow rift. This is believed to connect with the nearby sink at Polaphyla.

### Reyfad Pot

No notable breakthroughs have occurred in this potentially vast system for some years. In January 1976, a draught was discovered at the end of the Bear Pit. After a dig around a boulder choke a large passage was reached. Regrettably footprints were also reached and the 'discovery' proved to be a new route into the Scrapers Hole extension which had been discovered the previous year. However, the new route does provide easier access to these distant regions of the cave.

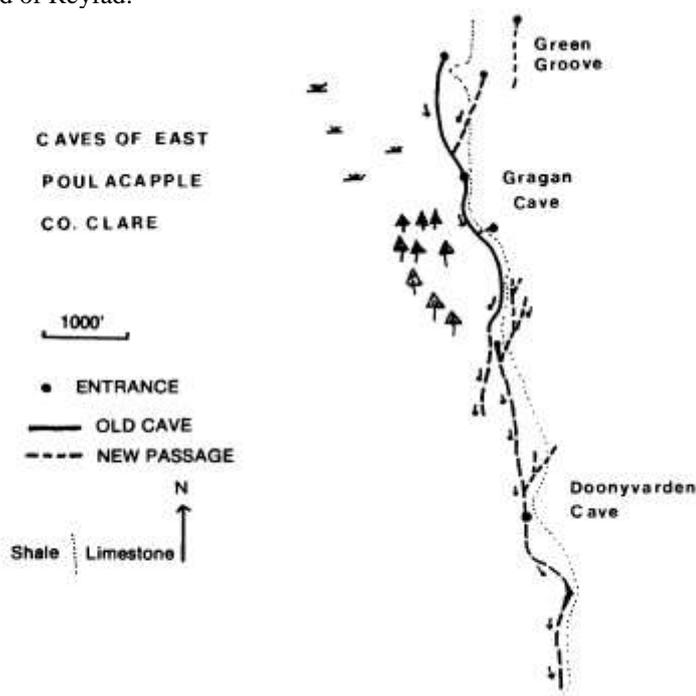
### Prods Pot - Cascade Risings

At Easter 1976, Farr and Morris finally entered the Prods Pot master cave by diving the sixth sump in the cave to reach 5000' of fine stream way ending in a complicated boulder choke. Inspired by this discovery, digging began at Cascade Risings, the known resurgence for the cave. After only 20 man-hours at the draughting boulder choke, a constricted streamway was reached. A tortuous 1500' of route-finding through crawls, squeezes, ducks and similar purgatories followed until finally the master cave was reached.

This new, 7000' long cave provides a fine sporting trip with almost every form of entertainment apart from a pitch.

### Carrickbeg Rising

This spring, the rising for Reyfad waters, had been dug sporadically and ineffectively over a period of years until the Cascade rising success. Then a determined onslaught was made on the entrance boulder choke. This time 30 man hours of digging reached large open passageway which sumped after 1500'. Using a mixture of Irish and imported English divers the sump was passed after 50' to reach a further 1500' of large boulder-strewn stream way to a second sump. This was dived by Farr for 160' without air being reached. However, a draughting dig above the sump gives some hope of a breakthrough into more of the three miles of cave that separate it from the present end of Reyfad.



## RADIO LOCATION IN STOKE LANE SLOCKER

Alan Mills

The author, having successfully completed the radio-location in Stoke VI, started making arrangements for a further radio-location in Stoke IV. At 12.15 p.m. on the 6th December 1975, P. Moody, P. Eckford and the author entered the cave, laden down with various ammo cans and reels of wire, and we clanked our way to Sump 4.

We arrived at the IV Aven at approximately 2.30 p.m. and commenced to set up house there. Unfortunately, the type of gear that we were using has to be set up in a horizontal plane in order for the surface location to be accurate, and, as the only part of the cave in the region of the IV Aven which is anything like horizontal is the stream way, it was this that we had to use. This was, however, not directly below the IV Aven and so we marked the spot used so that we could return at a later date and take the necessary measurements to correct for this.

