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NEXT EDITION:      Cotswolds Karst      (A.M.Ward)  
                          Rescue (part 2)      (R. Kenney) etc.

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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 stated otherwise.

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## EDITORIAL

### AN OPINION ON OPINIONS

The title page of the Wessex Cave Club Journal carries a statement to the effect that opinions expressed within it are not necessarily held by the Editor or the Club. Indeed, I have occasionally published Editorial replies to Letters, strongly disagreeing with the contents of the letter. I have always held that one purpose of any club's journal, apart from its main one of reporting members' activities, publishing technical papers etc, is to act as a debating forum. In this, the editor has the same rights as any other member, a point not in dispute provided the editor treats opposing views fairly. The club's official opinions on possibly-contentious matters must also be expressed as accurately as possible, and stated as being so.

Recently one long-standing member voiced his concern over the stronger opinions I have published in some Editorials, pointing out that I have slipped up once or twice. On the last point, I have always tried to correct errors of fact in the next issue. Generally, these Editorials have been snapping at the heels of, in my view, over-enthusiastic empire-builders within caving. The last one, which brought the wry AGM comment that I had finally achieved a totally-incomprehensible Editorial, was in fact intended as set of stern questions.

The member concerned was anxious lest these comments were seen as official Wessex Cave Club policy on given matters. The simple answer is, NO. In some cases, I have reflected Club policy, in others I have stated I am putting forward widely-held opinions.

However, the over-riding point remains:

My Editorial gives MY PERSONAL OPINIONS (unless I state otherwise).

I accept the point made to me however: I'll try as far as possible to make it clear whose views they are: mine, other individuals, or the Club's.

Well, it looks as if the S.S.S.I. problem has been sorted out. I think I can speak for all in thanking all who have been beavering away to obtain sensible protection measures for the caves which allow the landowners to carry out their normal work on the fields above. I trust the lesson will have been learnt by the NCA etc.: one courts compartmented Governmental bureaucracies at one's peril. Including the Sports Council.

Christmas approacheth fast. Why are squeezes always smaller in January - perhaps they contract in the cold?? So, Seasonal Greetings and a Happy New Year to you all.

Good Caving...

... and that's official!

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### CLUB NEWS

#### UPPER PITTS PROGRESS

To date has revolved around the new changing room. The present oil-fired hot water system and the gas supply to the kitchen will be replaced, a bulk gas tank supplying the kitchen, and two boilers separately serving the heating and the hot-water supply.

The CLUB RULES have been modified to create two new forms of Joint Membership: Full Joint – 175% of the single subscription, each partner having a vote, one copy of the Journal per couple. Joint - as previously, paying 125% single sub. (These of course are not quotes: the full wording will be published with the AGM report etc., in the next Edition.).

The single subscription is now £16.00 (1986/7).

## CLUB AWARDS.

Frank Frost Award: This was not easy to judge this year, as there quite a number of very good articles on the Editor's "short"-list. However, the judges decided the 1986 winner was  
GEOFF NEWTON, for his highly original "Memories of the Gouffre Berger".

The Photographic Competition, judged by Luke Devenish, attracted a goodly number of entries. Winners were:

JOHN SCOTT (Monochrome print),  
PETE HANN (Colour print).

The Frank Frost award is an annual award for the Year's best Journal article. Entry is automatic: simply submit a highly readable, well-made paper within the scope of the Journal. Although past awards have generally been for articles on original exploration in various places, this is not an essential requirement.

## MEMBERSHIP RECORD

To assist Mike York, a membership / subscription is enclosed with this Journal. If you have not already done so, please complete the form (some were available at Upper Pitts) and return it to him, EVEN IF YOU HAVE PAID. The forms will be used for maintaining the membership list.

Bob Drake held members' list on computer: he has now erased it.

ST. VALENTINE'S W/E (Feb 13th '87)

The Club is intending a buffet/disco, with fancy dress (open theme).

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Pete Watts	c/o Upper Pitts until further notice.
A1 Keen	5 Redruth Close, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 2PA.
Jo Beckett	31 Diamond Place, Starbeck, Harrogate, North Yorkshire.
Nigel Gosden	Rock Cottage, Ingleton. (full address?)

## NEW MEMBERS,

The Club welcomes the following new members:-

Nicholas Joseph Williams. 23 Landin House, Momas Rd., Limehouse, London E14 7AN.  
Denyse Dawn Shorrocks. 371 Tildesley Rd., Putney, SW15 3BB.

...and Best Wishes to Denyse (nee Prince) & Gary Shorrocks on their Marriage.  
to Dave & Amanda Morrison, congratulations on the arrival of a son, James Edward.

## REGIONAL NOTES

### MENDIP

Really, there is just one Mendip Note. The caves are open again.

On 28th November 1986, the Moodys were asked by Mr. Main to inspect Swildons Hole Cavern for any boulder movements etc. After some difficulties with a corroded padlock - the "golden key" soon moved it - the cave was found to be clear for opening. The Moodys + Geoff Newton bailed their way round The Troubles, looking at Four en route; Malc, Leg, Dean, Nigel, "Parrot" (representing the Craven PC), Pete H., Jims Moon & Rands and Dunc had a celebratory splash down a nicely wet streamway to Two (well, all right, the Hon. Ed. didn't quite) and variously Vicarage, Long Dry Way, etc. (Prepared from the Log).

On the same day, our Army guests descended Hunters' Hole, and on the Sunday a couple of BEC members inspected the Eastwater entrance ruckle.

The Mendip Rescue Organisation celebrated its Golden Jubilee in September, in the very best Mendip style. The Cave Diving Group ran a sump rescue practice and demonstration at Wookey Hole, using the Kirby-Morgan kit. Over at Cheddar Gorge, 93 people took the opportunity of Abseiling the 380ft High Rock face. Well worth it too: a mind-blowing trip! The BEC Morris men entertained the crowds with an aerial dance, and the Wessex Dragon - resurrected after a brush with an incinerator (you'd think a dragon would know better) - flew down.

## **SOUTH WALES**

Attention has recently been focussed on Agen Allweld, with renewed exploration of Sump 4 heading towards the Daren Cilau upstream sump, and investigations by the BEC of possible leads towards D.C.'s Hard Rock series.

A warning from the East Dorset S.S. (via a letter in "Descent" 73): even taking valuables into Daren Cilau is no guarantee of security. Their team lost belongings left in an ammo can in the entrance crawls, which they considered a safer place than their car.

## **NORTH**

Penyghent Pot has yielded over half a mile of passage to ULSA: Friday the Thirteenth Series, found by traversing across Eyrie Pot into open crawls.

The same club have also made discoveries in White Scar Cave. (Ref. ULSA Rew.16).

A new cave in Kingsdale is CRAFTSMAN'S POT, near Bull Pot, dug into by DCC and NCC. Work continues.

## **PORTLAND**

Portland's major cave, Blacknor Hole, suddenly "grew" by some 500ft back in July. A quick ferret by Malc Foyle and the Hon Ed in the choke beyond the Ariel Passage - Via Aquae Sulis confluence yielded a bit of rift. Two weeks later, the local Venture Scout Unit passed a boulder nightmare over the rift to find the continuing abandoned streamway, mostly low but wide, with fine formations in places, ending by deepening into a circular chamber with a totally-choked floor. Work continues. This breakthrough has unfortunately been marred by deepening local rivalry, a badly-worded press release in "Descent" 73 causing some offence.

Over in the Grove cliff, the Editor's group extended Guano Rift to a narrow cross-rift. Before we had really looked at it, the VSU nipped in and pushed the cross rift into the neighbouring Flagpole Rift at the Letterbox Squeeze.

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### IT'S SUBSCRIPTION TIME AGAIN

Mike Dewdney-York

As you will be aware from your AGM Handbook, your Committee proposed a very modest Subscription increase (p11, prop.4). Unfortunately, since that Committee Meeting in late September, events beyond the Committee's control swept over us. Namely, the company who for the last few years have carried the Club's Third Party Public Liability Insurance, now no longer wish to do so under their old terms. Complications over the use of explosives while caving, seems to be their main reason, though as far as I can ascertain, there has never been a claim against an insurance company for damage caused by cavers using insurance, in this country.

By the time of the AGM only one firm quote had been received, and that raised our premium by nearly 500%. Some of this increase is the need to double our Public Liability to the sum of half-a-million pounds, plus a large amount to cover for the use of explosives for Speleological purposes: and as no doubt all are well aware, very little cave has been found without the use of Dr. Nobel's Magic Rock Remover.

I have seen in M.P.S. Annual Report, these rather frightening words, "The one million pound claim is just around the corner", so you can see the Club has little room for manoeuvre. Thus the Chairman was forced to move an amendment, in consultation with members of the Committee:

"That the Subscription be raised by a far higher sum than that proposed by the Committee".

After some discussion the amount for the Full Single Subscription was to be £16, and that the others will be costed as Proposal One (b) (c) (d) (e).

It may well be that next year, if we do manage to get a lower quote, the Subscription may well not need to be raised, but no firm commitment could be given, as the Insurance market is very volatile, and as you will only be too aware from your own insurance bills, they just go up and up. The above figure has come as a nasty shock to all of us, but I can assure you all that the AGM had the Club's best interest at heart when we voted for this increase.

