

THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

VOLUME 20 (NUMBER 221) JUNE 1989

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Next Issue:

Caving in New Guinea

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**Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor
or of the Wessex Cave Club as a whole unless expressly stated as being so.**

Officers and Committee of the Wessex Cave Club. 1988/89

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Club Notes

Correction and apology: - Members may have noticed that the name of Mike Dewdney-York was published as Librarian in Journal 219. This occurred as a result of an unfortunate bungle in communications. For the record, Pete Moody has stood down as librarian due to pressure of work, but Alison continues the task herself. I have written to Mike to convey the committee's regrets for any annoyance, inconvenience or embarrassment caused, but wish also to express these apologies in the journal for the information of any confused members.

Jim Moon, Chairbody.

Hut Keys are at long last available again. They can be obtained from Jim Moon in return for a £5.00 deposit (address at the front of the Journal)

Concern has been expressed over the distribution of **lockers** at Upper Pitts. There are currently many more active members after storage facilities at the Hut than there are lockers to accommodate them. With that in mind, the Committee recently decided to make space for the long term storage of gear available elsewhere in the Hut, and to ask members who are not making regular use of their lockers to empty them for other members as of the end of this Club year (October). More lockers are to be provided when other work on the hut permits the locker room to be further improved. In the meanwhile, please would anyone wanting regular use of a locker at Upper Pitts contact Aubrey so that he can compile a waiting list and get some idea of the demand.

In Committee

Matters discussed at the 395th meeting of the Wessex Cave Club, held at Upper Pitts on Sunday 5th March 1989 included:

Treasurer's report: The current account is very healthy, and Brian has put most regular bills on standing orders.

Tackle: We currently have: 41 25ft Ladders, 3 15ft ladders, 3 30ft ladders, 2 'Swildon's Ladders', 5 lengths of lifeline plus a complete new drum, 12 spreaders and 21 tethers. We have enough materials (apart from wire) to make a further 750ft of ladder, and it was agreed that we should buy 200 metres of Superbraidline lifeline (cost about £270.00).

Sales: A new batch of boots has arrived.

Politics: The CSCC has come out against commercial caving interests.

Matters discussed at the 396th meeting of the Committee held at Upper Pitts on 23 April 1989 included:

Upper Pitts: The Ladies Dorm. is to be fitted with a fire-escape window. A ventilation fan is to be fitted in the new changing room to prevent steam from the showers getting into the rest of the Hut. Rat poison has been put down to try and control the rats which are known to be in the hut. **Tackle:** 750ft of new ladder is to be made by July. A battery powered hammer drill is to be purchased for the drilling of shotholes. It will be available for loan to members.

Caving Secretary's Report: New keys for Cuckoo Cleaves and Singing River Mine have been received.

Wessex People

The Wessex would like to extend a warm welcome to the following **new members:**

Tim Benfield

Alison Hutchings

Mark Helmore.

Change of address: Murray Knapp has moved to: Edford Cottage, Edford Green, Holcombe, Nr Bath. Telephone No. 0761 233069

Change of address: Nick Williams (i.e. editor of this illustrious organ) has moved to the Frome area: "At the time of writing I still do not have a fixed address, but mail will still get to me if it is sent to my old address in London. My day-time telephone number is now 0373 64311 xt 243. I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has a one or two bedroom property, with plenty of space for caving junk and the like, for rent in the West Frome/East Mendip area."

Congratulations to Ros and Keith, who now have a family. **Janine Rosella Fielder** weighed in at 9lb on 12 May.

Congratulations also to **Jackie and Roger Dors** who celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on 6 June by having an open house session at the Hunters. Those that went reported that a good time was had by all, although I do not think a great deal of work was achieved the next day!

Caving Notes

The **U.B.S.S.** have sent details of their meetings for the coming year, and invite any Wessex Members who would like to attend to go along. Meetings are held between 8.00pm and about 9.30pm in the University of Bristol Student's Union (2nd Floor), Queen's Road, Bristol, on the following Wednesday evenings.

1 November 1989 Chris Howes:	"The History of Cave Photography"
6 December 1989 Dick Willis:	"Caving in Australasia"
14 February 1989 Mark Lumley:	"The Black Holes of Mexico"
9 May 1990 Chris Richards:	"Recent research into Calamine mining and some by-ways in Cave Archaeology in Western Mendip."

This year's **British Cave Rescue Council Conference** is being hosted by the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association, and will be held in Grassington from 7th to 9th July (Friday to Sunday). Sessions include talks on relevant aspects of mine shafts, the Molephone and "plastic surgery" on boulders. Contact for further details and bookings: Dave Nelson, Amber Cottage, Kettlewell, North Yorks (Tel. Kettlewell 887).

Geoff Newton has written to invite other Wessex members to join him caving in **Agen Allwedd** and **Daren Cilau**:

"I carry out regular trips into the caves to dig in, among other places, Summertime, Maytime, Gothic and Aven series in 'Aggy', and the various passages in Daren between the pitches and the Terminal Sump.

"Wessex Members interested in joining a trip into any of these areas are welcome to contact me. The price of a trip is a couple of hours digging or hauling."