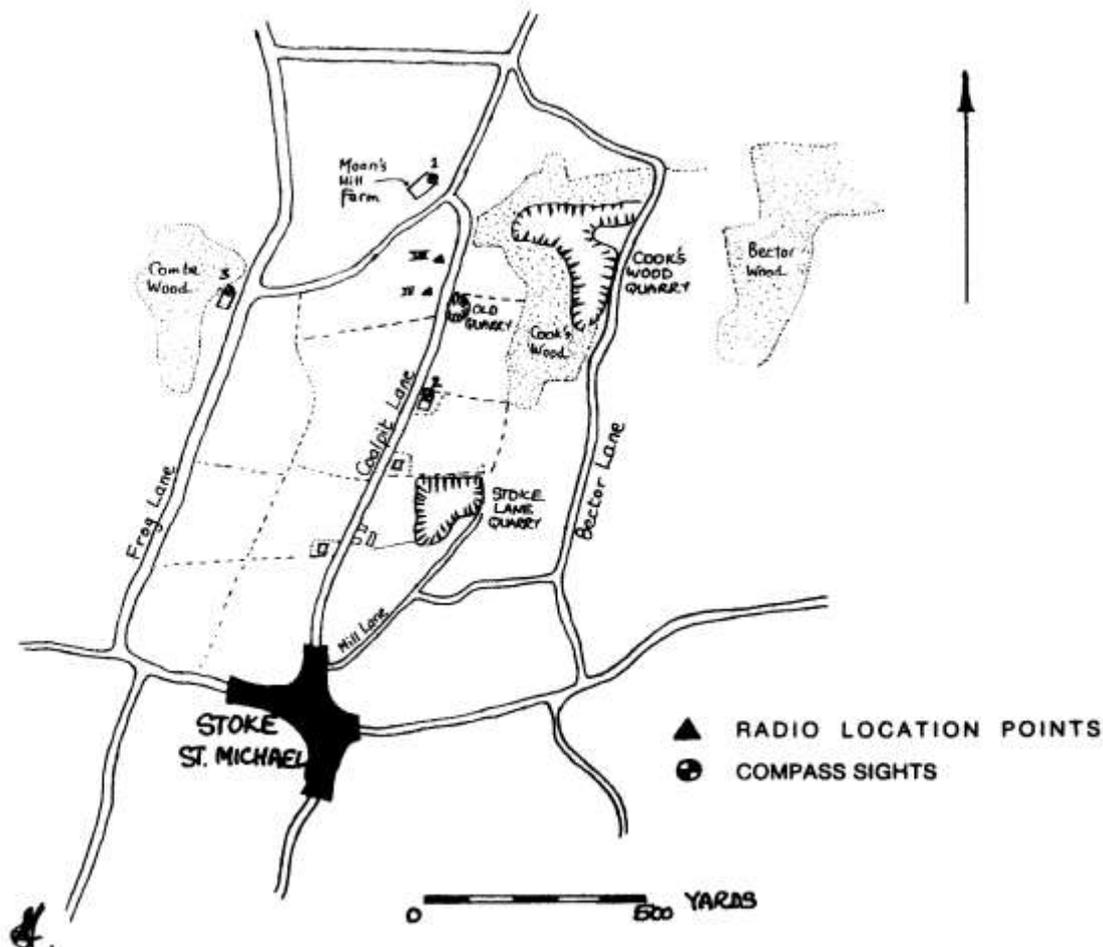
At exactly 3.00 p.m. the apparatus was switched on and transmission commenced, hopefully to be picked up by the surface party, which consisted of B. Prewer, D. Thomson and R. Whitcombe. We transmitted for 30 minutes as arranged and then packed our gear and left the cave.

