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Opinions expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Wessex Cave club as a whole, unless otherwise stated.

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EDITORIAL

This is a saddening Edition in that it contains obituaries and tributes to both Atty and Dr. Oliver Lloyd, who died on May 20th 1985. At time of writing (late July), two Club groups are preparing for their trips abroad; the B.E.C. / W.C.C. Gouffre Berger expedition, and a little later, a caving holiday in County Clare. Perhaps activities such as these, the variety of trips noted in the Log Book (digging and tourist), and the various social events throughout; the year, when taken as indicator of the Club's vigour, are the finest tribute the Club can pay to Atty and OCL, and to those before them, who put so much into caving.

Thinking retrospectively thus:- editorial reasons and personal interests led me to purchase a copy of "Wessex Cave Club Volume One" (£1.00 via the Club sales service). It was not a Journal then; it was titled "Circular No...." but collected, the publication forms a fascinating book revealing the development of the Wessex Cave Club and of cave exploration of the time: Primrose Pot for instance, the finding of Pwll Dwfn (by the Wessex), a variety of groups within the Club. Same old troubles too: litter underground and complaints about the Hut being left in a mess! After extracting certain references in Volume One I required, I enjoyed a rewarding browse through the entire book, and it was that as much as anything which inspired my first paragraph of this Editorial.

Volume One gave me another idea, used in a great many other Journals and a few newspapers. The Wessex is almost 51, so I can instigate a 50 years ago column....

CLUB NEWS

The MARRIAGE of Chris Milne to Anne Lavender took place in June. The Wessex Cave Club accords them Best wishes.

1984 BARBEQUE COLLECTION. Somewhat belatedly, the money raised by the "lepers" at the Roman Feast ("Pay up or I'll kiss you!"), plus a small surplus on running costs, was donated to Mendip Rescue Organisation recently. I quote from the receipt letter received from Jim Hanwell (Hon. Treasurer & Secretary M.R.O.):

"Thank you very much for the donation of £50 following the Club's Fiftieth Celebration last year. Please let everyone know how much their support is appreciated."

UPPER PITTS LOCKS. The locks on the H.Q. doors will be changed on August 31st. The new keys will cost £5.00 each.

The new TACKLE STORE is now in operation. Members are reminded that tackle must be booked in and out by its serial numbers: recently two ladders were drawn out and replaced with a note in the tackle book to the effect that one was slightly damaged: we do not know which as the user had failed to identify it!

FOUND. Or left, at Upper Pitts. CAVING LAMPS. If you think one at least may be yours - please claim it before the A.G.M.!

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS. In recent months, two fire extinguishers were discharged, as a prank, by separate individuals on separate occasions. Apart from the ensuing mess (including powder throughout much of the Hut, including the kitchen and its contents), the H.Q. loses the protection of an extinguisher for a time. The Committee views such irresponsibility very seriously, and will consider appropriate action to take should such incidents be repeated.

NEW MEMBERS: see page 102.

MENDIP

AN APOLOGY. In the March edition of the Journal, I reported an incident at Fairy Cave Quarry, when Cerberus Speleological Society found a group attempting to break into W/L Cave (the C.S.S. members at their cottage were alerted by the sound of hammering). The report published was based on verbatim accounts, which I should have suspected. It was reported that some "rough handling" took place. Cerberus have written to me, to point out that there was no violence, indeed they challenged the group responsible, and asked them to leave, in a civil and proper way.

I accept that I was mistaken, and apologise to the Cerberus Speleological Society for the embarrassment caused.
-The Editor.

TOM TIVEY'S OTHER HOLE, at Holwell, was buried by earthmoving operations for the construction of Frome Bypass. This occurred in June: it is not yet certain whether or not this will be a permanent loss.

Elsewhere on Mendip, it's still a matter of keep on digging. Mendip Caving Group are busy in BLACKMOOR FLOOD SWALLET and BONE HOLE, both containing promising leads. Swildons Hole still isn't long enough for the Wessex, while the B.E.C. ran an interesting pumping/digging programme at Sump Two in ST. CUTHBERT'S SWALLET. Starting as part of the British Cave Rescue Council Conference demonstrations, and going on over the next few weekends, Cuthberts Three still staying hidden, the work raised the possibility that Sump 2 isn't a true sump... See separate report later in this edition.

Perhaps the major Mendip item concerns WOOKEY HOLE.

Early in July, Rob Parker (C.D.G.) attempted to pass Sump 25, beyond the point reached by Martin Farr in 1982. Little further progress was made, the diver being stopped by the powerful current and a too-tight constriction, at -67m. (220 feet). An oxygen/helium/nitrogen mixture, "Trimix", developed to reduce the possibility of nitrogen narcosis at this depth range, was used. For a detailed report on this mixture and on training dives to investigate it, see "Cave Diving Group Newsletter 75, July 1985". A full report on the Wookey dive is promised for the next issue of the CDG N/L.

MESOSTICH FOR OLIVER

On first meeting him I said "Oh, the notorious OCL". He said "I'm afraid so."
Father died. Told Lloyd. He said "Let the dead bury the dead."
Are we ourselves or does the life they say we lead amend us?
Lloyd said "If you really get very close to something it moves away."
I said "Hasn't life taught you that?"
He said "Yes, it has". Cummings said: "or if your wish be to close me, I and
my life will shut very
beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines the snow
carefully everywhere
descending"

Bob Lewis

OLIVER CROMWELL LLOYD

D.M.M. Thompson

On Monday 20th May 1985, Oliver Cromwell Lloyd, perhaps Mendip's most colourful personality, died. He was found at home by Marco Paganuzzi and Bob Drake, returning diving equipment the next day.

Oliver had lived in Withey House, Stoke Bishop, since just after the war. He had been brought up in one of the Stately Homes of England, as befitted a descendant of one of England's rulers - Great Dixter, at Northiam, conveniently near Glynbourne, going to Cambridge to do medicine in the 1930s. He qualified in 1937, and during the war went to India, where he developed an interest in etymology - doing research on malaria mosquitoes - and at times walking and studying butterflies in the Himalayan foothills. By 1949 he was Reader in Pathology at Bristol University, and did manage a caving trip in his early days. There he went to the Gorge in GB soon after its discovery. This was probably just a public relations exercise. Tom Hewer, his Professor, and Bruce Perry, Professor of Medicine, were both active U.B.S.S. members years before.

Life was difficult for him in the early 1950s. His wife was ill and at times he felt overwhelmed. He used to cycle out to Mendip, but somehow did not at first fall in with the community. Eventually he did ask if we would take him caving again, a request which resulted in a trip to Sump Two one Saturday in 1952. It was in the days before wetsuits, or even dry suits, and he could hardly be blamed for stating firmly the following Monday that he would never go again. By the following weekend, the bruises were fading, and he was caving nearly every weekend for the next twenty years, staying either at Burrington or Hillgrove. People were beginning to look again at possible extensions to known caves -GB, August Hole and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu were still new. Oliver had been on a Swildons trip when Luke Devenish blasted the Boss, and was invited to join the exploratory and photographic trip on the following Monday evening. It was Oliver's diary that revealed that this discovery in 1953 occurred on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. His association continued. It is Oliver's birthday (August 4th.) that the squeeze commemorates. He logged every trip that he made into Swildons - the number ran to over a hundred.

His closest Mendip association was with the University of Bristol Speleological Society, especially the element of UBSS concerned with cave-diving. For years he was the Treasurer of U.B.S.S. Many ex-students continued to pay a subscription because of the continuity he represented. Oliver trained with a succession of divers at Henleaze and Vobster pools, and when one of his medical students, Paul Esser, was drowned in Porth-yr-Ogof, he felt this deeply. The help he gave with acquisition of apparatus, his willingness to share his knowledge of the caves, and feeling of continuity extended to the non-diving U.B.S.S. fraternity, and from the early 1950s to the 1980s he supported the expeditions to Lisduinbhearna, sometimes twice a year, as provider of transport, photographer and again, continuity man, and on return would furnish a light-hearted chronicle in song with guitar accompaniment. The expeditions stayed at Kedne's Hotel, when his botanical knowledge enabled him to keep upsides with Mary Angela Kedne, who held a doctorate in Botany, and was an expert on the Burren.

His only other overseas venture was with Tratman to Gibraltar. Looking back over his caving career, Oliver seems to have taken over the Mendip scene very quickly. The involvement with M.R.O. seemed only natural at the time. He was known to Bertie Crook, the first doctor in M.R.O. He had university connections with people like Alan Rodgers, who could do research in physiology: cave rescue seemed more a branch of medicine then than it does now. M.R.O. meetings used to go well and business was speedily dealt with. It seemed somehow churlish to raise difficult questions after an excellent meal, the preparation of which (and the choice of wine) being supervised by Oliver. There was a large element of generosity as well as attempts to persuade. Oliver was one of the first to draw attention to the dangers of hypothermia with cave accidents.