Geoff may be contacted on 03727 26405 (Home), or 0737 765070 (Work).

Also from Wales, Jeff Horlock writes to tell us that he and Linda Byrne have recently acquired a pub, and are looking forward to seeing a few familiar faces from the Wessex when they are in the area. Jeff continues: "We can offer limited accommodation at present but there are plans to provide more beds. There is ample room for tents and meals are available now, if anyone wishes to visit would they please ring in advance regarding numbers and accommodation required."

Jeff also offers to help find local accommodation if they have nothing available, and says that lamp hire

and charging facilities are also available.

Jeff and Linda may be contacted at the Black Mountain Inn, Mountain Road, Upper Brynamman, Dyfed. (Tel. 0269 823455).

The entrance to **Singing River Mine** is reported to be very loose, and care is required when entering and leaving the cave.

Recent discoveries in the Mendip area include work in **Welsh's Green** (Kangaroo Swallet) where the Welsh's Mining Consortium entered 300ft of "interesting" low passage, mostly full of mud. We await the survey with interest. (This is now thought to be the longest cave in the country in Blue Lias Limestone.)

The breakthrough point in **Drunkard's Hole** is a little more stable after Zippy, Alison H. and Murray had a gardening session, though no further work has been done to extend the cave.

Further details of the trips to both these caves can be found in "From the Log" which returns to the Journal this issue.

On Thursday 1 June, Wessex members assisting the MCG in digging **Upper Flood** came out to find themselves pulled in to assist a major rescue from the **Black Hole** in Swildon's. The victim was brought out at six am on Friday and taken to Bath Hospital. He was released a few days later after treatment for bruising and a broken wrist - remarkably little damage after a fall of 40 feet.

From the Log

(This is an extended edition of extracts from the Upper Pitts Log Book to compensate for the lack of news in the last two Journals.)

New Year's Day, 1989:

"Geoff N, Thrupe Lane Swallet: Spent an interesting time poking around Bypass Passage and Vengeance Passage area. Various 'windows' out onto the aven above Atlas Pot. The area is a lot more complicated than the guide book leads one to expect. At one stage carried out a five foot dig into what looked like virgin passage. In fact it was a chamber with a climb back down into Bypass Passage. Am now a fully paid up member of the Oxbow Caving Club."

"Pierre's - Pete: Return to the Way On (the high-level downstream continuation). The boulder blocking the rift was juggled around, but it only jammed across the rift lower down so blew it up."

2 January 1989:

"Pierre's - Pete: returned to yesterday's scene of action - 10ft of sharp nasty rift terminating in loose boulders. Also checked dug tube further on. The roof at the end had fallen in to reveal small bedding passage above, way on solidly choked, the sump now appears to offer the only chance for progressing downstream."

14 January 1989:

"Manor Farm Swallet. Nick Pollard, John Watson (BEC) Lawrence Smith (BEC). A trip to John's dig at the end of NHASA gallery. Managed to move the obstructing boulder with a scaffold bar held at arm's length. We gained access to a standing height chamber amongst more hanging deaths." (sic!)

15 January 1989:

"Charterhouse. Pete Hann, Paul Lambert & Nigel Graham gravel grovelling. Decent quantity of good gravel found in Main Chamber and taken to the head of the dig."

21 January 1989:

"Pierre's Pot. Nick Pollard, Alison Moody. A 3 hour trip drawing the passage shapes onto the line survey. Very enjoyable, over half the cave now drawn up properly.

29 January 1989:

"Swildon's Hole. Nick Pollard, Murray Knapp. An enjoyable trip to sump 6 for Nick and Murray through 6 to the start of 7 then straight back. In 5 we both noticed breathing was difficult especially just before sump 5. On the way out we

bumped into a rescue, some lad with a broken leg about 1 minute inside the entrance. Sump V yuk.”

1 February 1989:

“Cuckoo. Aubrey and Murray. Return (holding breath) to investigate the worryingly little bang, but thankfully it had all gone off and done a fair amount of damage. Hasty escape, the air now decidedly thin.”

4 February 1989:

“Peak Cavern. Malc Foyle diving Treasury Sump with John Cordingly & Co. Sherpa-ing by Pete Hann and Nigel Graham, and a BEC group coincidentally visiting the cave. Then went touring the rest of the cave. Enjoyable look around in low water. Fine main streamway. Full of intriguing digging gear and lots of pipe discharging powerful jets from a bedding plane!”

7 February 1989:

“Cuckoo. Pete Bolt, Aubrey, Max and Murray. Chisel, Chisel, photo, photo, BAANNG.”

8 February 1989:

“Allotment Dig (Portland). Nigel G., Phil, Martin. Started laying dig railway Mk 2 (Mk 1 ripped out by vandals).”

19 February 1989:

“Ashwick High Rising. I managed to get to the slot where we were digging, vis. poor, current very high. Ended up being spat out. Murray.”

23 February 1989:

“Cuckoo; Aubrey, Pete, Max, Alison H & Murray. Removed quite a lot of spoil, then let of 1lb of Pollard killing gas!”