Finally, could I ask you all to use the Subscription Reply Form and data form sent out with this Journal, even if you have already paid.

M. D-Y.

#### W.C.C. SUBSCRIPTIONS 1986 -1987.

Full Single		£16.00
Full Joint	(1 vote for each partner, 1 Journal copy)	£28.00
Joint	(1 vote per couple, 1 Journal copy)	£20.00
O.A.P. (Full)		£4.80
Affiliated		£4.00

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*Letter to the Editor*

Wells

M.R.O. Jubilee Celebrations.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks to all who took part and supported the weekend's activities. A big thank you too, to all Wessex members who helped to make the Village Hall party such a success, particularly for turning up on the Sunday to clear up.

You will be pleased to hear that a surplus of around £450 was raised for M.R.O.

(signed)

Jim Hanwell (Hon. Secretary & Treasurer, M.R.O.)

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#### **50 YEARS AGO**

From WCC Circulars 17, 18, 19 (October, November, December 1936):

The AGM of course was the main item. The Meeting and Dinner were held at Cliff Hotel, Cheddar: tickets cost 2/9 each, "NOT Evening Dress", it says, a little ambiguously?

In October, less than dozen (of over 100) members had contributed to the Lamb Leer Fund. An appeal for more was made. In November "No further donations are required".

An inter-club Committee was formed to set up a Rescue Organisation, similar to that set up a couple years beforehand in the North.

The British Speleological Association were providing information on cave and swallet streams, to a Governmental, national, Inland Water Survey.

The AGM Agenda "(10) Suggested publication of a Log".

# THE WATERGATE CONNECTION

Pete Moody

This is not the story of political skullduggery nor a report about discoveries made after long and intensive investigative work but is the disclosure of how two chance finds and inter-club co-operation led to the exposure of a very muddy underground area of Mendip. This is the chronicle of the Watergate Connection - a classic round trip in Swildon's Hole.

The story begins over a dozen years ago in February '73 when Greg Pickford and I were looking around at side passages in Swildon's 4. We both knew of the stream which cascades down a small climb into the final plunge pool before Cowsh Aven but neither of us had bothered to investigate its source. At the top of the two metre scramble a low arch led through into an inclined chamber; to the left, an eyehole back to the streamway, to the right, our stream bubbling up through a sandy choke. I well remember Greg remarking that once the stream had dried up only a few hours work would be required to get through. Greg emigrated to New Zealand that spring, a good move on his part for seven years of labour later the 4 Dig, or Watergate as it became known, had still not yielded.

Rich Gordon and I began the dig in April '73. We quickly established that the stream was not welling up from under the wall but was coming from a choked U tube of some depth. Over the first few years many of the Upper Pitts regulars (and some less than regular cavers) helped at the site. The digging season was short as the stream was active for most of the year and even in the height of summer any rain would cause the excavation to fill with water. Many a reluctant navvy was cajoled down to 4 only to discover their working site under three metres of water. The pit eventually bottomed out at five metres and a narrow rift, which required explosives to enter, was found. After four metres the rift ended and the way led upwards. Although open, the passage was very small and enthusiasm for Watergate waned away.

In 1979 Passchendaele was discovered, this series of passages beyond Shatter Chamber contains a stream which flows to the Inlet Sump in Swildon's 6 and derives its water from the swallets of Sludge Pit and Ninebarrows on North Hill. Several water tracing experiments were run to prove this connection and it was on one of the associated trips that the Watergate breakthrough came. On December 15th [20th] 1980 Brian Woodward and I were due to place detectors in 6 but water conditions were too high at Sump 5. On the way out, killing time, I thrutched up a climb just downstream from Blue Pencil and found that I was in virgin passage. That day we 'walked' into 120m. of new passage, including a small streamway - we had bypassed the 4 Dig.

The following week Alison and I were off to the Holloch in Switzerland and it was with some reluctance that we left Mendip with Brian itching to get back to the new discovery. However Christmas over-indulgence took its toll and the S.M.C.C. side of the Syndicate (that crack Shepton/Wessex digging team) could only muster one trip to Watergate before we returned. The first trip had ended at a sump, Brian with Mark Faulkner, Martin Webster and Pete Hiscock found that a small drainhole to the left enabled this to be broken. By the time an airspace had been established the water in the duck had been stirred to the consistency of thick vegetable soup, lights glowed dimly through films of mud and Mark's glasses had been dropped and trampled into the mire. Spectacle Duck had thwarted its first attackers. On 10th January Mark and Phil Dunk from the Shepton and Alison and I returned to the scene. Bailing at Spectacle soon opened the tiny airspace and a real nose scraper led into the unbelievable main Watergate streamway. Wallowing through the mud a long, narrow very aqueous duck opened out into a lofty passage with mud covered walls. Thirty metres from Spectacle a third, short duck brought us to a sump. The shallow gradient of the streamway spoiled attempts to dig a drainage channel - as we excavated the centre of the passage the mud banks at the side slumped in to fill it. On 31st [24th] January diving gear was carried in and a five metre sump passed to a short length of streamway and another sump, things were not going to be easy.

In March a side passage off the Sac Gang (named after that superb phreatic passage in the Holloch) yielded some more passage. By digging away the clay floor on a bend we were able to pass a tight squeeze into a

steeply ascending canyon. With what could only be a few metres to go to Paradise Regained the way divided and became too narrow. The chances of finding a new round trip appeared good if the other end of the passage could be located. Typically the break came when we were involved in something completely different. A couple of months after making the extension we were detackling Fault Chamber Aven after a visit to the Right Hand Aven Series. With me was Brian Woodward and Jane Ingram. Alison was off rooting about in boulders somewhere. I thought that she was just skiving but as the final ladder was being rolled Alison returned claiming to have found something interesting. She had been pulling rocks from a hole at the junction where the Fault Chamber route leaves that from Greasy Chimney to Blue Pencil. I could see a black space down there but Brian was sceptical and left for the surface with Jane. Five more minutes work were required and then Alison was worming off down open passage. A couple of body lengths in she had a rude shock when the way dropped vertically. Luckily we had kept the Fault Chamber tackle and 12m. of ladder saw us into a phreatic bore passage 2m x 3m. Upslope a climb led to a series of low choked crawls while down dip the passage buried itself in a mud choke. We may not have found the other end of our canyon but this looked a much better proposition. The Shepton were very enthusiastic about the dig and the project was sub-contracted out to them. Tony Jennings, Dave Cave-Ayland and others worked long and hard on Lower Fault Chamber. In true Shepton tradition a fine dam was built and an aerial ropeway was installed to take spoil away from the workface. In spite of the dam, water was always a problem at the dig, it seeped in from the right of the workface and had to be sealed off each time with a good plug of mud.

From our survey work we knew that the connection through to Lower Fault must be to the east of the Watergate streamway and yet we had seen no such passage in our exploration. Although it did not fit in with the plan we decided the link must be on the far side of the second sump. In July, Alison, Phil Dunk, Chris Milne and myself returned to Watergate intent on pushing further upstream. The first sump fell to our bailing within half an hour and leaving two behind to guard our retreat the other pair went through to tackle the next sump. We discovered however that on my dive I had overlooked a passage; a climb up a mudbank led to an eyehole through which a small chamber could be seen doubling back towards Lower Fault. The next month Mike Wise and I went to Watergate to bang the eyehole while Alison and Tony Jennings visited Lower Fault to check for an aural connection. The sound of our bailing was clearly heard and they thought the noise was coming from one of the higher passages. Fearing that the explosion might be a little too loud they retired to Paradise Regained and ten minutes later heard the sharp crack as the charge was detonated. We gave the fumes two weeks to clear and then went down again hopeful of making the connection; Mark Madden, Phil and I went to Watergate and a very large party went to Lower Fault. In the passage between the sumps we found a strong smell of bang but this did not unduly worry us as the smell is often held in mud long after danger has passed. The eyehole was now large enough to crawl through and we discovered a low gravel choked passage leading on. Shouting immediately produced a response from the Fault Chamber team, who, scrabbling about on their side of the dig, quickly uncovered the connection hidden behind that mud bung used to keep the water from the dig. Working from both ends we soon had visual contact and it appeared only a matter of minutes before the physical connection would be made. In Watergate we all wanted to be the first through but a spell of digging was remarkably tiring and each person would soon move aside for someone else to have a turn. In the excitement we almost failed to notice how quickly we were becoming exhausted and then through a daze we realized with horror that we were being poisoned by bang fumes. We were close to blacking out when we shouted the warning to the others and began a retreat. Unfortunately with both the dig into Lower Fault and the sump now open a draught was blowing the poisonous air out towards 4 - the way we had to go. It was all a bit desperate and a very relieved party eventually struggled down into the safety of the 4 Streamway. After that epic it was another two weeks before we tried again. Once more a strong party went to Lower Fault while Dave Walker, Alison and I went to attack the Watergate end. The air between the sumps was still not 100% but within an hour the connection was made. The Watergate team came out via Fault Chamber, there were no takers for going in the opposite direction. Within days of making the round trip the autumn rains set in, flooding the Fault Chamber dig and shortly after Watergate was carrying far too large a stream to make bailing the sump an easy affair.