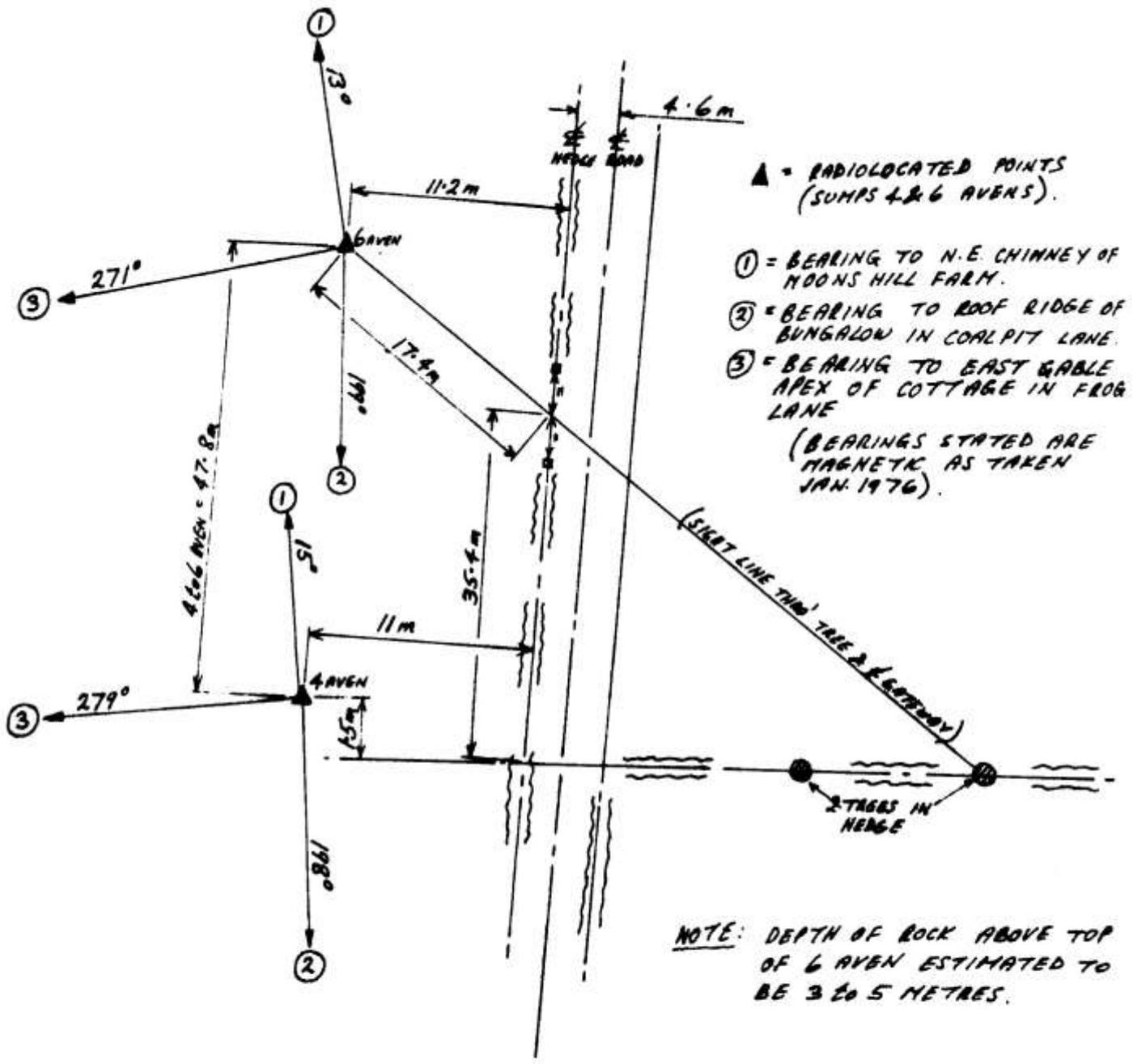
On the 28th December we returned to the scene at 11.30 a.m., this time the party consisted of R. Mean, B. Wilkinson and the author. We intended to survey between the aerial position and the IV Aven. As it was also a good opportunity to have another go at climbing the aven itself, the party was loaded this time with an assortment of ropes, pegs, slings and hammers.