We tended to think of him only as a caver, forgetting he had other interests. His medical position was a University teaching post, and he taught pathology with the same enthusiasm he gave to caving lectures. He was an authority on melanomas (malignant skin tumours). At one time, the Government of Uganda quite frequently used the services of the Bristol Pathology Department, although I'm not sure either realised this.

He was deeply interested in music, especially opera. When he reached compulsory retiring age, he enrolled in the Bristol University Music Department as a student, producing several works of interest, although these never became well-known. He played the spinet which stood in the corner of his sitting-room (and the full drum kit that stood in the other - R. Palmer, Temp. Ed. CDG N/L), and years ago held occasional concert parties at home. He was the possessor of perfect pitch - not always a gift - and he sometimes found other people's pianos hard to live with. Again, he loved teaching. I well remember returning from a weekend in Ffynnon Ddu listening to his resume of the Wagner Ring. This account occupied the entire journey from Craig-y-Nos to Bristol, apart from a few minutes when he broke off, I suppose at about Act Three of Die Walküre, to exchange pleasantries with a jay-walker near Raglan. It was probably his interest in opera which led to amateur dramatics. This certainly dated from his days at Cambridge, where he produced a script for the medical students' pantomime which had to be censored by the Vice-Chancellor's office. "Twelfth Night", produced on the lawn at Wills Hall, was a favourite and a success.

Oliver's involvement continued right to the end of his life. He had introduced the rescue films at the Cave Rescue Conference on May 17th, and had done it well. He handed over the films for safe-keeping, almost as if he had had a premonition. He had a good evening, and he must have gone out on a high. Cavers were not encouraged to attend the funeral. I know this is not as he would have wished it.

He could be an infuriating man at times, and he would not tolerate hypocrisy or woolly thinking, but his commitment to the caving scene, and to generations of students, was sincere and total.

.....

(First published, Cave Diving Group Newsletter No.76 July 1985. The Editor wishes to thank Bob Drake (CDG Somerset Section) for the contribution of, & the Hon. Secretary CDG for permission to publish, this Obituary.)

Initialed Wessex Coffee-Mugs.

HAVE YOU ordered, but not yet received, a W.C.C. Jubilee coffee mug with your initials on? There are several at Upper Pitts, awaiting collection. Contact the Sales Officer (Pete Hann).

ATTY

Maurice Hewins

Members will have been saddened to hear of the death in May of Atty, following several years of failing health. He was 74.

In his home town of Swindon, Harry Carleton Attwood was known as a professional sculptor and a keen follower of his local rugby club. On Mendip, Atty was a respected Wessex Member, whose affection for the Club ran very deep.

He only took to caving during his middle years, joining the Wessex in 1947. He was a familiar figure on Club trips in the 1960s, and also caved for a time with two younger friends from Swindon.

It was on one of these latter trips that our Farnham group encountered him at August Hole. I remember Atty had with him a ladder he had made to use on the 10ft pitch. Its design was, to say the least, unorthodox. However, his party descended safely then cheerfully went on their way. Later, in the Hunters', news came that Atty was overdue and we became involved in our first rescue. Happily though, it proved no worse than lamp failure, and all emerged unscathed.

By way of apology, Atty wrote up the story in the style of Chaucer as "Atty's Tayle". His companions commented that the worst part of the ordeal was Atty singing in the dark to keep their spirits up. In "Atty's Tayle" he described himself as being "an litel man and somdel deaf was he", and indeed his disability could make talking to him hard work at times - but those who made the effort were well rewarded.

I was privileged to spend two weeks in his company on the Wessex trip to Ireland in 1964. We found his knowledge of history, archaeology and folklore to be extensive, and at times, his wit positively impish. One evening in the bar in Lisdoonvarna, Atty was cornered by the town drunk, who was seen lecturing him at length. On rescuing him, we asked what the Irishman was going on about.

"I don't know", said Atty, "I switched my hearing-aid off".

Back on Mendip, Atty helped on Club digs and with the building of Upper Pitts. The sign at the end of the drive is his work. In later years his visits to the club became less frequent but he rarely missed the AGM and Dinner. He will be remembered sitting, sketch-pad in hand, making drawings of the meetings.

Four years ago, Atty suffered a serious stroke which affected his right side and hand. For an artist, this was devastating blow, but with characteristic courage he taught himself to write and draw left-handed. He even recovered sufficiently to attend the 1982 Dinner at Cheddar. The Club gave him a splendid reception and he greatly enjoyed the weekend. I think though that everyone knew it was to be his last visit to Mendip.

As well as a host of fond memories he has left the Club his own lasting memorial: the Wessex Dragon which hangs in Upper Pitts. Long may it remain in its place of honour over the fireplace to remind future cavers the debt the Club owes to Atty and his generation.

Charterhouse Cave

The entrance blockhouse has now been completed: concreting finished and covered over with earth, turf etc., by Shepton Mallet Caving Club.

W.C.C. Charterhouse Cave leaders are now Jeff Price and Nigel Graham.

Ye Mendypp Tayles

ATTY'S TAYLE

Dedicated to
Them That Forsook Their Bere

Now there was yn thys Cavers Companie
An litel man, an somdel deaf was he.
"(Gentles", sayd he, I have a Tayle to tel
Of August Hole, and how yt went nat wel.
For knowe thys Cavern hadde a Name of Dredes;
Yt semed a Dyrtye Word, as Peter sayd.

One Eastertyde dyd Peter, Frank, and I
Sette forth thys dreded Cavern to espy,
With Farmer Yonge dyd passe ye tyme of day,
And then att noonetyde went upon owre way.
By Pytch and Pott, and Crepe and Crawl and Bende
Ful Syxtie Fathom depe, Itrow dyd wende.
Dyd in ye streamway other Cavers grete
With them dyd have a smoke and eke a swete.
Then wee oure Bagge dyd leave us yn thatt place,
For sure, wee woulde nat neede hym for a space. T
hen wee dyd onward goe, ye Rife dyd stradel
And then across Poole Chamber dyd wee padel.
Sum twentie ells beyond dyd crepe and twiste
And then oure Doome befel us, wel I wist.

Juste where wee hadde nat space to turne aboute
Eache after eache, I saye, oure Lampes went oute.
Thenn were wee yn grete Consternatioun,
Yt was as Blake as ys Damnatioun.
Wee verrie busilie dya ply oure Flynt
Yette for oure laboures gatt wee nat a glynt.
Then Peter spake, "O atty, tel us true
Wat bee oure cours, and wat bee beste to doe?"
I answered hym, "How now shall we descry
Of Ledge or Pytche or how ye way doth lye?
And synce sum Greivous Hurt may us affraye
Wee yn thys doleful spott muste needs to staye."

"Yt mayhap thatt sum Caver, passyng by
May come thys way, and soe owre plyght descry.
And next, owre hope thatt or ye Sunn be set
Ye Farmer marks ye vann bee wyth hym yett
And strayt unto hys Telefone shal goe,
And with good spede shal dyal ye M.R.O.
But yette, methinks, yt shal avayl us nott,
For they bee delving yn a Yorkshire Pott
Or swinkyng yn ye Hunters, wel I wott.
And they will nott forsake their Beer wythal
Until ye Landlord thryce ye tyme shal call,
Wych wil nott bee tyl Tenne or eke Eleven,

And then to gett there Gere must tyme bee geven.
Here must wee sitt, and here endure owre woe
They may nott seke us ere ye coke shal crowe,
And wee muste wayte; O wel yt ys thys daye
Thatt yn a Goones Suite I dyd arraye,
And synce, methynks, wee yn ye colde muste wayte,
I thys same Goones Suite wil mee ynflate."

Whych being don, I dyd myne Bagge lament
And how owre folie dya yts use prevent.
"For ther bee Carbyde for to fyl a Lampe
And ther bee Matches yf they bee not Bampe.
A litel Candel, for to light owre way
And ther bee Glucose for owre stomacks stay."
Then wee, by turnes, dyd sumtyme synge and shoute
For to bee heard yf Cavers bee aboute.
So slolie by ye chylly houres dyd crepe
Att laste myne head dya nodd and I dyd slepe.

Tyl yn myne eres, yn thatt uneasie nyght
There came a cheerful cry "A Light, A LIGHT".
And soothe yt was, O never syght of bere,
Or ayle, or wyne dyd give us soe moche chere.
Yt was noe dreae, a Caver came to sight
And soone wee were delyvered from owre plyght.
Eftsoones they dyd restore to us owre Bagg,
Refreyshed ua eche wyth swetemetes and a fagg.
Thenn up wee wnet, by crepe, and pytch, and pott
To Longwode, alle owre troubles soone forgott.
There greted us ye Farmer, and ye Dogge
Aboute us was ye moon, and rayne and fogg.

Myne Tayle is tolde, wee thank the kindlie witts
That left ther bere to seke thre silie Nyttts.

First published; W.C.C. Journal Vol.7 No. 86, Sept 1962.

Letter To The Editor

Bristol

Dear Sir

Paul Weston's heart-cry in the May issue about the ladder in Lamb Leer brought back memories of when we installed it and the aerial ropeway across the Main Chamber in 1937.