The new connection was not the culmination of our efforts for in addition to offering an interesting round trip it also made the possibility of pushing upstream Watergate more feasible, we now had an easy route to

the terminal sump and no longer required a second party downstream keeping the first sump open. Before the next dry season we had to find a means of coping with the sumped dig in Lower Fault. It was impractical to further excavate the crawl in Watergate and the Shepton's dam had insufficient capacity to hold all the water from the dig. Our solution involved diving through the pool with one end of a hose and leaving it in the Watergate streamway while the other end was sealed in to the dam outflow. In Lower Fault you now bail the water to behind the dam where the excess is piped off through the dig and into the streamway on the far side.

The push upstream was made in May '83. Alison, Paul Morris and Chris Milne came in from 4 to open up the draught while Anne Lavander (now Milne), Phil and I took the easy way in and tackled the terminal sump. The sump was too choked to be passed by diving but a quick recce with a bottle showed it was shallow and should fall to bailing. In fact it took an age to break. The gradient on the far side is very slight and an enormous quantity of water (and mud) had to be shifted before an airspace was established. On the far side two cross rifts led off left into sumps while the way on was to the right where a duck under a low arch gained an ascending passage carrying a small stream, 30m. of crawling and a 2m. rift climb brought us to the inevitable sump. Two weeks later we tried the hose technique, piping water from the new sump through the lower one to save on bailing effort, unfortunately the pipe soon blocked. The next week, joined by Pete Seed from the Craven, we tried again with another hose. The new sump turned out to be badly choked and by the time it was bailed the second hose had also blocked. With the lower sump beginning to fill and the air in the new passage quickly becoming stale there was only time for a very quick look around Watergate IV. There was not much to see, a small round chamber was entered with a choked passage heading off southward and a tight flakey aven overhead from which showered a small stream. The Rotunda has now marked the end of the Watergate explorations for over three years. The inlet in the chamber is almost certainly the trickle seen sinking away under the left hand wall after Greasy Chimney. The Watergate streamway has been dye tested from the First Mud Sump, St. Pauls, so the main way on must lie elsewhere. Diving in the side of the second Watergate sump has failed to find any negotiable passage and the effort required to extend the series further may no longer be justified when considered against the limited potential remaining. Our attention has turned to an attempt to regain the passages found on the far side of the First Mud Sump by the Shepton in 1970. The sump is badly silted and the upstream dam capacity is not large enough to allow adequate time on the far side. We have been opening up a small passage in the St Paul's Oxbow which offers the possibility of a bypass. Progress has been slow and the project has not exactly had a high priority, one day though we will be through and then the completion of the Watergate Link should soon follow.

## The Survey

The work was spread over five trips during the course of exploration with most people mentioned having helped at one time or another. Sunto clinometers and calibrated compasses were used, read to the nearest degree, with Fibron tapes read to the nearest five centimetres. Passage cross sections were measured where appropriate. All the surveyed passages were to BCRA Grade 5 except between Spectacle and the first sump where conditions forced us to drop to Grade 3. The Rotunda and all beyond the second sump are Grade 1 only. A 5m. misclosure in the horizontal plane has been distributed evenly throughout the connection.

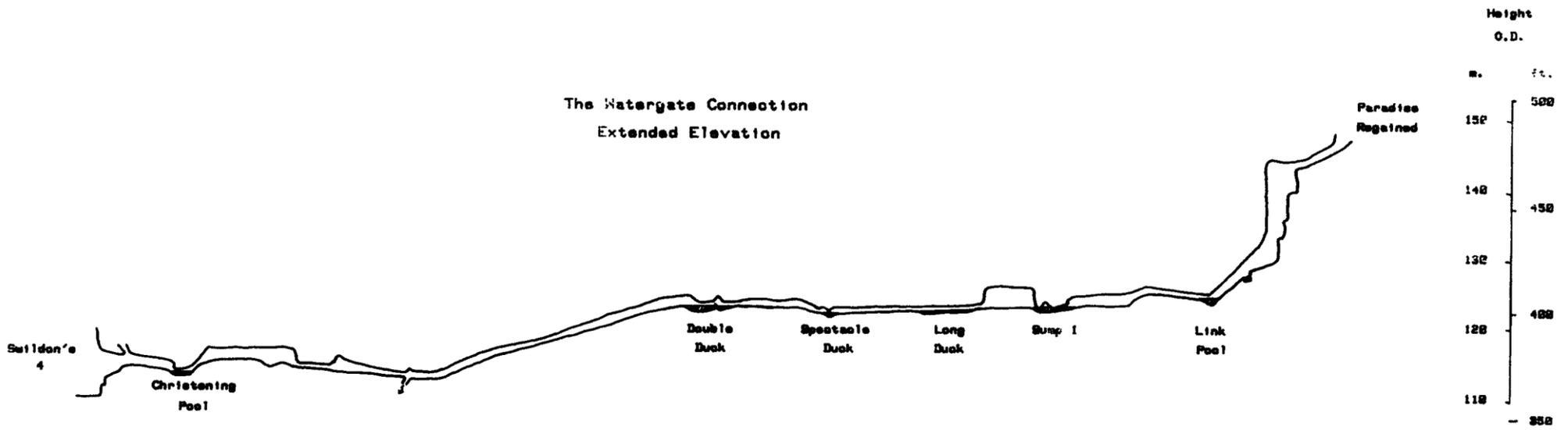
## The Trip

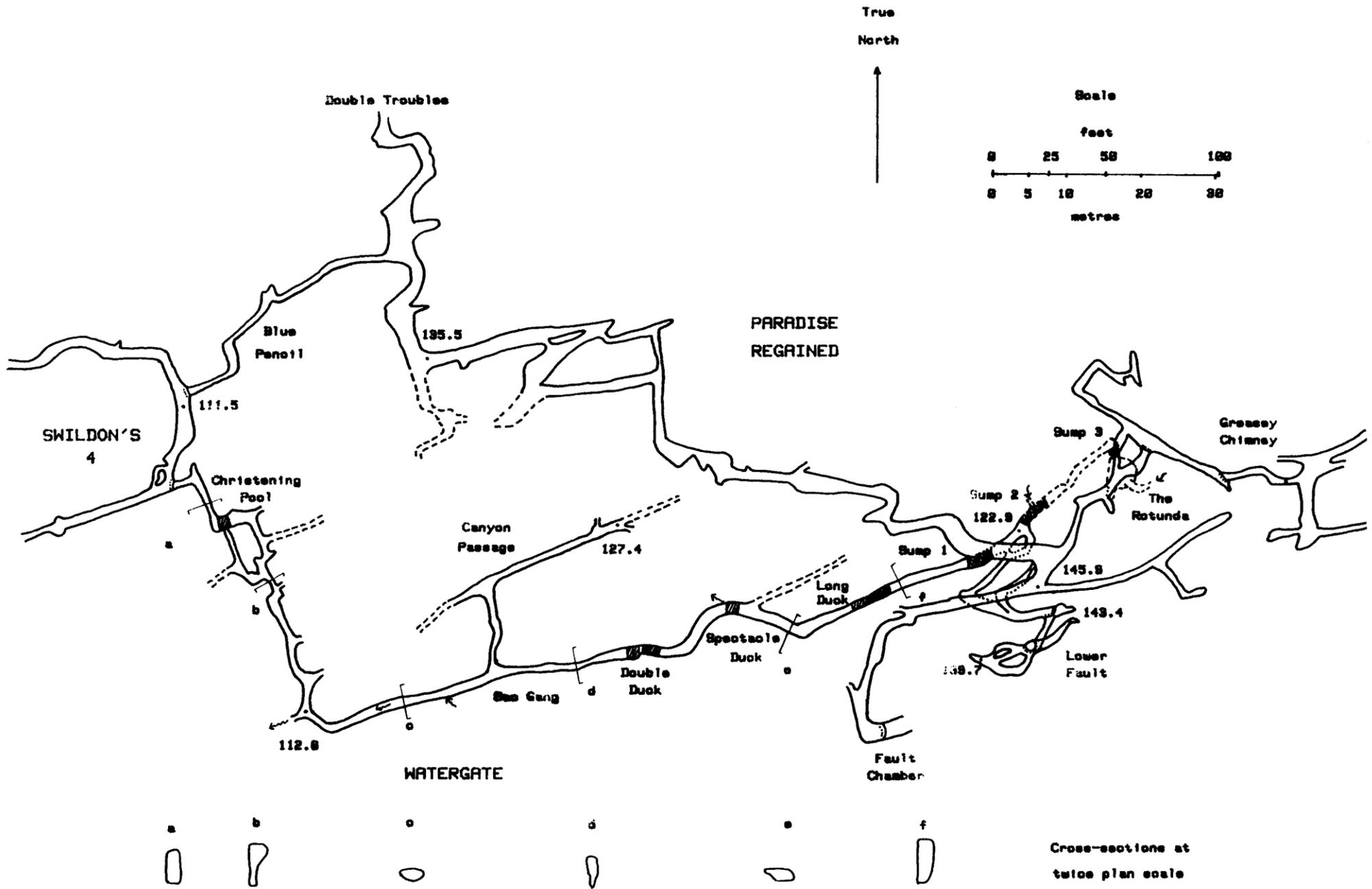
The climb into Watergate is 10m. downstream from Blue Pencil, where the stream turns sharp right into the long straight to the Tate Gallery. Scaled close into the rift the climb is not exposed but large cavers might find it a bit tight. At the top a more spacious cross rift leads down to the first duck, the Christening Pool. The way then is in a series of rifts, usually negotiated at roof level, until after 30m. a crawl brings one to the Watergate streamway. Downstream is hopelessly small while upstream the Sac Gang provides easy going. Approaching the junction with the route to Canyon Passage, the water is found to rise from a small hole in the floor. The dry passage continues straight ahead, climbing steeply up dip and becoming deeply incised until abruptly ending at the Double Duck which is split by a small roof pocket. Beyond, a wide passage