Having arrived at our destination, we sat down and made ourselves at home as before, this time with hot Oxo, beef sandwiches and a grand total of 20 Gold Leaf! After tea, we took the relevant measurements and then started on the aven. R. Mean made the first attempt at climbing and, although he found great difficulty in finding anything to hammer a peg into, he reached a height of approximately 40ft. before making his way back to the stream way. The author then went up, but found that he could not gain any further height. Barry, who had lifelined us both, was getting rather fed up with the whole idea and said that he would not bother to climb on this occasion, but we all agreed to have another try later using bolts.

### *Editor's Note*

*Another trip to the cave was made during January 1976 and the position of the VI aven was determined in a similar manner. Subsequently, the surface was surveyed by B. Milton and R. Mean and the position of the two avens was related to local features shown in the accompanying sketches.*



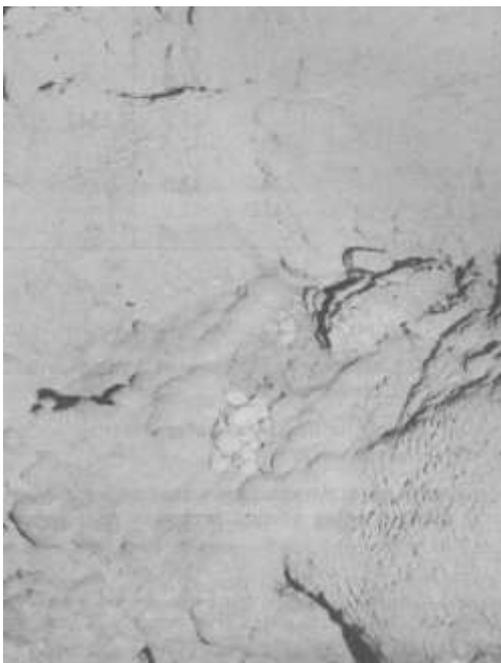


SKETCH OF SURFACE CO-ORDINATES & BEARINGS  
FOR LOCATION OF 4 & 6 AVENS.  
 (NOT TO SCALE).



Start of a Mills climb  
of Stoke IV Aven  
*(Andy Watson)*

Formations above  
Stoke III Stream way  
*(Andy Watson)*



Cave Pearls, Stoke Sump 3  
By-Pass Aven.  
*(Andy Watson)*

TIDAL DATA FOR OTTER HOLE (CHEPSTOW) FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1976  
 Abstracted from Arrowsmith's Bristol Channel Tide Table by R.R. Kenney

MONTH	DAY	LOW HEIGHT (M)	HIGH HEIGHT (M)	LOW HEIGHT (M)	HIGH HEIGHT (M)	LOW HEIGHT (M)	HIGH HEIGHT (M)
SEP	4		0435 10.2	1052 2.9	1719 10.8	2346 2.3	
	5		0557 11.0	1225 2.0	1829 11.8		
	11	0453 1.1	1003 13.0	1703 1.3	2220 13.1		
	12	0521 1.3	1031 12.8	1728 1.5	2248 12.7		
	18		0146 9.4	0756 4.0	1424 9.4	2037 4.1	
	19		0322 9.5	0938 3.7	1601 9.9	2232 3.4	
	25	0426 0.5	0926 14.1	1646 0.3	2142 14.2		
	26	0510 0.4	1007 14.0	1727 0.3	2224 14.0		
OCT	2		0245 9.8	0852 3.3	1535 10.1	2149 3.0	
	3		0421 10.1	1033 2.9	1707 10.8	2328 2.3	
	9	0350 1.0	0904 12.9	1559 1.2	2122 13.0		
	10	0418 1.2	0935 12.9	1626 1.3	2153 12.9		
	16	0626 3.3	1240 10.2	1844 3.5			
	17		0116 9.8	0728 3.7	1351 9.8	2007 3.8	
	23	0308 0.7	0822 13.8	1531 0.5	2038 14.1		
	24	0259 0.5	0807 14.1	1520 0.3	2025 14.2		
	30		0012 10.6	0619 2.8	1248 10.6	1900 2.9	
	31		0122 10.1	0726 3.1	1408 10.3	2020 2.9	
NOV	6	0138 1.2	0703 12.5	1350 1.3	1921 12.6		
	7	0210 1.2	0736 12.6	1419 1.3	1955 12.6		
	13	0449 2.4	1039 11.5	1701 2.6	2304 11.1		
	14	0523 2.8	1126 11.0	1743 3.0	2358 10.5		
	20	0025 1.5	0603 12.9	1257 1.2	1824 13.3		
	21	0131 1.0	0658 13.6	1358 0.7	1918 13.7		
	27	0525 1.9	1126 11.8	1755 2.1	2350 11.2		
	28	0604 2.4	1221 11.8	1840 2.5			
DEC	4	0003 2.0	0548 11.6	1224 2.0	1811 11.8		
	5	0049 1.7	0629 12.0	1306 1.7	1850 12.1		
	11	0422 1.7	0954 12.5	1638 1.9	2219 12.3		
	12	0456 1.9	1023 12.2	1713 2.0	2258- 11.9		
	18		0428 11.4	1102 2.3	1656 11.9	2342 2.0	
	19		0536 12.3	1221 1.6	1802 12.6		
	25	0445 1.1	1019 13.2	1708 1.2	2240 12.5		
	26	0517 1.6	1103 12.4	1743 1.7	2322 11.9		