I did not actually help with installing the ladder. I think it was probably Hywel Murrell who put it in, mainly to make it easier for him to get his gear up and down when he was making his film.

I did help with the aerial ropeway, which was erected to make it easier for visitors to the British Speleological Association Conference, Bristol 1937, to visit Lamb Leer.

Best Wishes,
A.J.S. McMillan.

(Correspondence on this topic is now closed, but an article on the Lamb Leer installations is being prepared. Ed.)

carefully selected sites which should help reduce pressure on surrounding farm land or important wildlife sites. Many of the sites are already used to some extent and only improvements are necessary. A few are new sites, but total costs can be reduced by seeking contributions and spreading development over several years. Careful visitor management is vital to the success of other measures in the Plan. Certain sports such as riding, caving and motor sports cause problems which the Plan seeks to alleviate as far as it is able. The strategy concerning tourism is to concentrate it at existing heavily used sites and not to promote the whole area to attract large numbers of extra tourists. Cheddar Gorge remains a site with major problems where Somerset County Council proposes an independent study to find ways of promoting increased tourist use accompanied by environmental improvements."

It is this last section which is likely to be of the greatest concern to us as cavers. However, it is important to put caving in perspective when considering the Plan: it is one of several activities enjoyed on Mendip, by both visitors and residents, and, indeed, most of the regular cavers on the area also enjoy walking etc.

It is interesting to note that Cheddar Gorge is problematical: it is examined in detail under the heading "ZONE 10 - CHEDDAR GORGE", pp93-97. It was found that of the 1,500,000 approx. visitors per year, a great many make only one, fairly short visit, and that the numbers of visitors have declined since the mid 70s. Various reasons are given, mainly pointing to the rather unattractive appearance of the commercial area, the lack of amenities (seats, toilets, car parks, etc.), or deficiencies thereof, limited hotel accommodation and lack of pavements, and:

"12.10.3 (vi). It is impossible to appreciate fully the scenic grandeur of the main Gorge during the season due to car parks and traffic." p94

It would seem that Cheddar Gorge has been overtaken by its own popularity the very thing tourists come to see being spoilt by tourism itself. An all-too-common problem. A set of proposals and suggestions is given to alleviate the problem, though one proposal may merely spread it:

"PROPOSAL CG4:

The local authorities will seek to develop a parking area and picnic site at the top of Cheddar Gorge in agreement with the landowner." p96

Despite the concern shown by the authors of the Plan over damage to vegetation and erosion, paragraph 12.10.12, which explains the reason for this proposal, states:

"This will have the dual benefit of restricting verge-side parking lower down the Gorge which causes damage to vegetation, and will encourage visitors to enjoy the walks above the Gorge on the cliffs where there are exceptionally good views."

Further, the Plan identifies Cheddar Gorge as a Grade 1 S.S.S.I. where damage to vegetation by parking and trampling - and, on the cliffs, by climbers - and increasing scrub growth are causing concern. To an extent, the National Trust have stopped road-side parking by boulder obstructions. The impression given by this part of the Plan is that climbers are thought to be at least as much a problem as the ordinary visitor who can be provided with car-parks and "better signposting and promotion" of footpaths. The problem of making all climbers follow access agreements is recognised, and management proposals could be promoted through the climbing literature - or, "if the damage persists", no climbing. p97.

To return to the Summary, (pp i - iii), Building Development, Quarrying and Transport are considered. Detailed development controls for most of the villages in the area are set out in the Plan: essentially, new building will be limited, generally, to within village limits defined, with a "Presumption against" new building in the countryside. The Structure Plan seeks to concentrate new quarries outside the Mendip Plan area, and those within the area still with reserves for working, are detailed.

Transport: no specific ideas, though the County Councils will attempt to improve public transport services experimentally.

The problems of Cheddar Gorge have been summarised in some detail above as an illustration, albeit an extreme one, of the main problems facing the Avon and Somerset County Councils in attempting to maintain the interests of the residents (mainly farmers and, on the South flanks of the Hills, horticulturists), tourism and the landscape and wildlife of the area. Some sections of the Plan beg important questions: primarily, where does one draw the line between conservation and artificiality? If visitors are trampling a network of muddy trails through a wood, does laying gravel paths with little wooded steps, etc, improve matters, especially if such work encourages yet more visitors? This question is considered by Phil Hendy in the Club's written reply to this Plan.

Phil has also highlighted those paragraphs in the Plan directly applicable to cavers: these will be summarised before turning to the representation. It may be relevant to consider the points made about caving and cavers, in the Plan, in the light of one of caving's thorniest issues: access. There are now quite a number of non-club cavers with some odd ideas (mainly misunderstandings and ignorance) on cave keys and key, issuing clubs.

"4 AGRICULTURE

(pp14

(Recreation) causes problems for the farmer including trespass, vandalism and litter.

4.6 (iii) (Karst features) ... more than 1000 shake holes have been mapped on Mendip. Swallets ... can lead to major caves ... They are lost once the depressions are filled to enable easier ploughing or prevent stock accidents. It has been estimated that over a quarter have been levelled and filled and the process is accelerating, thereby impoverishing the landscape and losing the opportunity of discovering and mapping large cave systems. Local caving organisations would be willing to comment on proposals for filling.

Such features, together with field monuments, gruffy ground, dew-ponds, can become obstructions to cultivations, and may be removed, though at a cost to the farmer, as even where a Ministry grant is obtained he still pays about three-quarters of the cost of the work.

"4.9 generally, the removal of man-made features and obstructions to cultivation (like swallets, shake holes, gruffy, dew-ponds) is eligible for grant. The benefits to the farmer can be costed in terms of extra production, but changes in the landscape require a judgement of quality which offers no direct comparison."

Further details on the exercising of this judgement follow, together with Proposals AG2, AG3 and AG4 (p17) aimed at greater consultation, and a County Council offer of labour (subject to resources) to assist farmers with "works which benefit the farmed landscape"

The risk of pollution of water sources by farm slurry or chemicals is discussed (4.17 & 18, p20), the proposal being that the County Councils stress the problem to landowners, in circulating advice to them. (Proposal AG10).

6 WILDLIFE

Introducing this section of the Plan, the authors point out the range of important habitats and remnants of early landscapes from various periods, and discuss the importance of conserving and enhancing these features. In a survey of present, important reserves, SSSIs etc., it is stated that "the importance of the general Mendip countryside as a reservoir of wildlife should not be underestimated." (6.3, p27). Generally, the Proposals in this section aim to promote conservation and enhancement of wildlife resources, support the principle of the notifying of S.S.S.I.s, consider the effect of afforesting on wildlife

when forestry proposals are put forward and encourage farmers to maintain grazing land. (Neglected grazing land becomes invaded by scrub, a less valuable habitat than grassland in regular use).

The problems of balancing protection of wildlife with recreation are introduced in this section; by Government policy, conservation takes preference over recreation in A.O.N.B., but on Mendip many important habitats are also attractive for recreational reasons (e.g., Cheddar Gorge, Burrington Coombe, and the Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes). In the case of these two lakes, careful management avoids conflict. Areas like "Priddy Pools" (Mineries) and Ebbor Gorge are both of considerable wildlife interest and attraction to visitors:

"Often their unspoilt character is part of the attraction, but increasing use is endangering the habitats" (6.11 p30).

"6.13 The caves on Mendip present a special problem. Many are important scientifically, either for (solutional) features, or as winter roosting sites for large numbers of bats ... (protected) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A number of caves are notified as Ss.S.S.I. and this should help to protect their geological features." (Notes on bats, bat roosts, the Act) "The following measures should help to reduce disturbance by cavers to bat roosts and to geological features.

"PROPOSAL WR6: The County Councils will contact the caving organisations to emphasise the importance of Mendip caves as scientific sites and to encourage the organisations to take responsibility for recreational use of particular caves, as unofficial wardens." p30.

7. RECREATION

This section of the Plan expands the points above further, and it is in this section that the major self-contradictions are apparent. Essentially, the desire of the County Councils is to at least maintain if not encourage sporting and recreational use of Mendip whilst protecting the places and things visitors come to see. The two main Mendip sports are caving and sailing: as seen above, the latter seems to cause no problems, the lakes being of ornithological importance. Climbing in Cheddar Gorge has caused some damage to rare vegetation and disturbance to nesting birds (7.13 p35), proposals to deal with this are summarised in Proposal CG5, p97. General development "beyond existing 'honeypots' like Cheddar (etc) ought not to be encouraged" (7.4 p32). The Plan does however, propose a rash of signposted walks, information boards etc., though this is partly to avoid the unnecessary duplication of footpaths which can be annoying to the farmers.

The importance of caving on Mendip is recognised: it has the lions' share of comments and proposals under the Wildlife and Recreation headings. Other sports covered are horse riding: the damage caused to bridleway surfaces by the activities of commercial stables are recognised, and motorcycling: organised trials are no problem but unauthorised trail riding is, so should be prohibited, except at specific, acceptable sites.

Caving: it is difficult to see how the Plan's proposals could be implemented, even if the caving world wanted them.