leads down to Spectacle. The drainhole is off to the left and care must be taken not to allow mud to go down into it. On the far side the passage to the left heading up towards Paradise Regained quickly chokes, you keep in the streamway. The Long Duck is next, it is narrow and liable to silting but once through only a short distance remains to the first sump. As mentioned earlier, this takes about half an hour to bail and provided that the drainhole for Spectacle is not blocked there is no danger of anything sumping behind you. The Watergate II streamway is only a few metres long and the dam for Sump 2 marks where the connection passage doubles back to the right. The final section of crawl into Lower Fault can still sump in wet weather and is very difficult to bail from the Watergate side. Passing that obstacle a scramble over the Shepton's dam brings you to the 12m rift climb up into P.R., a straight forward if somewhat strenuous finale to the new link. An experienced party would take about an hour to reach P.R. from 4 via Watergate assuming there was no trouble with the sump. It is a harder route than Blue Pencil but not especially difficult. I would not care to do it without a wetsuit and carbides could be a real problem in the wet and muddy conditions. A hood is strongly advised otherwise a visit to the doctors may be necessary to have your ears syringed out. A sense of humour is recommended and you should be on friendly terms with the other members of your party, you may be called upon to lick the mud from their eyes!

#### References

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J. Shepton Mallet Caving Club 7(3), 14-18.
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Richard Kenney

## INTRODUCTION

I don't think that there were any rescues in the 1940's, so to write anything at all on this subject I would have to stray somewhat outside the generic title "Caving In The '40s". I have found a gap in the records which the following notes should fill.

The article on the Mendip Rescue Organisation in WCC Jour. Vol. 16. p. 188 states that that organisation reformed in 1951; and that the first incident after that action was the Mendip contribution to the rescue of Bill Little and Lewis Railton from OFD in August 1951. The first Wardens' Meeting after that date was in 1953. Those statements are perfectly correct, but the reader may wonder why 1951 was the chosen year, and what factors led to this state of affairs.

This story attempts to present what happened after the War and tries to re-create the atmosphere of the years 1951 - 52 so that the start of M.R.O. can be examined in greater depth. I give sources of the material (and have passed copies of that material to the M.R.O. Secretary), so that any reader can follow the prevailing Press atmosphere, accuracy and patronising attitudes occasionally adopted.

The first post-War activity culminated in the printing of a list of Wardens and rescue teams, in 1946 or 47. Even that exercise was difficult, for the following reasons:-

1 Wardens had to be on the 'phone, a luxury to many in those days. At work their scarcity could lead to difficulties, and trunk, or non-local calls, were expensive.

"Cane I help you?"

"Trunks, please."

"Tis Tmple Meadsl, wos want?"

"Joe at Dr. Day's, North Junction Box."

"Caller your tame is up."

2 Then the priorities had to be assessed...

"Can't come - it's choir night."

- the wife's mother's cooking the dinner."

- it's our turn to take the flowers to the cemetary."

3 Out came the pushbike and a tour round might arouse the team, and then

4 -a visit to the Police.

"Please can you take us to a rescue?"

"What rescue?"

The list was up-dated as required, but the Wardens still tended to be mature, responsible cavers, a far cry from today's priority of "Doesn't matter who or what but are you good at emergencies?" Then, in 1951, came a succession of incidents that effectively transformed M.R.O. from a theoretical organisation into a group that set itself the task of constant practical learning and re-structuring. This process took some time to gestate, and the dates of the early meetings are on record as described in the reference at the head of this article. I could write a formal account of the first incident, but that would mean giving the game away at the start: I would have to tell you the result before the rescue began, so I will stick to a strict time sequence.

All of us involved had lessons to learn, and one can also spot mistakes that could have led to further trouble. However, nothing that follows must be taken as personal criticism, for the lessons were learnt, and those responsible for the early list eventually saw an appropriate structure take its rightful place in the caving

world.

The starting date was Easter Monday, March 26th. 1951.

The caving party were;

James Pembry, 23, of Bristol. Engineering student at London. Leader: quite a bit of previous Mendip caving. First visit to G.B. Cavern.

Derek Reynolds, 26, of Bristol. Draughtsman for a Bristol company.

Rosemary Reynolds, 21, (sister of Derek). Nurse at Weston General Hospital.

Norman Goodman, 23, of Taunton. Student, Reading University.

Mary Goodman, 16, (sister). Wierfield School, Taunton.

Previous experience: Goatchurch and Sidcot only, on Good Friday.

09-00 26-3

The approximate time that the party had their last food and drink before the trip. They reached Mendip by motorcycle and presumably requested permission to park their bikes at Lower Farm and to change in the hayloft, although one notes that some parties never asked permission and could enter a cave without being spotted by the farmer. All members had caving clothes: "dry grots" - doesn't that word look out of place for 1951?

14.00 26-3

Party entered G.B. The blockhouse did not exist then, and as often as not the entrance lock was vandalised. I cannot recall asking for a key in those days. Their lights were one hand-held torch, candles and matches carried in waterproof material. The party thought that the entrance was tight because they had to lie flat on their backs for the first 20ft. (At that time we often thought of doing a "reverse rescue" with Herbert Balch in the stretcher, to let him see the cave. This was always treated as serious proposition. The '68 Flood changed this spot a great deal.) They made normal progress to the Devil's Elbow, where a trickle of water was found. Then, there was a knotted rope ladder below the Elbow, later replaced with a knotted chain.

15.30 26-3

Party reached Main Chamber, in those days often called The Gorge. They lit flares to admire the view; these were probably home-made from magnesium as were those that I have seen. No mention is made of the main drop further down the chamber, and I suspect they did not venture that far.

16.00 26-3

The ETA of 18.00, decided amongst themselves before the trip, seemed to be well within their grasp, and they started their return journey intending to follow the same route. Prior to the '68 Flood it was quite a struggle getting into the old route from the Main Chamber. At its junction it was a narrow, inclined rift which widened at a level some 4 feet above the floor, and the constriction extended for about 10 feet. We take it for granted that with modern lights we can make a quick visual sweep of the Main Chamber and can quickly assess the water situation. However, with candles, one can only rely on the noise level, and being less perceptive through inexperience they made no mention of an awareness of changing conditions. They were also unaware that a strong flow in the stream passage meant that the Devil's Elbow would be flooded. This passage always carries a strong airflow when the stream is high, and even carbide lights can be affected. The party must have struggled hard to reach the ladder, and in the effort they dropped and lost the torch. Somehow they achieved their aim only to realise that the Elbow was impassable, and even access to the ladder was denied by the resulting waterfall.

16.30 26-3

A quick decision was made, that another route should be sought. None of the party was familiar with the cave survey, but they reasoned that an attempt should be made from the Main Chamber itself. They were now experiencing trouble with the candles, and one can imagine how first one would go out, be relit, would then be the lighter of the next, and so on. They descended as far as the largest pot between the Elbow and the

Main Chamber. This had also become impassable now, with their lighting, lack of a rope and general inexperience. Events now lose their clarity, but it seems that they attempted to regain the ladder chamber and look at the other water inlets for a new route. Derek fell three times in his efforts to climb, either from one of these inlets or from the largest pot, either with or without lights, fortunately without injury. They now found that matches are only waterproof if kept in a waterproof container. They also found that matches cannot stay alight in a draughty passage.

18.00 26-3

The last burning candle failed, then came the realisation that they would have to remain in that chamber until rescue came. In Derek's words, "The girls were wonderful about it all". They intuitively followed the emperor penguin technique - huddle together in a group, periodically changing from periphery to centre - varied by the wasteful human technique of jumping up and down and singing.

22.00 26-3

Frank Brooker, 25, of Brighton. Research engineer, lodging with Derek and Rosemary Reynolds. He knew that the party was on Mendip, but did not know the particular cave. He also knew that they intended to have a reasonable ETA, expecting them home in time to join him at a dance in the Vic Rooms. He eventually went alone to the dance, at 22.00

23-59 26-3

Frank returned home from the dance and found that the Reynolds parents were worried.

00.30 27-3

Frank set off from Clifton on his motorcycle, intending to locate his friends' motor-cycles and thus deduce the cave that they might have entered. After touring Burrington without success he decided to call the Police.

03.30 27-3

Frank rang Axbridge Police, requesting help to locate a party of overdue cavers.

04.00 27-3

Frank fell asleep in the telephone box. At 05.00, the Police rang Frank, waking him, and told him that they had everything ready. They had contacted Harry Stanbury, who was effectively in charge of M.R.O. at that date. Harry joined the Police party.

05.30 27-3

The Police collected Frank and began a new tour of Burrington area. Control was now in their hands as Frank was unaware of the locations of other Mendip caves. With Burrington still showing a blank the Police decided to try the Charterhouse area. From their point of view it was better to visit the farmers rather than the caves, so their next location was Lower Farm, Charterhouse.