**NOTES ON THE TABLE**

- 1) The data is for Saturdays and Sundays only. Richard will supply data for other days if you write to him.
- 2) The times are obtained by adding a 20 minute constant for Chepstow to the times at Avonmouth. Times are Civil Time. Note that Summer Time ends at 0200 on October 24th.
- 3) The height of the tide quoted is that at Avonmouth, being the depth of water over the lock sill in metres. These figures should thus be used in the relative sense only.
- 4) Some reports have indicated that the sump does not always open. An example would be September 18th, when the height at low water is 4 metres. A very good opening should occur on September 26th. Note that Christmas Day is favourable!
- 5) River flood water could obviously block the sump.
- 6) The time between successive tides (either high or low) oscillates between 1207 and 1240 hours approximately.

## UNPLEASANTNESS AT THE APATHEUM CLUB, 1984

*J. Letheren*

It is Saturday afternoon on Mendip. Three members are dozing in decaying armchairs and the sun shines in through the dirty cracked windows. A few copies of old club newsletters lie scattered about and the remains of an old boiler suit rot quietly in a damp corner.

The club was formed in the post war years when a small band of cavers in their twenties used to meet on Mendip to 'do' a few caves at the weekend, but after a club headquarters had been built and a number of digs had been organised, with no great successes, the club had gradually matured to its present state. The chairman, who had no very clear idea where the H.Q. was, was a notable man who professed an interest in caving in his younger days, and the committee business took up what little time its members could spare for 'caving' activities, and since there seemed to be no younger men prepared to serve on the committee, they had duly re-elected themselves from year to year.

Enter a party of somewhat muddy young lads, aged about 17.

Their Leader:

*'We have just done Goatchurch'* (how on Earth do these people manage to get Burrington permits, the members wonder) *'and we want to join a club so we can do the bigger caves'*.

Two members stir, and after a long pause, one speaks:

*'What for'?*

Leader baffled:

*'Urn, well, er, we can't get keys and permits unless we do, and that's what we want, sir'*.

Second member:

*'This club has STANDARDS you know. You can't just spend an afternoon in Goatchurch and then join any club you like. Have you taken your part III caving certificate yet, or studied the hydrology of the area, or published any research papers, or even discovered a major cave system'?*

The leader tries to ask how they can do this without first being members, but he is not sufficiently skilled in the art of debate and his question is soon eliminated from the discussion. Eventually, the group becomes abusive and departs.

The third member stirs:

*'Bloody cheek! There aren't any real cavers about these days. You know, when I joined this club, - - -'*

And as his slow quiet voice drones on in the hot stuffy atmosphere, the other two fall gently asleep once more, unaware that outside the hut the young lads have returned with a heavy green box, which they have placed against the wall, having already lit the fuse.

## NORTHERN CAVE ACCESS, 1976

A list of existing access arrangements and sources of permission for important caves and potholes in the Dales, compiled by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs.