"7.6 Mendip is of national importance for caving. The sport is pursued individually and through clubs, ... over 500 cavers on a busy weekend. In general the entrances are on private land and local clubs have negotiated access with owners. As the number of cavers using the 30 miles of cave passageway has increased over recent years, problems have arisen. Increasing recreational pressure is leading to erosion of the caves, problems of litter and graffiti, making the sport less enjoyable as well as damaging natural features.

7.7 Most caves are freely available to cavers. These 'open' caves can still be acceptable to those cavers who merely wish to be underground. It does mean, however, that caves that still retain their

impressive features need to be safeguarded. A controlled access 'leadership' system works well in some caves and this idea could be extended by clubs or landowners. Clearly this is outside planning's statutory sphere of influence, although the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 does enable those caves within S.S.S.I. to be given some degree of protection. Proposal WR6 in Chapter 6 should help to ease the problem. It may be possible, through voluntary arrangement and discussion, to secure better use of caves. WR6 allows for closer negotiation with landowners and caving organisations to maintain access but minimise damage to caves.

7.8 As the number of cavers has increased, so problems on the surface near the cave entrances, such as litter, damage and dangerous parking, have also increased. Again the solution lies in educating offending cavers, who simply need to pay more heed to the Country Code. The Warden will seek to prevent problems although it is accepted that many caves are a long way from parking areas.

7.9 Other problems caused by farming activities and tipping have already been referred to ... proposals ... there should help to protect the cave systems. Quarrying has resulted in both the discovery and destruction of caves on Mendip. However, the application of the Structure plan policies which normally only permit new workings outside the plan area, should assist safeguarding in the long term. p33

An example of caves affected is given in the chapter "Zone 3 - Mendip Plateau", headed "Wildlife / Scientific Interest (p77):

"12.3.9 Two cave systems in this Zone which are scientific importance, are designated Ss.S.S.I. The systems are at Lamb Leer and GB Cave near Tynings, which is popular for recreational caving. The designation does not affect land uses on the surface and the measures outlined in Chapter 6, Proposal WR6, will help to protect the scientific interest of these caves without unnecessarily inhibiting recreational access. It is possible that the N.C.C. will notify further cave systems as S.S.S.I. in the future."

Other S.S.S.I. notified, listed in other chapters of the Plan, include Longwood and "Three ... important cave systems" (12.1c.8.) (p102): these being among the Priddy sites.

Generally, the County Council staff seem to have taken great care over their work, but the section relating to Cavers at Burrington Combe, especially Goatchurch Cavern, shows considerable naivety:

12.9.10. Cavers

Cavers also have a parking problem, most .. parking on the track .. to Goatchurch Cavern. A variety of vehicles park there and cavers use the trees and bushes for drying wet clothes, so the whole area becomes very unsightly. There has been some erosion in the area and in addition pollution of the stream has occurred from waste carbide Avon County Council have carried out some minor improvements to the Goatchurch Car Park but a properly designed and constructed scheme is required. In addition the (opportunity should be taken of providing information facilities here, geared particularly for cavers. This approach accords with the suggested Countryside Recreation Sites Hierarchy in para. 7.20 (p37).

PROPOSAL BC7: The local authorities will seek to improve parking and information facilities in the vicinity of Goatchurch Cavern in negotiation with the Conservators of the Commons." -p92

ZONE 12 – PRIDDY

"This is a unique area of Mendip" (12.12.1.), "a centre for tourists and cavers" (12.12.2). A general description of the village, which is described as "a well-established and thriving community" (12.12.3), is given, together proposals to limit housing development, to protect the greens (Priddy Green itself is a registered village green), to grant-aid shelter-belt planting, to protect and manage the archaeological

areas, and to "seek to obtain the best possible network of rights of way" (12.12.12) and retain and maintain the 'Green lanes'. These have vehicular rights over them and are used by motorcycle trail riders: keeping them open will help prevent unauthorised trail riding on bridleways and footpaths.

The popularity of the Stock Hill forest (Forestry Commission) and the pools opposite mean it is a very busy place, with parking problems at times. Consequently the proposal to develop a car park and picnic area, first mooted in 1972 but not implemented for financial reasons, has been revived.

"POLICY PR4. The local authorities will help to develop the potential of Stock Hill, Priddy, as a site for countryside recreation, in agreement with the Forestry Commission and Landowner.

Recreation

12.12.9. Caves in this Zone, as well as being scientifically important, are heavily used for recreation. Eastwater Cavern and Swildons Hole are particularly popular and cavers and their vehicles are much in evidence around Priddy on many weekends. It is not proposed to take any special measures with regard to caving. The procedure following from S.S.S.I. notification in the Wildlife and Countryside Act will help to protect the scientific interest of the caves. In addition Proposal WR6, para.6.13 will apply."

Reading Proposal WR6, one may well ask how the County Councils knew of the importance of the Mendip caves in the first place, in order that we may be so informed in turn! What the Plan does not suggest is any way in which "caving organisations" can best act as "unofficial wardens" other than by access controls and leadership systems. Mendip clubs already receive a lot of adverse comments in the caving Press over the present access controls; granted, this criticism is largely from people not fully aware of the reasons for the controls, but what sort of reaction would there be to further controls? Especially if the caves affected included Eastwater or Swildons

The importance of the Priddy area's surface S.S.S.I.s, wildlife, etc., are described, including an area of unimproved limestone grassland being considered for S.S.S.I. notification. It is pointed out that reviewing and altering the boundaries of cave S.S.S.I. would not affect uses of the land surface.

The rest of the Plan contains Zone proposals for various areas, mainly quarries and villages, implementation details and general planning policies. The Mendip Hills Local Plan is a major document, the outcome of a considerable amount of work, prepared by people who do appreciate the Mendip Hills. Clearly any such set of proposals will not receive full support from everybody concerned, hence the public debate invited. As cavers - one of several groups with widely differing interests in Mendip - we are of course most concerned with the caves and with access to them. Phil Hendy submitted a reply, on behalf of the Wessex Cave Club, which does cover not only caving, but other interests as well: -

"Sir,

The Mendip Hills Local Plan ... if accepted, would have wide-ranging and long-term effects on Mendip, its scenery, wildlife and population both local and tourist."

Phil notes that the comments he submits were made chiefly by Wessex members living locally. Of great concern is that preserving the Mendip A.O.N.B. by restricting agriculture etc. while "encouraging more of the (often uncaring) public" will "irretrievably" lose much of Mendip's character and undeveloped beauty. The Reply points out that not only is improved access, parking and way marking incompatible with some agriculture and with conservation, but also that those who enjoy Mendip as it is do not need information boards, car-parks etc.

"To install them would not bring an increase in those who really care about and appreciate the countryside, but it will bring an increase in those to whom the countryside is merely a large 'country

park' with all facilities laid on. This will inevitably lead to an increase in trespass, vandalism and litter. (Para 4.4)."

(Underscoring is the writer's, Paragraph references are those of the Plan document).

"The Plan itself is in conflict over these issues."

The Reply lists those sites in the Plan where increasing use is a danger to their wildlife yet where car parks etc. are proposed (e.g. Priddy Pool with its important grassland - and a suggested car park / picnic area.)

Phil points out the destructiveness of quarrying, and considers that the Plan's recognition of this is insufficient. Regarding filling of depressions, toxic waste dumping and rough pasture reclaiming, the point is made that co-operation with the farmers will achieve much in the way of preservation, since the all-important access to caves has been gained by years of contact and the maintenance of good relations. The problem of pollution of water sources is well known: "Most farmers are generally sympathetic to this problem".

"Our comments on Section 6 (Wildlife) take two angles. Firstly, the impact of cavers on wildlife, which mainly concerns bats. It is important that the importance of caves as bat roosts is not over-emphasised."

An explanation follows, and the Comment that

"There is no proof that cavers are responsible for the declining bat population - more likely reasons are ... pesticides ... and the loss of non-cave roosts... (buildings)

"Of far more importance to wildlife habitats will be the planned proposals to 'improve' sites and provide more and 'better' access to the public. We cannot accept that such 'improvement' will merely direct the existing tourists to certain sites. It will most certainly attract more tourists to Mendip. Para.7.4 states that Mendip is incapable of absorbing many more visitors at peak times! By and large, Mendip tourists now (apart from those who merely park, picnic and leave their litter by the roadside) are those who appreciate what is there"

Further amplification of the point follows, with examples from the Plan (Mineries, Deer Leap, Ebbor Gorge), to show that some of the Plan's proposals will merely lead to deterioration of those habitats etc. the planners are attempting to protect. (As well as being visually intrusive).

CAVING. Editorial comments on the problems of cave conservation and their suggested solutions contained in the Plan, have been made above. The WCC submission points out that a great many of the visiting cavers on Mendip have little or no contact with caving clubs, and many of these visitors (school or youth club members under "dubious supervision") "care little for the caves or the ethos of caving". Phil explains that although clubs have no way of communicating with them, there are a number of properly-organised school, university and Scout caving clubs who use club headquarters as guests, and who can therefore be influenced. He also points out the C.S.C.C. / Somerset L.E.A. vetting scheme for teachers wishing to instruct schoolchildren in caving:-

"This restricts children to caves within their capability and gives the opportunity for clubs to put over the ideals of safe caving and cave conservation. It works very well."