06.30 27-3

Police called on Messrs. Young. If you think that Mendip farmers are reasonably alert to transport or clothing left on their properties, then it is only as a result of incidents like this one. The party's motor-cycles were found, and from prior conversation G.B. was recognised as the cave to search.

06.45 27-3

Wells Police Rescue Team put on standby. Leader, Ken Russell, CID, called back from a proposed trip to Plymouth. One assumes that the Police Rescue Teams, of that name, were more in the nature of Civil Defence teams then.

07.00 27-3

Police call at "Mendip Mansions", Colin Vowles' hut adjacent to the Lower Farm yard. "You are doing a rescue". The weather was dry but cold, with some snow under the hedges. The last few days had been very

wet, but not abnormally so for the Charterhouse area. In the traditional manner our dry grotts had been draped over the wall to dry, but were of course wringing wet. The Police made us walk to the cave. We did not spend any time having food or drinks.

08.00 27-3

Rescue party entered cave. Harry Stanbury remained at entrance to coordinate with the police. There was no water within sight of the entrance.

The rescue party were:-

Frank Brooker (previously described).

Colin Vowles, 24, of Wells. Wells Cathedral School contemporary of Howard Kenney. Dental student, Guys Hospital, London.

Charles Alexander Pitt-Steele ('Sandy'), 23, of Wanstead. Evacuee to East Horrington. Wells C.S. contemporary of R.R.K. Dental student, Guys Hospital.

Cpl R.R. Kenney, 22, of Wells. Royal Engineers Field Survey, Singapore.(on compassionate leave).

Our route was the new one, recently opened. At that time there was no drop beyond the squeeze, which was at a lower level, and wider. We headed down the Main Chamber as far as the drop, where I left the others and went over the Bridge to the Gallery. From here I turned left to the Hall and down the Oxbow meeting the others at its lower end. They had been down to the choke without success. Sandy now joined me, and Colin and Frank headed directly back towards Devil's Elbow. My route was back up the Oxbow, then via The Loop to Rumba Allay, White Passage and a return to The Gallery. Sandy and I headed up the new route to the surface.

08.45 27-3

Sandy and I reached the surface and reported to Harry Stanbury. Time for a quick smoke.

08.55 27-3

Re-entered the cave, this time taking the old route towards Devil's Elbow. Water level just a few inches: no problem. At this time we had no idea that there had been a flood pulse.

09.00 27-3

Trapped party found by Colin and Frank just below the Devil's Elbow. No injuries, and all capable of moving under their own steam after a few moments candle-lighting and jerks to loosen up a bit. As the new route was less tiring that's the way they went.

09.15 27-3

Sandy and I deduced that the party had been found and were now in front of us. We joined them halfway up the new route.

09.40 27-3

Everyone out of the cave. Colin and I suddenly realised that we were on our own, the police having found transport for everyone else. It was a distinctly cold walk back to Lower Farm.

10.00 27.3

The Youngs' hospitality was everything one would expect from them. There were people everywhere. Colin and I were busy trying to ensure that the Press had the right picture - us as well - and we had to make sure we were described as camping. 'Mendip Mansions' had no planning permission, and officially did not exist, neither did Colin possess a necessary permit to buy concrete building blocks (Austerity period). The whole structure contravened all building, drainage and other regulations. As far as I can remember, no M.R.O. teams were called out by Harry Stanbury, but I assume some people were put on alert. Howard, from Wells, definitely did not appear.

11.30 27-3

Colin and I at the Wells Journal Office: "Sit down, pick up your pen, write this, - and don't get it wrong".

Some notable quotes from the Press:

"It could happen to anybody" "It was not really dangerous" - Mary Goodman.

"I think that if we are going to tackle any more caves like this one, it would be better to make sure we have the right equipment, with helmets fixed with lights" - Derek Reynolds.

"I wish that they would seal up the caves. I can't see that this kind of thing serves any useful purpose" - I. Pembry (father of James Pembry).

"The girls behaved marvellously, singing and telling stories. They never faltered once". - Bristol Evening Post.

Harry Stanbury replied in a letter to Bristol Evening Post, that if the caves should be filled in, then why not start by filling Avon Gorge and the docks. He pointed out the existence of caving clubs and the general safety practiced by cavers who were properly introduced to the sport. He signed his letter: Warden, Mendip Rescue Organisation; Member, Bristol Exploration Club, Wessex Cave Club, South Wales Caving Club, Cave Diving Group.

Howard wrote a long letter in the same vein, to the Wells Journal, concerning training and equipment. He pointed out how inconvenient it was for the rescuers. He signed as: Secretary, Mendip Nature Research Committee of the Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society. Nowadays we might write and say "Silly B's", but then all correspondents were anxious to show that caving could be respectable and safe.

Before passing on to other events in 1951 let's finish the G.B. story.

UBSS were distinctly huffy about the whole thing. They were nominally in charge of the cave, but entry via a posted key from Bristol, providing the students were resident during their short terms, was always difficult. Sometimes unknown writers would get no response at all. Keys were often kept, locks were broken, and the grating hidden on occasions.

Axbridge Rural District Council, in the absence of a well-written and costed report, still clung to the concept of a commercial cave, and were always keen conservationists. Like ourselves today they had little idea of how to achieve their aim other than by banning entry for a few months to gain thinking time. UBSS appealed and were once again given special status, this exchange of pleasantries being reported in the local press. (I can't resist a plug for the BEC and their remarkable success in St. Cuthberts.)

Both Axbridge RDC and Bristol Waterworks were uncertain about their insurance liabilities, and the whole history and development of Charterhouse Permits stem from this incident.

I played no further role, for within a few weeks I was back in Singapore and became a non-caver again.

Caving and potholing were now in a state of rapid growth, and articles on these subjects were now acceptable to the general reader in the topical magazines which preceded TV.

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In the second part of this paper, the Press coverage of other caving and climbing incidents, and of caving generally, will be summarised by headline and reference. (Next edition).

## SPELEOLOGICAL H.E.

Graham Balcombe

Should anyone now or later be compiling a history of the use of explosives in cave exploration, he might be interested in the following tit-bits which I have culled from my personal records while doing a bit of tidying up. They come mostly from the file on Sump One phase of the Swildon's Hole exploration.<sup>1</sup>

Please do not think I am claiming any pioneership (except possibly for use in Yorkshire caves): I was introduced to bang by "Digger" Harris of M.N.R.C., and we were not the only ones on Mendip, e.g., Hywel Murrell's work at Cow Hole.

The first bang in these Swildon's records was on 22/23-1-34, at the rock-face above the pool by "orthodox" method, i.e. by drilling a shothole for the charge. This was a complete failure; the location did not permit a good swing of the hammer, and the eventual small shot of Abelite had no effect. Timewise, it was equally inefficient, 37 hours down under for no gain.

The next attempt was by contact charge under the archway of the sump and is variously described as 10, 10½ and 11lb of Gelignite. Ten-and-a-half is presumably the correct amount as it was so described by the maker of the bomb, Jack Sheppard, in an undated note to an office colleague, "10½lb Gelignite compressed into ½-gal. tin, and supported on structure of bamboo canes. Alarm clock exploder set to go off in two hours time" - i.e. we got out of the cave first! The canes were rigged to press the charge against the underside of the arch. The record gives the date as 10-3-34<sup>2</sup> The explosion (naughtily at 1a.m.) caused appreciable disturbance at the surface but relatively little effect down below, restricted to cracking the arch but leading to the parting off next day of a large mass, separately (but probably very inaccurately) estimated by Balcombe and Sheppard as 20 tons. The fall was unexpected and provided some moments of tense anxiety. A second charge, similarly placed, of 3½lb Abelite plus 4oz Gelignite (all we had) had no effect. Even the sound at 300ft higher up the passage was not appreciable, though the air wave was.

On 18-3-34 a 9lb Gelignite charge was shot off under the arch with no effect (at the surface excluded!) apart from a fine crack on the carin side of the passage, and of course the usual disturbance of loose stuff and water. Next, an 11lb Gelignite charge was fired from a raft against the sump roof, bringing down another large mass but from the crack on the cairn side, with no effect on the sump roof. The addendum (7-9-35) to the report recorded that some months afterwards Jumbo Baker (M.N.R.C.) and his party at the Double Pots heard a great crash, and it later transpired (5-5-35<sup>3</sup>) that a huge jammed block had fallen from the roof and obliterated the blasting party's "dining room". We thought it looked rather insecure at the time of blasting, but we must have had our fingers crossed or something.

Thus blasting had failed. The Sump was later passed by Sheppard in his diving gear - the historic moment was on 4th October 1936.

About the same time, explosives were used in small quantities at Waldegrave Swallet, for cracking boulders too big to be lifted by the ½-ton hoisting tackle available. A report dated 4-2-35 to Wessex and other clubs records "Explosives, 6½lb". At least some, probably all, of the explosive was Ammonal from M.N.R.C. stocks<sup>4</sup>, so that might give the researcher another lead. The last shot at Waldegrave was bigger than usual, but the only record is an undated note with no mention of the size of the charge; the occasion is suggested by cryptic diary entries<sup>5</sup> to have been about 8-12-35.