### **Barbondale (Crystal Cave area - Short Gill)**

Estate Office, Cowan Bridge, via Carnforth (Tel. Kirkby Lonsdale 445).

### **Aygill Caverns**

Estate Office, Cowan Bridge, via Carnforth (Tel. Kirkby Lonsdale 445).

### **Casterton Fell - Easegill Caverns (Inc. Bull Pot, Lancaster Hole etc.)**

Club access only, with CNCC Permit. Approach from Bullpot Farm.

### **Pippikin Pot etc.**

Club access only, with CNCC Permit. Approach via. Leck Fell House except during April, May and June, when approach from Bullpot Farm is permissible.

### **Leek Fell (Lost Johns, Gavel, Rumbling, Notts etc.)**

Club access only, with CNCC Permit. Call at Bank House Farm (on left at first gate). Closed April, May and June.

**Ireby Cavern**

No permission required. Approach from Masongill.

**Marble Steps, Low Dowk Pot, etc.**

Call at Mr. J. Hartley and Son, Masongill Hall, Westhouse, Via. Carnforth.

**Kingsdale Master Cave and Swinsto Hole**

Call on R. Shuttleworth, Thornton Hall, Westhouse. For Valley Entrance only no need to call. Park in lay-bys to avoid obstructing road.

**Simpson's Pot; Rowten Pot**

Call on E. Cockett, Foredales, Ingleton, Via. Carnforth.

**Bull Pot**

Call on J.L. Whitfield, Westgate, Westhouse, Via. Carnforth Yordas, Slanting and Batty Caves. Call on J.Coates, Braida Garth, Westhouse.

**East Kingsdale (Heron, Spectacle etc.)**

Call on J. Coates, Braida Garth, Westhouse.

**Dale Barn Cave**

Call on R.S. Rushton, Ywistleton Dale House, Chapel-le-Dale. The cave must not be visited when chalet is occupied.

**Meregill, Black Shiver, Tatham Wife, Quaking Pot, etc.**

No permission required. Approach from Hill Inn, Dale House or Crina Bottom only.

**White Scar Cave**

Access restricted beyond Show Cave. Apply Manager.

**Newby Moss, Hurnel Moss, Gaping Gill area (Inch Bar, Disappointment, Grange Rigg)**

Permit from Dr. J.A. Farrar, Ingleborough Estate Office, Clapham, via Lancaster (Tel. 302). Avoid changing in Clapham village.

**Allotment Area (Rift, Long Kin E, Juniper Gulf, Marble Sink etc.)**

Permit from Ingham and Yorke, Land Agents, Littlemoor, Clitheroe, Lancs. May be refused between April and October inclusive.

**Nick Pot**

Call on Mr. J.H. Waterson, South House Farm, Selside, Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

**Borrins Moor Cave and Fell Close area**

Call on Mr. J.H. Barrow, Borrins Farm, Selside, Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

**Alum Pot, Long Churn, Diccan etc.**

Call on Mr. J. Wilcock, North Cote, Selside, Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

**Washfold Pot**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Call at The Shaws, Selside (Mr.J.H.Morphet).

**Birkwith area (Browgill - Calf Holes, Birkwith Cave, Old Ing etc.)**

Call at High Birkwith, Horton-in-Ribblesdale (J.A. Morphet).

**Red Moss Pot, Penyghent, Long Churn, Earl Pot etc.**

Call at Top Farm, Horton-in-Ribblesdale (P. Wood) Tel. Horton 216. 2nd farm on right beyond Newhouses.

**Sell Gill Hole**

Call at Holme Farm, Horton-in-Ribblesdale (C.M. Sutcliffe).

**Penyghent Pot, Hull Pot area, Dale Head Pot**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Call at Gamekeeper's cottage, Brackenbottom (G. Perfect).

**Magnetometer, Fornah Gill and Echo Pots**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Call at Neal Ing, Stainforth, (Mr. M. Caton). Cars may be parked at farm (small charge).

**Gingling Pot, Fountains Fe!!**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Applications required by 1st February each year for farmer to approve meets list. Call at Rainscar Farm (Mr. E. Coates).