The problems of car parking by cavers is not seen as very significant and where specific problems do arise, clubs would doubtless be willing to liaise with the council or landowners. The particular problems of Burrington are examined; the present Goatchurch carpark is described as a "disaster", trippers, as well as cavers, are blamed for the litter, and information boards would be vandalised. In any case, Phil advises

against erecting information boards on the grounds that the genuinely interested can obtain plenty of published information, and on conservation grounds.

The subject of the work of the Avon and Somerset Trusts for Nature Conservation is raised, regarding both Burrington Coombe and Longwood Valley. "Some of their actions are less than impressive" : builders' rubble to limit parking on verges; tree clearance, which without sheep grazing to maintain the cleared slopes, is now encouraging scrub growth (a poor habitat - ref. 6.7 p29); "neat paths and well-tended vegetation ... all right in a city park"; coppicing for stove fuel. "Whose wood-burning stoves?" The "childish" signposting at Longwood, and more seriously, vehicular damage to the track from Black Rock Gate are also criticised. (Rich Whitcombe tells me of a Longwood Valley information leaflet which called Longwood Valley Sink a 'blowhole': it seems to show a lack of homework! -Ed.)

"Who controls these conservationists, because a lot of what they do is not compatible with sympathetic land management, let alone the conservation of nature?"

The Plan is not entirely disapproved of: "many parts of the Plan make good sense", particularly with respect to building controls to prevent scattered houses all over Mendip. A suggestion is put forward that more care is taken over the appearance of houses visible from Mendip: a "literally glaring example of colours incompatible with the landscape" being given by the Portway estate at Wells.

"Finally, we strongly urge, in summing up our views on the plan for the Mendip Hills A.O.N.B., that nothing should be done to materially alter the Hills as they stand, from the point of view both of the farmers and others who earn their living from the Hills, and of those who currently seek their pleasure, by whatever means, in Mendip's tranquil landscape and unrivalled uniqueness and beauty.

(Signed) Philip G. Hendy BSc.
Honorary Chairman, Wessex Cave Club.

A SAGA of^{ye} West Saxons

Att Pready hys on Mendippe in ^{ye} yere of ayety-five
West Saxons fought a myty fyte the Vykynz to debie
att Belfry camp^{ye} challynge tang, come drynk and eat
our grubbe
proud boasts were mayd by Vykynz of ^{ye} Explorattion Clubb.
The challynge out, ^{ye} Saxons bold mayd haste to go to warre
the Cerberos, ^{ye} M.E.G, ^{ye} Sheepton in ^{ye} fore,
with Em and En and Ar and Cee, cwyte proudlie in ^{ye} van
and Wessex leading meny mor, full armed was evry man.
From Upper Pitts we sallied forth, thro Mendep fogg and rayne
Blott led the way on horsback, tho menie might be slayne.
Owre chariott blak with dragon godde we pull'd with
slavs bedrenchid
and justt to chere the valiants on, full meny brout a wench.
Two score and mor of Wessex men approachid ^{ye} Belfry campe
Owre harts were brimd with war and thyrst, tho boddies
mite be damp
A trumpet tang, oure match was oer, no moore of false alarms
Oure fyrst atak was mayd upon "Ye Pillagers Armes".
Then Vykynz sygnified ^{ye} start of tace of chariott and dolt
By summonyng from Heavn a most myraculos thundrebolt.
Thro mudde and fen the slavs dyd pull with all theyr mite
and mayne
Ye chariotts thro wildreness, alonge ^{ye} wynding layne
Cerberos fyrst to layk ^{ye} lead, BEC behynd in rayce
When Wessex threw an cremy cayk, whych hit them full
in fayce
On to ^{ye} sacted layk they rode, then plunged into ^{ye} main
To rescu out a woden godde, and bryng itt back agayne.

Once more on wheels the combatants dyd taye back to 3rd forte
MNRC dyd wyne perforce, 3rd Wessex thyrde of course
3rd BEC cam forth, methynks, all honour to theyr geytte
All cam bak safe, tho covered oer with mudde and slyme
and shytte.

Then drynkynz set in earnest, full freely flowd 3rd ayle
Tho this is not 3rd ending yett of thys my wondrous tayle
For trestles hie were stakd with mete of hot dogge and
coste capon

We ette oure fyll as onlie can who follow of 3rd Dragonne
And meny mity hostes were mayd of battles real (and nolte)
And exploits undreneth 3rd grounde, in caverne and in grotte
The axemen theyn displayd theyr skills upon a woden foe
Untyl he was as kyndling wood upon 3rd grasse belowe
And as 3rd day grewe dim and dark we hadde a big surpryse
Wyth meny bangs and plumes of smok as fireflies filld 3rd skyse
3rd magic of 3rd Vykhynz fill'd all wyth awe and wondere
We gaz'd aloft and fait forgot owre tankards and owre plunder
Sych fyrework sparks hadd not bene seen for full a meny yere
Then when t'was oer we went bak to oure wenching and oure bete
As nyte goes on, 3rd legends grow, owre heroes never cese
Wyth mity foemen frends all last, and talkynz eche of pece
So once agayn a famous day of feastynz is gone past
yts tales will grow wyth tellynz, so long as memry last
Oure heroes reste, theyr boddys aychy, with bete theyr
heads be sore