Again about the same time (Easter 1935<sup>6</sup>), some Gelignite was taken to Yorkshire where up until then it seemed not to have been used for caving. A small demonstration shot (surface contact for boulder-breaking) was fired for the Northern Cavern & Fell Club, then a bigger shot was used to re-open Rough Pot, a major tributary (now blocked by Dame Nature) to Lost John's. This shot was probably 5lb, but no record of it survives. A negative of the blast should be somewhere in the NCFC archives, failing which a copy might be made from a rather unsatisfactory print in my album.

The last use of explosives I can remember was a ½lb shot placed underwater at the resurgence of OFD on 20-4-46. That it failed to unlock the secrets of OFD is a matter of history. What it did do, apart from its intended purpose of removing an obstructing rock pinnacle, was to cause a slide of debris down below with a corresponding disturbance in the choked swallow-hole at the surface. I suppose, though, it was caving milestone - the first cave shot laid by a diver, unless there be earlier claimants.<sup>7,8</sup>

The researcher must seek elsewhere for the rest of the story.

#### References.

- 1 Manila file in archives of F.G. Balcombe, to be offered as a bequest to the BCRA.
- 2 Report to M.N.R.C., dated 21-3-34, with revisions at 18-1-35, 7-9-35.
- 3 Visit by Tricouni Mountaneering Club, led by Baker (M.N.R.C.).
- 4 Report to M.N.R.C., W.C.C. and another, 13-2-35.
- 5 & 6 "Schoolgirl's Diary", 1935. F.G. Balcombe.
- 7 Diver's Notebooks, No.D12. F.G. Balcombe. Destined as Note 1.
- 8 Diver's Logsheet.

Postscript. Re. Ref. 4:

Incidentally, that report acknowledged the "untiring assistance" by W.C.C. "Untiring" was hardly the right word, we were regularly flaked out! I distinctly recollect that, on one occasion while driving home, I fell asleep and woke up with the front wheels almost in a village duckpond.

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"FROM THE LOG" Continued from p22.

1st November. OFD II to I. Ric Halliwell, Jan (??Ed.) Kaye, Gordon Kaye + (CPC). At least some Wessex know the OFD I - II connection! (I'm sorry, Ric, I couldn't make -your writing out -Ed.)

8th Nov. GB D.F., J.R., Denise & Gary, Mark & Allen Nunn. Very wet. Waterfall quite impressive.

4th November. LONGWOOD. Tav + Dean. Superb tourist trip. Pretty wet. con

12 & 16th. GOON'S HOLE. P.M., G.N. Very wet. Inspected Waldegrave Swallet & Wheel Pit, former much collapsed, latter very choked.

15/16th November. M.F., D.F., Rich Websell, P.H., N.G. OFD II to Maypole Inlet with Pete Dobson (Westminster). Loop round into Salubrious. Hon Ed in a cautious frame of mind, so (returned via Gnome P.). Supposed to do CRAIG-a- FFYNNON on Sunday with Arthur Millet. Aborted trip: floods. So to pub. -D.F. Also in OFD II (separately) were Dean, Tav & 2.

16th November. LIONEL'S HOLE. Dean + Tav. Took a few pictures.

23rd November. ROCKET DROP. P & A.M. First trip to RD for over a year. Air in lower chamber still suspect. Depression showing signs of collapse: holes opening up around concrete pipe, few lumps of cement broken off & fallen to bottom.

23rd November. GREBE SWALLET. P.H., Tony Jarrett, Mac. Pleasant stroll to refresh my memory. J-Rat & Mac impressed with the miers' work & artefacts that make the place unique on Mendip. -P.H.

22nd November. HERMIT'S CAVE (Tetbury, Gloucester). Andy Ward's 4th solo trip this month, digging sand/clay fill (draughting), 7x6ft, cave now 80+ft long.

## THE DALES

The Yorkshire Dales have been the venue for a good number of Wessex trips this year, encouraged perhaps by the closure since May of some of Mendip's main caves. Log Book accounts of tourist trips do not date too quickly, so it was decided to collate them into an echo of the "Dales Diary".

28th March - 31st March 1986

Prospecting. Geoff Newton and Trevor Faulkner. On North slopes of WILD BOAR FELL. CHRISTY GILL SINK looks a good prospect; Also removed boulders from a stream sink about ¼ mile North near the same gill to reveal a cave passage. A couple of hours engineering enabled G.N. to slide down feet first. The passage proved smaller than it looked so he was unable to turn round to see if it really was too tight to proceed further than the 10ft or so gained.

PIPIKIN POT. G.N., T.F., Alan Marshall. A good old-fashioned wetsuit and ladder trip to Gour Hall and Lower Streamway, then returning to Pip. ent.

BRUNTSCAR CAVE. G.N., A.MI. The guidebook describes it as a "fine cave". This is a dirty lie! It's a grubby grovel and infinitely boring. Avoid like the plague, and don't be tempted by the prospect of changing in the barn next to the entrance.

LANCASTER HOLE. G.N., Andy Summerskill, John Redding. SRT trip to foot of 80' pitch in EPC Series. A fine trip. The navigation is interesting. -G.N.

5th - 6th May

MARBLE STEPS. Jo Beckett, Andy Bland, Pete Watts. Andy's first trip underground. A little bit of ladder and a lot of string. As far as the 90', but dead trees and foam cut short the adventure. Spent a lot of time squirting about in some little bits while waiting for Malc Foyle and Jeff Price to come down. Got fed up so went back up, de-rigging as we went. Passed Malc and Jeff halfway so handed over tackle and exited into rain (just for a change).

ALUM POT. J.B.t, A.B., P.W., Beth Yates, Nigel Graham. The easy way: Upper Long Chum and Dolly Tubs, the leader alleviating mass dissent at the ladder by threatening physical violence. -P.W.

24th - 26th May

Area invaded by Mendip: SMCC, Cerberus, BEC ... CPC Cottage invaded by WCC and MEG. M.F., P.W., N.G., Pete Hann, Duncan Frew, Dean Nute, Rob Tavener. Jill + Tim (MEG). Various caving and walking: P.W. completed an ambition, the Three Peaks Walk. Rain stopped a lot of play but 1st 5 named trotted down through SIMPSON'S POT, using a variety of strange abseiling techniques. SWINSTO POT too wet so went white water paddling to Rowten sumps then waterfall climb to Slit Pot area. Very sporting, much enjoyed. Walked up to G.G. (BPC Winch Meet), then over Ingleborough and back to Horton.

-N.G., D.F.

12th June

BLACK SHIVER POT with the BEC "Lads" and NCC "Not So Sures", yes we really went underground, with poxed rope-walking kit (Another thing I'm not so sure about). All this training is possibly improving my hangover recovery time but nothing else. -D.F.

M.F., P.W., D.F. & N.G. returned on 24th of August for "an early Berger practice frolic in Kingsdale ... Pete tested the ballistics of handled jammers but his aim was well off", hitting the pitch bottom rather than Dunc's head. Sump briefly visited without rope. After Bull Pot, Dunc rigged JINGLING POT for Malc and Pete, who found "a 2-dimensional kermit" at the bottom, and N.G. wombled through JINGLING - ROWTEN CAVES,(remembering latter meets side of Rowten Pot, somewhere...). -D.F., N.G.

25th August.

GAPING GHYLL: Wessex Takeover Bid for the Craven Winch Meet.

Maggie McPherson, M.F., P.W., D.F., Jo Beckett, Andy Bland, N.G. Down Bar Pot, rigging for SRT, some used the CPC ladders. Andy woke everyone up playing panto fairies on the 120ft. A minor altercation with another group (of members from two clubs: I cannot name them here - but we know who they were.-Ed.). I won't say "cave clubs" because in way can I condone their actions.

(N.G. went to Main Chamber, photographing the winching - the camera failed! - and lending a hand mending the CPC dig railway. -N.G.)

Rest through New Henslers to the Master Cave, searching for the source of an echo by the sump. Visited the Blowhole and Echo Rift. To Main Chamber via Mud Henslers, Mud Hall to Main Chamber. M.M. & D.F. went out via Bar, rest went up winch.

At Bar, the rope was found badly clogged up aftermath of the above-mentioned party. Maggie exploded (her rope). Dune pratted around ensuring the lifeline was returned properly then de-rigged the SRT hang. An unpleasant welcome awaited at the top. TWO of the FOUR BELAYS WERE IN FREEFALL MODE, (i.e 1 Y-hang, and 1 traverse line, bolt, undone.) This could not conceivably be accidental in the circumstances. The names of the suspects were gleaned from the Winch Log. Their bollocks will, be duly nailed to the wall: homicidal bastards will not be tolerated.

Still, we survived to get into the beer tent. The Craven were most hospitable - well, half those present were Wessex members! Staggering down the hill at 3am was a good way to finish off a "memorable" trip!

-Duncan Frew.

(It is just possible, but highly improbable, that a third club (sic) were involved: I left the others at a too-tight bit so was back at the pitch a few minutes later. The suspects were all still there, when some others, possibly friends at least, appeared and asked about the rope. They were told by one already prusiking, the owner had let them use it "provided we don't make it muddy". I did not catch the reply as I was already on my way, but it seemed to amuse the others. This was late in the afternoon though, so whichever group they were, it was not too difficult to produce a list of likely names. The mixed bunch were from one Yorkshire and one Hampshire -based clubs.