**Pikedaw Caverns area**

Hilltop Farm, Malham (Mr. Hezeltine). No need to call for holes close to public footpath.

**Out Sleets Beck Pot**

Manor Farm, Halton Gill, (J.E. Cowan).

**Cherry Tree Hole and Darnbrook area**

Call at Darnbrook Farm (Mr. G. McColl, Mng.)

**Potts Beck area**

West Farm, Litton (D. Lund).

**Crystal Beck Pot**

Armistead Farm, Litton (G. Emmott).

**Boreham Cave**

Old Cotes Farm, Arncliffe (J.E. Metcalf).

**Pasture Gill Pot**

Top Farm, Yockenthwaite, (D.L. Mudd). Permission unlikely at present.

**Strans Gill Pot**

Lower Farm, Yockenthwaite, (T. Hird). Permission unlikely at present.

**Langtroth Cave and Pot**

Raisgill, Hubberholme, (D. Carlton).

**Birks Fell Cave**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Closed 15th November to 15th June. Call at Redmire Farm, Buckden, (Mr. F. Horner).

**Dow Cave, Providence Pot**

North Cote, Kilnsey, (R.W. Foster).

**Langcliffe Pot**

Mile House, near Kettlewell, (J. Lambert).

**Mongo Gill Hole**

Club access only, with C.N.C.C. Permit. Call at Stump Cross Cave for all entrances.

**Goyden Pot, Manchester Hole**

Call at Limley Farm No. 1 (on left) (Mr. Burton). Written application to Melton, Speakman and Hare, 1 Cooper Street, Manchester 2.

**New Goyden Pot**

Call at Thrope House Farm and approach by footpath on east side of river bed.

**Whitewell Pot**

Entrance sealed. Duchy of Lancaster Estate Office, Forton, Lancaster.

For areas where access is controlled by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs, it is advisable for clubs to apply early in the year. Because of the big demand (particularly for Casterton and Leek Fells) the number of dates granted may have to be limited and it is necessary that clubs should be paid up members of the C.N.C.C.

## FROM THE LOG

### 17th January 1976 SWILDONS - NORTH WEST STREAM PASSAGE

Mick Boroff, Rich Mooney, Chris?, Deidre Bowler, Ste. Jones and Ian Holme (LUST). Passage eventually entered after a further 8 bolts. The passage was exactly 60ft above the floor of the aven. The passage was followed for about 20ft to a tight right angled bend, at which point lack of time prevented further exploration but the passage probably becomes too tight. The aven was observed to continue to at least 90-100ft above the floor. A fairly large opening could be seen but would require approx. 4 trips at the same rate of bolting to reach it. Dripping water could be heard, so the aven could well go higher? 11 hrs.

### 7th February 1976 SWILDONS II

AVDP, Bob and Pete. Dug at Adrian's site 60ft downstream of Old Approach Passage. Spent a couple of hours digging a trench through clay into a small chamber beyond. Then started digging at the actual choke, which quickly revealed an air-space and we were able to look through into a passage. Afraid that our ETO was going to expire, Bob and Adrian went out to change the ETO, while I continued digging. After a further hour it was possible to squeeze into the passage, which turned out to be a solution pocket some 5ft in diameter! Met AVDP and Bob at Barne's Loop and all came out. Made a bit of a mess in the stream way, but the next heavy rain should clear it. PM.

### 14th February 1976 SWILDONS - NORTH WEST STREAM PASSAGE

Rich Websell and Trevor Faulkner, digging at SWETC's Heaven and Hell dig. Five ft. progress made and 20 buckets removed. Hampered by liquid mud and constricted dig face. There appears to be another 20ft of digging before the passage opens out and a more efficient spoil removal system will be needed as we progress further into the tube.

RAW.

### 27th March 1976 SWILDONS - KEITH'S CHAMBER

Mike, Roger, Pete and Alison spent four hours digging with a fair amount of progress. New pickaxe borrowed from a nearby dig and a super streamlined steel spoil-shifter built and delivered the previous week, were a great improvement on the old plastic buckets. The end of the dig is opening out but no air-space has been found yet.