We thank you, BEC, untyl we doe it all once more.

~~~~~  
Eggbald 3<sup>rd</sup> Bard

wyth thanks to 3<sup>rd</sup> ynspirattion of Atty of Swinedun  
and yn hys Memory.

# BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL.

1986 Conference 18th – 19th May

Editorial note: It had been hoped that a full report on the Conference proceedings could be produced, this, however was not the case. Apart from anything else, at time of writing, the official report intended for the organisations represented at the Conference was itself still in preparation. This report is a summary of the Conference weekend as a whole, compiled first-hand by the Editor with assistance from Pete Hann and Brian Prewer.

The 1985 British Cave Rescue Council Conference, hosted by the Mendip Rescue Organisation, was a valuable and highly successful occasion, with regard to both the serious proceedings of lectures, displays, etc., and the social side.

It is fitting, in reviewing the Conference, to remember the work of Dr. Oliver Lloyd, who passed away only a day or so after the Conference, particularly in the contexts of cave-diving and of cave rescue. On the Friday evening, Dr. Lloyd commenced the weekend with a showing of old M.R.O. films, of a rescue practice in Swildon's hole and of sump rescue practices in a swimming pool, together with a Royal Navy film on resuscitation training. The sump rescue practice film, demonstrating the early sump rescue apparatus, was of particular interest bearing in mind the equipment demonstration at Wookey Hole resurgence, to follow.

Saturday was occupied by a programme of lectures, held at the Little Theatre in Wells. Throughout the day, an M.R.O. equipment display and various trade stands could be visited in the Youth Centre nearby.

Chaired by Jim Hanwell (Hon. Secretary & Treasurer, M.R.O.), the Conference was formally opened by the Rt. Hon. David Heathcoat-Amory, M.P. for Wells. Andy Eavis delivered a lecture on "Rescue Equipment and Techniques on Expeditions", followed by questions and discussion the subject.

After lunch, "First-Aid and Treatment Underground" was covered by a series of demonstrations given by M.R.O. Medical Wardens and the Casualty Union. John Hill (C.U.) demonstrated the use of the spinal board, and Drs. Peter Glanville and Don Thompson explained the first-aid treatment for head injuries, long bone and pelvic fractures.

The final lecture was entitled "The Self-Sufficient Caver" - an "Illustrated talk on self-contained equipment for rescuers", by Phil Hendy. An innocuous Conference Programme entry which turned out to be a very amusing piece of light relief, taking a very-much-sideways look at the self-sufficient, home-computerised, caver. A fine performance also from Phil's assistant, Barry Davies.

Following the lectures, two demonstrations were scheduled. The first, at Wells Fire Station, was a display of Somerset Fire Service's Rescue Tender, capable of off-road travel, and fitted with an air compressor to which standard compressed-air fittings and tools may be connected. This display did not take place as the vehicle had been sent to an incident on the motorway. It was, however, shown on the Sunday morning at the Belfry, where for a time it was pumping air down St. Cuthberts.

The second demonstration was of the Kirby-Morgan Sump Rescue Equipment, at Wookey Hole Resurgence, shown by M.R.O. and Cave Diving Group members. The main principle of this apparatus is the complete enclosure of the casualty's head by a combined hood / face-mask, on which is dual valve

allowing a full-flow air supply into the mask. By this means, it is possible to rescue an unconscious casualty who would be unable to use the normal demand-valve/mouthpiece arrangement. The casualty is put into the suit and strapped into a normal rescue stretcher, cylinder strapped on, and the hood fitted and secured by a "spider" of rubber links. Air may be directed across the mask to demist the lens, if required.

For this display, which was very well attended, the "casualty" (Al Mills) was towed around the perimeter of the resurgence lake, the divers submerging as they reached the deeper area. A problem discussed by many of those present was that shown by the necessary artificiality of the display, where an experienced cave diver was being towed around a large open, though fairly dark, lake by his fellow divers. In some situations, on real rescues, a conscious, non-diver casualty already in some distress, may be put under considerable additional stress by the use of this technique and equipment, in which the casualty is totally helpless to himself. Against this, however, the technique would considerably expedite the rescue of a badly-injured casualty from places like the further reaches of Swildons or Little Neath River Cave.

By the end of the Sump Rescue display, the gnats had gathered for a luxuriant feast, so it was something of a relief to return to the top of the Hill - in search of sustenance ourselves. A Dinner was held at the Hunters', for delegates, who could subsequently move onto the Priddy Village Hall social evening. Buffet (organised by Alison Moody), bar, ending with a disco - and the Cave Rescue Game (organised by Glyn Bolt). The Wessex cave constructors had devised an additional feature for this occasion: the 11" wide Narrow Rift, the erection of which early in the evening puzzled many people. Winners were the Royal Ulster Constabulary team - clearly off duty, as their presence didn't stop the scoreboard being snaffled by souvenir hunters...! A fine evening, which evidently impressed those visitors who had perhaps seen references to Mendip hospitality in "Descent" 'Mendip' news, but not previously seen "anything quite like this"!

Three activities were offered to delegates on the Sunday. Fred Davies had offered to arrange caving trips, otherwise, demonstrations were under way at Gough's Cave (in the "adventure cave" area) and at St. Cuthberts.

Gough's was the venue for demonstrations of various hauling and communications systems, using alternative stretchers, phones, etc. This was organised by Tim Large (B.E.C.)

The St. Cuthberts Sump 2 pumping demonstration had a dual purpose. For the Conference, it showed that compressed-air tools such as the pump could be used successfully a considerable distance from the compressor. The exercise was also simply (simply?) a cave dig. Pumping was resumed over the next few weekends, reaching a final distance of 40ft at 20ft depth into the Sump and raising the possibility that in fact Cuthberts Two ends, not in a true, choked, sump, but a choked rift.

The cave was very busy that day; not surprisingly since the exercise offered an open, albeit working, Cuthberts trip. Teams entering the cave were generally doing so to act as sherpas and diggers.

The air was supplied by a "Hydrovane" (trade-name) compressor, rated at 165 cu.ft./minute, 100p.s.i., supplemented in the morning by the Fire Service rescue tender, and at other times by the NHASA compressor. The compressor outlet was linked, via an adaptor, directly to fire-hose, with no intervening oil separator. This ensured lubricating oil mist reaching the pump's motor. (This raises one question: is fire-hose oil resistant?)

Forty lengths (3000 feet total; of standard 2¼" hose installed via pulpit Pitch route conveyed the air with negligible pressure drop to the Atlas-Copco 14000 galls/hour pump in the sump pool. The NHASA pump was installed as a stand-by: the main pump sometimes became silted up. Pumping continued throughout Sunday, until about 5p.m., when the dams were near to overflowing.

By late afternoon, conditions down there were pretty vile: one visitor reckoned the place resembled a mining disaster rather than a cave dig. The choke material was a black slurry, much of it lead tailings,

carried back to the dump in plastic sacks. The air stank of oil, and was a warm, misty fug. Nevertheless, the pumping was successful, in that it proved the efficacy of the system. Clerk of Works was Alan Butcher (S.M.C.C.)

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A few people have been mentioned above as organisers: obviously they could not have done everything single-handedly! A large number helpers did a lot of work, not only "onstage" (manning displays, carrying in Cuthberts, serving at the Village Hall), but also behind the scenes (from building "squeezes" and sweeping the Hall floor to the administration and preparation of the Conference itself). Their work was well rewarded. Four Clubs officially offered accommodation to Conference visitors. Apart from Wessex, they were the B.E.C., S.M.C.C. and C.S.S.

#### Acknowledgements.

The Editor would like to thank Pete Hann, for notes on the First-Aid lecture, and Brian Prewer, for the details of the Cuthberts pumping equipment.

Further details came from the Conference Programme (prepared by the M.R.O.), as did the title block.

#### Addendum.

Omitted accidentally from the lecture notes, a quote from the programme-

"...Andy Eavis, 1984 Ness Award Winner of the Royal Geographical Society for his leadership of caving expeditions to Mulu and Sarawak."

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DORSET EVENING ECHO Friday June 28 1985

## **Climbers' rope stolen**

A GROUP of cliff-climbers from Weymouth Youth Activities Centre had a rope stolen while they were exploring a cave at Portland.

Fortunately the rope was only a back-up line in addition to the ropes actually in use by the youngsters.

But a police spokesman said the theft could have put the team in danger

As I have no connection with the Weymouth Youth Activities Centre, this newspaper report was the only information I have on this incident, the first to my knowledge to be publicised thus, though not the first such incident. I believe the Y.A.C. use lifelines on abseils (I'm not 100% certain), so perhaps it was a top line stolen. I am assuming the cave was Blacknor Hole....