-N.G.)

4th - 5th October.

P. ("Gold Top") W. and M. ("Prong") F. ride again, + Tav, Dean, The Fielders, Zippy and Kermit. The Wessex "Adopt-A-Parrot Weekend".

IREBY FELL CAVERN was descended on string rigged parrot fashion (21 bolts for 4 pitches). Kermit went swimming.

ALUM MAIN SHAFT (low side), again rigged Parrot-fashion (No bolts). He found the rope too short and it had no knot in the end (WHO packed it last at Split Rock?). Malc was the only one to find a stream running as he prusiked out.

(...the onus should be on the one tackling... -P.W., rope owner.)

PIPIKIN - TOP SINK Exchange. Motley collection of Craven / Wessex geriatrics ... (sorry, I can't quite make the rest out -Ed.). Top Sink party: Keith Sanderson, Swanny (BICC), Maggie McM., Gary -, Steve Gough, N. Thompson. Pip party: Trevor Faulkner, G.N., Ric & Pat Halliwell, Paul Norman. 9½ hours.

-G.N.

5-10-86. M.McP., Steve Pickersgill had evening trip to Link Pot to recover gear from previous day's abysmal attempts at tying knots!!

18th -26th October

M.F., Tav, Dean, The Fielders, Parrot, Kev -. BAR POT: Tav and Dean had not ventured in before. Had good look around: Mud Hall, Sand Caverns, Stream Passage. Main Shaft very impressive: it's not often you see a vertical sump from below. On the way out, Parrot had to rescue a right plonker from about 80ft up the big pitch.

TATHAM WIFE HOLE: great little cave. Just like being on Mendip again. Pitches are all short and nice and wet.

23-10-86. Joined by Hon. Ed. CHERRY TREE HOLE. Third trip in three days! A bit off the beaten track but a great little cave,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long.

Couple of days prospecting somewhere Parrot knows. Moved a thumping great boulder round in circles, found a sink or two. Roz found a rift.

SIMPSONS POT K.M.C. Last trip of the week. Everybody had a good trip, including one member of the party who "must have got fatter since last time I was here", at Slit Pot.

8th November.

HURNEL MOSS POT. Keith, Roz, Malc, Leg (Andy Summerskill), Shanks. Went up a bloody great mountain again to look at Stream Passage Pot, but it was full of people. So went to Hurnel Moss Pot: two 100+ft pitches, superb shafts and a great traverse to the top of the first pitch.

## FROM THE LOG

### **Charterhouse Cave**

30th November '86. P.H., Julie Bolt, N.G. Back to playing with the boulders after a long rest. Boulders getting bigger and cleaner, looking a better site. PH

### **Drunkard's Hole**

30th August. G.N. The war of attrition continues. The dig should should shortly become a 2-man one ... well, in a month or two's time.

13th September. G.N. Offending rock buttress now small enough to permit GN to squeeze past and drop about 4ft to loose boulder floor. Too constricted to dig however: small recruits necessary. Good draught. Return difficult.

1st November. G.N. Managed to enlarge it sufficiently to go in head first and shift a few rocks. One will need breaking up for further progress. Reversing the passage was a bit worrying. Cave wetter than usual - almost a stream. -G.N.

### **Pierre's Pot**

24th, 25th, 29th, October + 2nd November. P & A. M., D.F., G.N., Andy Sparrow Tom Chapman, (variously). Exhausted stacking space in immediate area, so introduced the "Warren Method" - paint cans on rope. Using this technique, good progress is again being achieved, although digging has to be suspended occasionally for cementing. Dig very draughty and stream clearly audible. -P.M.

12th Nov. Same crew + Pete Watts. Digging revealed a narrow slot, through which the way on looks more open.

18th November. P & A. M., A.S. Successfully opened narrow slot. Alison got into "openish" passage below. Way back underneath the ruckle looks horrific, in the other direction the water sounds very close but a fair amount of digging is required.

22nd November. 2M. + A1 Taylor. Big cementing trip to secure the new bit.

Flange Swallet very wet, excellent draught being pulled through into Pseudo's. Had good look, at the way on: I think it may be more long term than first impressions gave. Some pretty horrendous boulders dangling in the roof.

29th November. 2M. Cementing and stempling. -P.M.

### **Portland**

8th October. N.G., Phil Strong &co. Rift-spotting in recent quarries. Not much there.

22nd October. N.G., Phil Strong, Martin Crocker. Looked at dig sites at North end of SANDY HOLE, (hoped-for link to Blacknor Hole). Two rifts intersect the passage, but choked. 2nd (more N) one the more

likely. Scared ourselves silly with raining boulders so went to extremity of passage; very low, clay-filled bedding. Draughting, but looks very long-term, or even hopeless. Retreated to explore the pub: rocks were still rolling down the rift as we passed by it!

7th November. "GROVE DIG". N.G., P.S., M.C. New dig, started by Phil & Martin. Three hours rapid progress in loam/clay/sand fill. Interesting site. Returned:

12th, 26th November. Same 3. Going to have to call this cave something! On entering for 26/11 session, found mattock missing: our (very!) "oppo", Mike Read has had tools nicked from his dig under Westcliff. Kids? Or a shadowy bunch of dig pirates?? We're in a phreatic tube ca. 4ft wide x 3' 6" high. Pity there's no air space. -N.G.

### Warren Farm Swallet

11th October. 2M. (Quicker than "P & A. M."). Checked the low, calcited bedding plane at the end. The bang had opened it out, and a fair amount of rubbish was shifted. Way on almost totally choked, and further calcite bands will need more bang. Before leaving, proved that the high-level strike passage leads only to the Aven Dig.

8th November. 2M. Rather than attack the high-level calcited bedding, tried the bedding encountered just after breaking out of the sump area. Although choked with claggy mud it looks a better bet; quite big once you get the mud out, a bit of a draught.

9th November. 2M., Kermit, Ian Pearson, Tony Boycott. While I put in a charge at the end, Alison gave Kermit & Tony a quick tour of the lower bedding. Ian is unfortunately a little too large for the corkscrew squeeze. Tony is helping Bruce Levitan with the bone survey.

15th November. 2M., Jim Rands. No draught, water in pools, stream in Grille Chamber, sump closing off route to end. Great! -P.M.

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23rd August. GOATCHURCH. M., J. & E. Hewins. 1½ hr family trip.

SIDCOT, PIERRE'S/PSEUDO JN'S. Jim & Mary Rands, Nick Dunmur, Denise Prince, Gary Shorrocks. Good afternoon's fun.

GB. Same 4 + Fred & Hannah Felstead. 3hrs.

22nd August. GB N.G., Pete Ryder (Moldywarps SG).

25th August. GB P.H., Sandra Mackenzie. Cave very dry compared to foul weather outside. Hands-in-pockets stroll to entrance made pleasant change to last 3 weeks of 4+ hr walks with packs in the Norwegian mountains.

26th August. CHARTERHOUSE. N.G., Pete & Elaine Ryder. Late evening tour.

30th August THRUPE LANE SWALLET. Doug Adams, M.F., D.F. A good trip to take our minds off the bad smash we found at Green Ore.

6/7th September. TWEEN TWINS DIG. J. & M.R., M.F., D.F. Two hours digging (24 buckets) before going to pub then to:

OTTER HOLE. J.R., M.F., D.F., D.A., Bob Pike, Jeff Price, Jim Moon. In at 5.40pm. Everything about the trip was unbelievable: the stal., the really quality mud, the noise the sump made and the speed at which it drops, not getting lost, no lamp failures (just moderate body failure). J.M. took lots of "piccies". Out at 2.45am. At Aust Services by 4am, bedraggled and knackered, Jeff had to be at work at 6! The rest slept it off: Grandad is just a bit stiff this morning! Had visited Straw Chamber and Coral Passage.

7th September. GB search. 3rd trip in 36hrs for M.F., D.F., J.R. With Bob Drake and Pete Watts to find gormless overdue party. Met them 20ft in. They cheerfully donated their key deposit to MRO.

RODS POT / GOATCHURCH. F. & H. F. Hannah was most peeved to find exit from beyond drainpipe entailed crawling back through it. 3hrs.

SPLIT ROCK. SRT practice: Malc, Dunc, Pete W., Jim.

30th August. POSTJAMA. Dewdney-York family. Eat your heart out, English show-caves. 200-seat train, ¼ hr ride in, bail out at huge, well-decorated station. Head for huge rock pile with English and Yugo signs. Smartly-dressed guide leads off into wilderness of stal, over bridges, through passage measureless, back to another railway station for exit ride, 1hr 30min trip.

14th September. TWEEN TWINS. D.F., G.N., N.G. A few bucketfuls shifted.

20/21st September. B.C.R.A. CONFERENCE, Manchester (U.M.I.S.T.). The Wessex and most of Mendip in great force (BEC, MNRC etc etc). Lectures normal mix of brilliance and boredom. Upheld the best traditions: got well and truly rat-arsed and leapt about a lot at the evening bun-fight. A certain BEC member was seen unable to reach the bottom of his pint pot - he even gave it away to the Wessex! -P.W.  
14 WCC members attended.

11/12th October. PANT MAWR POT & L.N.R.C. P.W., P.H., M.F., D.F., M.McM., Gary -; P.H., photographing, complained loudly when one of his models ran away to the sump without permission. LNRC very dry. -P.W.

12th October. DAN-yr-OGOF. The Fielders + leader. V. enjoyable. Far North.

18th October. GOATCHURCH. Carl Pickstone +4 taking No.2 son Charles on his first caving trip. Very pleasant after many years absence from Mendip u/g.

19th October. Graham' secret dig everyone knows about (WELSH'S GREEN SINK). Graham Johnson, P.H. (secret mason), John Scott (Col. Gadaffi), Hon. Ed. After-Dinner trip, using the chariot/rickshaw to ferry cement etc across fields

20th/24th October. Devil's Bridge area, N. Wales. The Hendys, Colin & Claire Williams, Brian & Sheila, Tina, Rachael Pitman - and the dog, Sally. Looking at mines and local hostelrys. Four adits located, all very wet due to spoil in entrances. Incline level at Goginan investigated to c.100ft - very steep. Survey shows approx another 200ft, all flooded. Mining museum at Llynwemog highly recommended.

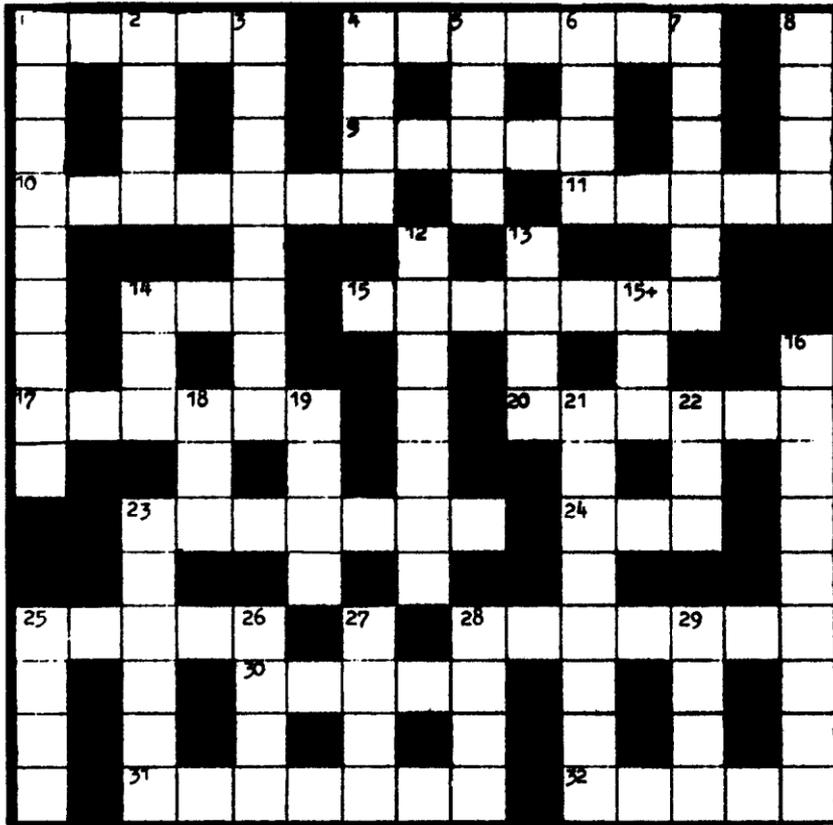
25/30th October. Nasty rumour of "southern Contingent" visiting Yorkshire, so Maggie McM., Steve Pickersgill, Gary Smith (CPC) arranged an exchange trip. A famous speleotigers' (I think that's what it says -Ed.) watering hole, walking on the Mieries, climbing at Split Rock with Kermit, exploring Bristol in the rain, and a GB trip with CPC members Pete Rose, Russel Mfyers, Mike Scratcher.

12 & 26th October. GOON'S HOLE. P & A.M. A really disgusting dig, water collects in it as floor is deepened. Digging flat out in 6" muddy slurry. P.M.

25/26th October. DAREN CILAU. Clive Gardener, Sarah - , John -, (his 1st Daren trip), G.N. Aim, a dig at end of passage near lower end Bonsai Streamway. En route, loud roar heard beneath boulders at Red River series with White Passage Spent an hour or two attempting to dig into supposed inlet passage. Eventually "reached" original objective. Gained by a climb manged only by Steve Holmes, when Time Machine first found, and aware of difficulty of getting out with a broken leg, we turned instead to an un-named passage in area found by Rob Parker and Tony White. Running parallel with Hard Rock Cafe series, towards Aggy, but some 300m North, it changed from easy crawl to incredibly tortuous rift, provisionally named "Echo Snake". John & Sarah retired to Bonsai, C.G. & G.N. managed Grade "2½ survey, Clive having reached bitter end where it pinches out. 300 - 500 metres of masochism. Disturbed party pirating kitchen and sleeping gear (apparently), at Hard Rock Cafe, at 3am. Found Sarah and John asleep at the Bonsai (they were last seen looking for water). Exit on side beam after 22½ hrs. Were we 1½ or 2½ hours overdue? The clocks went back during the trip. -G.N.

Continued p 17

# PRIZE CROSSWORD No3



This year's Christmas Crossword has been designed by its compiler to be slightly easier, sort of DC rather than VDC.

The Prize will be a W.H.SMITH'S GIFT TOKEN, for £5.

Winner will be first all-correct solution opened on Monday, January 12th 1987.

Entries (you may list the answers on a separate sheet, or photocopy this page) to The EDITOR (home address, as in front page).

Usual Competition Rules apply.

## ACROSS

- 1 Dance company? (5)
- 4 Morphological mollusc. (7)
- 9 Of sole importance. (5)
- 10 Illuminant for a lay-by. (7)
- 11 E.g. the Chariot Race. (5)
- 14 Heartfelt call across the Channel. (3)
- 15 Circular letter in stone. (7)
- 17 Establish the fabric of a society. (6)
- 20 Of home and country. (6)
- 23 Staff writer going into wild becomes political (7)
- 24 And only. (3)
- 25 Possessiveness in Iolanthe should be crystal clear. (5)
- 28 Cave joining the Pennine Chain. (4,3)
- 30 Record prefix. (5)
- 31 Extended place of worship gives support. (7)
- 32 As in snowy pipes? (5)

## DOWN

- 1 Not for the upwardly-mobile caver? (9)
  - 2 Old injury in the Dales. (4)
- Hotel "15+\*" has no special significance! it is simply a correction for a mis-placed number.

- 3 Diggers' principle. (8)
- 4 Interesting position! (4)
- 5 Feature inverted in France is altered in church. (4)
- 6 On rock, helped early navigators. (4)
- 7 Confused seraph in, e.g., home of Wise Woman. (6)
- 8 A watery tale unfolded, (4)
- 12 Pivotal media. (7)
- 13 To sorrow in an arboretum? (4)
- 14 Three over three gives the key. (1,1,1)
- 15+That of the Wessex, a misnomer. (3)
- 16 Elicit the decorative answer. (9)
- 18 Many a caver's real food?? (3)
- 19 Seek one's fellows in the gloom, (4)
- 21 Demonstrate the latter in the former. (4,3)
- 22 The best of digging tools! (3)
- 23 Imperfections even in high places. (6)
- 25 May leave 2 down, (4)
- 26 Ratio for an adder? (4)
- 27 Ascending animals may become brave. (4)
- 28 Keeps the archer busy. (4)
- 29 Either way up, a 1 down is involved, (4)

## BACK PAGE

No Upper Pitts Warden Rota as yet:  
Duncan Frew is Hut Warden,  
WITH a Rota arrangement.

From a Reuters report, in Dorset Evening Echo 5/12/86:

### YARIMBURGAZ CAVE (Turkey)

Yarimburgaz Cave, near Istanbul, which has been used as a mushroom farm and as a science-fiction film set, has revealed one of the oldest settlements known outside Africa.

The cave has been known since the 1890s for its Byzantine-Roman structures and for undated wall paintings of two boats. It was also noted for evidence of Chalcolithic era (>7000 years B.P.) pottery-using culture, and it was this that inspired a recovery excavation.

Led by Mehmet Ozdogan, an expert on the Chalcolithic era, Istanbul University archaeologists discovered much earlier bones, ashes and tools beneath the Chalcolithic material.

At least one million years old, the settlement is considered major evidence for the existence and movement of early man outside Africa. Work continues.

RIDDLE. The poetic (?) Riddle in the last edition had a price on it: the Editor offered a £1 cash prize for the first correct entry opened the morning after the Club Dinner. There were no entries!

The full solution follows, with the riddle itself as explanation.

No Riddle this time, as this edition contains a Prize Crossword. (And the Hon. Ed. hasn't yet had chance to invent some-new ones...)

Of Carrara I sing,	where dark water flows,	
* MARBLE (Showers,)	OGOF FFYNNON DDU, ie Black Spring Cave	
And Slavic ways.	Of rural ribbons and bows,	
* (Cwmdwr) JAMA	MAYPOLE (inlet etc	
And Celtic lands where the planetary dog		
* (S)WALES	PLUTO ('S)--	
Doth swim while shrimps shoal in hidden pools, silent		
* --BATH	NIPHARGUS (Niche)	HUSH SUMP
Below cloudless, moonless, sunless, firmament.		
* STARLIGHT -----	CHAMBER.	