N.G.

## REVIEW

### The Diary of C.H. KENNEY, 1942 -1950

Edited by P.G. Hendy

WESSEX CAVE CLUB OCCASIONAL  
PUBLICATION Series 1 no.3 Feb 1985.

Review: Brian Prewer

If one had to find a title for Howard Kenney's recently-published Diary, perhaps "The First of the Summer Wine" might be appropriate. Howard's Diary has provided us with a marvellous record of caving activities during and after the last war from 1942 to 1950. Recorded in the Diary are the original explorations of Primrose Pot in Eastwater and the Black Hole Series in Swildons, as well as many Badger Hole digging trips with Balch, and early trips to South Wales and France.

It is interesting to reflect on the activities, so vividly recorded, and observe the efforts and planning that went into these early trips. The exploration of Primrose Path is a fairly typical example: several explorations were needed before the pot was finally bottomed by Vincent Stimpson. Vincent is still a regular visitor to the Hunters' Lodge, although I doubt whether many of the younger cavers today would know him.

For me, I think the most interesting part of Howard's Diary must be the beginning, starting with the Balch lecture to the local school boys, and the early trips, some of them clandestine, to the Forty-Foot Pot in Swildons. Yes, the removal of cave padlocks was going on even then - in this case because they were too frightened to ask the farmer for the key! Interesting too, and somewhat amusing, is the meeting of Howard and Richard Kenney with "that schoolboy from Sidcot, one W. Stanton", who, in Howard's words, "appeared to be fearless". He was the one who ventured as far as the Forty-Foot pot whilst the others remained in the Water Chamber, too cautious to go further.

After two or three trips using their school clothes and explaining to their mother that they had fallen into Priddy Mineries, Howard sorted out his priorities. The early Swildons trips required that Richard and Howard returned to Wells on their bicycles for Cathedral choir practice. After three or four trips, Howard left the choir, Richard however remained for a further year, until his voice broke.

Some of the lighter-hearted moments are worth picking out. For example, the visit to France involved a meal stop at Folkestone before boarding the ferry. Luke Devenish, well noted for his good taste in food and wine, chose a rather 'up-market' hotel for their lunch. Howard is at the pains to point out the acute embarrassment of Will Stanton who was wearing khaki shorts.

Howard's Diary certainly recorded details of the conditions existing during the years near the end and immediately following the war: the elaborate detours required to get to Longwood, due to army restrictions in the Charterhouse area; or even the persuading of sentries to allow them to cycle along the Charterhouse road. Charterhouse, I am told, was a large army store depot.

I was rather surprised to note that candles were still the norm. Howard records purchasing his first Premier carbide lamp for a Swildons trip, noting the improved performance over candles. Caving tackle must have been hard to come by during and after the war, although Howard commented on the BEC using aluminium-and-wire ladders in Swildons. On the subject of ladders and ropes, Richard Kenney reminds me that pre-war manila and hemp tackle was still being used in 1945. They were lucky not to have had more breakages. Richard also points out that manpower problems and lack of tackle was one reason for them not exploring the Dolphin Pot route down Eastwater. They had visited the top of the chimney but as it was not on the survey in 'Balch', they chose to ignore it. The night trips to Eastwater were well remembered and had a special thrill - they were the first times that Howard and Richard had stayed up all

night!

Hunters' Lodge goers will be interested to note that Howard and his friends found great comfort from a pint, usually supped on returning on their bicycles from Burrington. I think perhaps cavers of the 80s are somewhat softer than they were 30 years ago, when transport usually consisted of cycling or walking with all your kit. Consider one of Howard's trips to Stoke Lane when he cycled from Wells, and later, having returned to Wells after the trip, discovered that he had left all his kit behind. Next morning, at 6a.m., before work, he cycled back to Stoke to retrieve that kit! No doubt old clothes for caving were at a premium after the war, and such a journey was felt necessary.

For a person who always demanded the leading position or often gave that impression, Howard was very tolerant of weakness in others. In retrospect, it made him a more balanced person. Certainly many of the early "Friday Nighter" caving trips led by Howard showed him to be very tolerant of the more 'wimpish' amongst us. Howard's diary can only be considered as that of a gentleman and I found much pleasure in being given such a vivid description of caving activities thirty years ago.

My only regret is that I was not there to have enjoyed the excitement and satisfaction of some of those early exploration trips to Swildons and Eastwater, or the lazy Summer days spent at "Mendip Mansions". Incidentally, Mendip Mansions was located behind Lower Farm in the Longwood Valley, and served as a base for Howard and his friends for a number of years. Notice the personality clashes and politics that appeared even then, with restrictions being applied to certain individuals.

Having reached the Diary's last page, I puzzled as to why it ended there: Howard certainly did not stop caving at that point, in fact he played a major role in the Mendip Rescue Organisation for many years after, and enjoyed caving on Friday nights with the Friday Night caving group which he founded. The answer was provided by Richard. The Diary finally came to an end when correspondence-course studying for accountancy examinations became an every-evening event.

I will leave you with a little puzzle. WHO is "Obviously Waterworn"? All the clues are in the early part of the Diary.

Acknowledgement.

I must acknowledge the valuable help of Richard Kenney in preparing this review. He has provided many useful bits of information not recorded in the Diary.

B.E.P.

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## New Members

The Wessex Cave Club welcomes the following new members:-

Ronald James Bury. 70 Cranberry Lane, Darwen, Lancashire.

Richard Elton Panes. 8 Fromeside Park, Downend, Bristol BS16 2QL.

Nicholas Weston Truman. New Close Cottage, Ston Easton, nr. Bath, Somerset.

James Burrige. The Smithy, High Street, Ston Easton, nr. Bath, Somerset.

Christopher Robert Glover. 17 Capel Lane, Littleham, Exmouth, Devon.

Philip Alexander Underwood. Cherry Orchard, Wookey Road, Wells, Somerset.

## FROM THE LOG

### Charterhouse Cave

Pete Hann, Julie Bolt, Rosie Smith, Merv Ingram, Clive Barlow.

11 May. J.B., P.H. More cement in boulders. Brought iron ladder back from muddy dig near Citadel, to the entrance.

2 June. J.B., P.H. More cement in boulders, one of which leapt out of the roof at me! Boulders 1 Me 0. Decided collecting gravel is much more fun.

26 June. R.S., P.H., M.I., C.B. Merv and Clive collected gravel while I gave Rosie a tourist trip as Thank-you for all the hard work at our digs, before she goes back to Scotland. Now we have lost the Beauty, I will have to put up with the Beasts . . . . P.H.

### Eastwater Cavern

23 May. Jo Beckett, Ian Jepson. To Morton's Pot to see if dig needs banging again. Found it to be silted up quite badly. Had lengthy discussion on various methods of retrieving a small frog hopping about the bang site! 50mins. J.Bt.

8 June. WEST END SERIES. Geoff Newton, Pete & Alison Moody, Doug Mills, Simon - . The dig at the bottom of Blackwall Tunnel was found to be in a horrid state. We spent a good hour trying to dig out the drain hole, but it remained choked. Geoff, Pete and Simon went through to Whitehall to try and approach the drain from the opposite end, however the passage was too small. After a quick tourist trip for Simon we came out for Chris Milne's stag-night.

### Swildons Hole

BUTCOMBE CHAMBER. Rosie Smith, Pete Hann, John Scott, Merv Ingram, Clive Barlow.

1 May. Removing lots of rock and mud under the slot. Very strong outward draught: looking good.

LOWBOW. Pete Hann, Alison Moody, Julie Bolt, Dave Grieves.

5 May. Surveyed the horrible place; Alison with clino & compass, Julie on notes, Dave getting bored and me full to the brim on ale to calm my nerves on tape. The job was soon done, glad that's done, don't have to go there again - bloody awful place! P.H.

28 April. P. & A.M., P.H. To see if the bang had removed the boulders in the aven. After digging out the bottom a careful ascent of 15ft, where it appears to close up.

(Apologies for inadvertently reversing these two entries - Ed.)

WATER CHAMBER DIG. P.H., R.S., C.B., M.I., J.S., Aubrey Newport, Pete Watts.

19 June. All except P.W. Started work in Graham Johnson's dig in left-hand wall above big boulder. Most of the time was spent moving digging kit from Butcombe Chamber and sitting up here. Looks a good site: 3ft square, with mud floor, dipping downhill.

3 July. A.N., J.S., M.I., C.B., P.H., Graham Johnson. Apart from the water, it's quite a nice dig. Lots of mud removed.

10 July. J.S., M.I., P.H., P.W. Lots more spoil removed and a small air-space over fill for about 4 feet. The passage is slowly dipping down and turning slightly left.

HENSLER'S DIG. Nigel Graham. 28 April: 3 hours., 29 June: shortened session due to hammer handle breaking and light failing.

NEW RENASCENCE. p. & A.M. 1 June: tidying up odd survey legs.

SHATTER POT DIG. Nigel Graham.

12 May. 1½ hours boulder-trundling and silt digging, with scintillating conversation with passing tourist party:

p.t. "Are yer diggin'?"

N.G. "Yes!"

p.t. "Oh!" (slight pause) "I've never seen a digger before!"

SHATTER SERIES / PASSCHENDAELE. Pete & Alison Moody, Geoff Newton, Julian Taylor.

24 May. P. & A.M. Took the two long ex-Watergate hoses from Shatter Pot to Passchendaele. Hopes of siphoning the Sump were thwarted when we found the water had dropped 8ft, making the job of priming 1" dia. pipe by lung power a little difficult.

23 June. P.M., G.N., J.T. Three suckers to Passchendaele but not enough suck between them to start siphon tube.

MUDDY SUMP. P.H., J.S., M.I., R.S.

13 May. P.H., J.S., M.I. Chiselled at previously-dug end choke. 2hrs.

JS

15 May. P.H., J.S., M.I., R.S. Dug at end, had mud fight. A small person can just see over the mud bank at far side: needs bang. 2hrs.

JS

25 May. Ian Jepson, Jo Beckett. Swildons Four, exit via Troubles, laying bang wire at Mr. Hann's "new" secret dig en route. 5½hrs.

I.J.

27 May. P.H., J.Bt.

2 June. P.H., P.M. To blow up the squeeze.

5 June. P.H., M.I., R.S., C.B., Steve Hall. Cleared bang debris and squeezed through. Dug 8ft forward in layered mud 18" high, 12" wide to constriction. Tight aven beyond.

THRUTCH TUBE. P. & A. M., Doug Mills, Simon -?

11 May. Doug and Simon via Blue Pencil with the digging boat, followed us to Nine (their first trip beyond Five). At Nine, Doug and Simon went back while we proceeded to Thrutch Tube to dig. Looks a really good prospect but there is a severe lack of stacking space. Most of the time was spent bagging up mud which had slumped in from the last session (last year!). Should go next time... P.M.

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28 April. RESERVOIR. P.H., P.W., Beth Yates. Up & down or down & up to the strains of Sibelius and whimpering males.

1 May. PINETREE POT. P.W., B.Y. Wessex v. Easy Street part II No contest

4 May. EASTWATER - WEST END. G.N., Bob Lewis, Martin Buckley, and Dave and Mike (S.V.C.C.). An ill-fated trip, aborted at S-bend as one of SVCC fell down 10ft drop when tatty ladder finally broke. Bob unable to risk the duck due to an ear infection, Martin's lamp was knackered. Met Mark - and Sean -

on way out, but SVCC wanted their ladders out so their trip aborted as well. G.N., Mark and Sean temporarily trapped by boulder rolled down into Greek Street.

4 May. DAREN CILAU. Rich Websell, Anne Lavender, Chris Milne. To the bitter end. Took some photos in Time Machine, assisting Westlake & co. 10hrs.

5 May. ROCK & FOUNTAIN CAVE. R.A.W., C.M. Quick trip to the 5th Choke. Not bad but now dwarfed by Daren.

27 April - 4 May. FRANCE: Dordogne. Paul & Val Weston by 750 Ducati to the Dordogne. Gouffre Padirac, Lascaux II, Pont de Gaume, Roffignac.

15 May. S. WALES. Paul Weston. Took 7 mentally-handicapped men, average age 40 years, to Llangattock for afternoon's caving. Very enjoyable and satisfying day's work - yes, I get-paid for it! P.W.

18 May. LONGWOOD. P.W., R.W., G.N., Martin Buckley, Julian Taylor, Dave Grieves, finished bolting up wall in Lower Streamway, started at Easter. The bolts get smaller, the boulders above get bigger, the jokes get worse. 5hrs.

24 May. CUCKOO CLEEVES. P.H., A.N., J.Bt. Down to the dig and out in time for the pub.

25 May. LITTLE NEATH RIVER CAVE. Kev Clarke, Mark Owen, Rob Jacob. Dived in through Bridge Cave using 1mm cable as line! Canal was flooded and Mark and Rob couldn't be bothered to do the bypass. Kev.

26 May. MONKTON FARLEIGH MINE / AMMO DUMP. M, S, E & J Hewins with Bob Scammell for conducted tour. 1½ hour trip in a most odd mixture of Bakerloo Line, old mine workings and industrial architecture. Bob says there's 80 acres of it, with miles of passages, all easy walking. The power-house has a huge engine, parts of the air-conditioning plant are just like Farnborough wind-tunnel. A trip full of VE Day nostalgia and well worth doing.

Just as we were coming out there was a power failure due to lightening (? : Bob had demonstrated the switch-gear to us!). Out in time for late lunch at The Swan, also recommended.

26 May. NINE BARROWS; AMANDA'S ALLEY dig. Jim & Mary Rands. Pulled out three more boulders, gained about 25ft to small chamber. More boulders to move.

25 May - 1 June. YORKSHIRE. Quite a number of members visited a good selection of caves; this set of entries will appear as a sort of mini-article, next issue. -Ed.

8 June. NINE BARROWS: AMANDA'S ALLEY. Tuska, Amanda, Duncan Frew. A poke-around and boulder-chucking session. Jim's dig looks mad: shift one rock and the rest will follow under their own steam.

9 June. LONGWOOD VALLEY SINK. Rich Whitcombe, N.G., Simon Meade-King. Deeper on down, in rift, a nice ledgy chimney broadening at bottom.

8 June. ST. CUTHBERT'S SWALLET. Brian Prewer, Ric & Pat Halliwell, Ron Bury (C.P.C.), Robin Gray, Andy Cave (B.E.C.). Down Pulpit, wandered round in ever-decreasing but deliberate circles, return via Wire Rift.

9 June. RHINO RIFT. Brian Prewer, Ric & Pat Halliwell. De-tackling behind Phil Romford, Nick Marachov et al. P.C.H.

21 June. BURRINGTON BARBEQUE (FRIDAY-NIGHTERS). They do say the 21st June is the longest day of the

year, but with all this rain and cloud about, I don't believe it! Anyway, Fred Felstead, Hannah and N.G. held a mini-barbeque (wood fire) in Goatchurch Main Entrance before braving dense smoke - we got lost in it for 20 minutes! - for a candlelit through-trip. Then joined the rest at a barbeque in Aveline's entrance. A fair bit of water draining off the road was sinking in the cave. N.G.

24 June. NINE BARROWS. Gave up digging Amanda's Alley - going to find a safer site. Jim Rands.

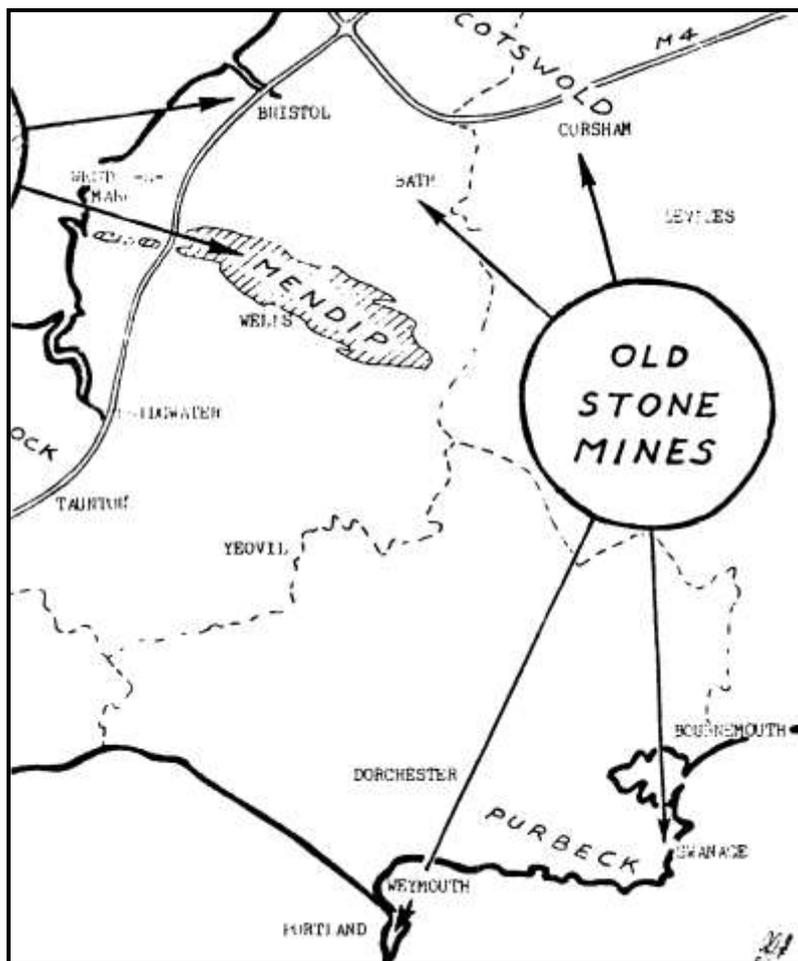
25 June. SWILDONS TWO, Jim Rands and Graham -? Hunting for dig sites, found two possible places. J.R.

26 June. GB. J.R., Graham - . Looked at side of Gorge to try to find something to pass Charterhouse boulder choke. Only one place looked possible, and someone is already digging there. J.R.  
(Would such a link be desirable or not? -Ed.)

14 June. DAREN CILAU. Kev. Gannon, Jim Moon. Digging trip with Arthur Millet and John Cooper (Chelsea), in boulder choke to by-pass the ladder pitches. Reached the pithes in less than 2hrs, then 5hrs. digging. Moved a lot of chunky boulders. Proved possibility of by-pass, stabilising choke while digging. 2hrs out, in time for the pub. Goatchurch won't be the same again!

(3 July. "Many thanks to W.C.C. for the use of the Hut and the hospitality." Sheffield Poly C.C., who logged Eastwater & Swildons trips.)

6 July. EASTWATER. A very pleasant day festering in the sun, interrupted by G.N. managing to get himself stuck in Primrose Pot squeeze. Oh well, thin men to the rescue. A Stanley-Knife, rope and lots of swearing managed to alleviate the situation. Divine retribution as reward for making us all go down King Pot on his 40th birthday - or a cunning ploy to get me down Eastwater again! Probably neither... Pete Watts.



POLITE COUGH TIME.

I've spent the last 11 years exploring the subterranean scene on Portland: I've just found out they're Mines, not Caves, notwithstanding articles in Wessex Cave Club Journal, Cave Science, etc.

According to the Rescue Council Conference literature, that is: that was the source of this map.

No, no offence intended: I was rather amused, and this is only a light hearted comment!

Incidentally, although Purbeck is part of the same structure as Portland - and it does contain very unstable old stone mines - no caves are known there, apart from the odd sea cave.

N.G.

(With apologies to M.R.O.)

# BACK PAGE

## UPPER PITTS WARDEN ROSTER

|      |    |              |      |     |                       |
|------|----|--------------|------|-----|-----------------------|
| AUG  | 2  | Kev Clarke   | SEPT | 13  | Bob Drake             |
|      | 9  | Brian Pitman |      | 20  | Nigel Graham          |
|      | 16 | Bob Lawder   |      | 27  | Glyn Bolt             |
|      | 23 | Jim Rands    | OCT  | 4   | Phil Hendy            |
|      | 30 | Mike D-York  |      | 11  | Fred Felstead         |
| SEPT | 6  | Pete Hann    |      | (18 | A.G.M. / Dinner w/e.) |

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## YORKSHIRE MEETS LIST

Saturday 28th SEPTEMBER

Death's Head Hole & Long Drop Cave

Sunday 29th SEPTEMBER

Rumbling Hole

Anyone interested, please contact Keith Sanderson in good time. S.A.E. to  
11 Pye Busk Close, High Bentham, via Lancaster. Tel. 0468 61862.

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## BCRA National Caving Conference 1985

U.M.I.S.T., Manchester. September 28/29

Conference Secretary: Keith Plumb.

Bookings Secretary: Dr. R.G. Picknett.  
28 Potters Way, Laverstock,  
Salisbury SP1 1PX.

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I'm by no means sure it's advisable to tell Mendip you're about to be married. Poor Chris, whose marriage was announced in the Club News in this edition, was manacled to a large lead ball on his stag night. He dragged it around the Wells pubs safely, but after returning to Upper Pitts, someone picked it up - and dropped it, accidentally. From what I hear (I was probably refilling my beer mug at the time!), Chris, instead of ensuring his feet were clear, tried to kick the descending sphere. It won. The groom limped up the aisle with a fractured toe, the following Saturday

N.G.

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## ANSWER TO LAST EDITION'S RIDDLE:

"SWILDON'S ROUND TRIP"

How? The equation  $y = \sqrt{r^2 - x^2}$  is the general equation for the Circle, of Radius R (hence the Clue).  
Sin 90 equals One.

Back to word-games. Three song titles inspired this:

"Neither Father, nor the. but an, ole man goes wild in the country".

An easy one this: name the cave. Give yourself a bonus point for naming the three songs!