4 March 1989:

“Eastwater. Keith Savory, Tav, Murray Knapp, Alison, Nick Pollard. Had a furlge with crowbar in the boulder choked arch below Dolphin chimney. Several boulders were moved to gain a better look, prospects crap. We climbed into small passage above bottom of chimney and Alison forced squeeze into 15’ of virgin rift, and after a struggle was joined by Nick (the others are too fat). Prospects nil. Also found a possible dig in the vicinity of chimney, worth a go but don’t hold much prospects.”

4 March 1989:

“Jim’s 50th birthday barrels topped off by a Zot-O-Gram. Yoh!”

11 March 1989:

“Eastwater - Tav. To open up a hole below the choke just to the side of the head of Dolphin Chimney. Led to a tiny aven - hopeless. Smoke test courtesy of Benson and Hedges proved a connection with choke about 20ft up. This area is interesting as a strong draught disappears up into the choke and it is also a regular bat route.”

Easter Bank-Holiday Weekend:

24 March 1989 (Friday):

“Robin Brown, Murray Knapp, Malc. Foyle: Ogof Capel. First trip for Malc and Murray. The water was quite high and cold as ever, but we made it past the sumps.”

Ric and Pat Halliwell, Steve Pickersgill, and Andy Elliot (CPC) into OFDII for a good wander round without going anywhere near the main stream.”

25 March 1989 (Saturday):

“OFD: Nigle (sic) Tav, Murray, Alison, Nick, Malc, Jumbo (WSG). We found the stream high enough to be interesting”

“A similar trip to the previous day, but with Bob and Barbara Jenkins (CPC) instead of Andy Elliot, and Gary and Maggie. Steve and Bob spent a lot of time photographing.”

26 March 1989 (Sunday):

“Little Neath: Jeff, Babs, Murray, Alison, Malc, Nigel. Malc and Murray dived in via Bridge. Found the River cave to be particularly sporting.”

“Cwm Pwll-Y-Rhyd - White Lady, Malc & Murray. We eventually found the right hole and had a good dive.”

“Ric, Steve P, Andy Elliot & BB Jenkins did an OFD I to II trip. The choke at the OFD I fell in a few weeks ago, and there is much debate as to whether or not the choke is safe. The only difference I could was a large boulder dangling from the roof near the beginning, and some scratch marks on the boulders.”

27 March 1989 (Monday):

“Silica Mines. Murray and Malc. More bloody diving. Is this a record for Foyle: 4 days away, 3 caving trips and 4 dives.”

“OFD I: Ric, Pat, Steve and Barbara Jenkins into I.”

Jan - March 1989:

“Jean Pot. Ric Halliwell and Paul Norman plus a few others have been busy digging Jean Pot on the Allotment. This is now 800ft long and 350ft deep and going strong with a good draught. It should hit the G.G. system in Far East (or Car Pot) in the not too distant future.”

2 April 1989:

“Swildon’s - St Paul’s. Pete and Alison M. Mud Sump still sumped, drainhole must be taking water slowly as not much water this side of dam. Stuffed 1/2 kg of plaster into the lower hole in a shit-or-bust attempt to blow it open. Where is everyone? Pleasant Sunday afternoon & we were the only people in the cave.”

1 April 1989:

“Jeff, Babs, & Stuart Line (?): Burrington Ham Top Dig. 20 minutes work clearing depression into 15’ of cave. Not mine. Someone’s looked at this before but cannot find out who? Cave going down at 45° to two boulders blocking. These will be removed next weekend. Passage about 2’ high. Entrance filled in again when we left to stop tourists messing around.”

8 April 1989:

“Pete & Alison - Swildon’s St-Paul’s: Visit to the Mud Sump to clear away the bang debris. Picked up three willing helpers from the upper part of Barnes Loop where they were climbing about in the roof looking for Trat’s. Moved an enormous amount of shattered calcite and after two hours work uncovered the drainhole. Bailed the water from the mud sump and it took all we could throw at it without backing up. Yoh!”

9 April 1989:

“Jeff, Babs and Stuart: Burrington Ham Top Dig. Continued to dig out boulders after last weeks trip. Broke into a small chamber after another 10’. Looks like it could have been mined but not completely sure. Mud choke not worth digging won’t go back again. Joined later by Murray and Alison. Filled depression back in again.”

12 April 1989:

“Allotment Dig. N.G. + usual 2. Latest in a long series of sessions trying to clear large boulder. We can’t pop it, and it’s all chert: sledgehammers bounce off it and it blunts chisels. Try fire-setting next!”

16 April 1989:

“Palmer’s Dig. The Moodys, t’other Alison, Murray, Nigel. Cleared lots of goo so PM could go in with the magic linctus to make lots more. Got very muddy in, very cold out.”

19 April 1989:

“Cuckoo. Aubrey, Max, Alison H & Murray. A late start, so raced down to see what the last bang had done. Not much spoil to clear as the last bang had a good job and made gravel. Another 7/8 lb laid in normal manner and fired from a long way away.”

“Allotment Dig. Martin & Nigel & Phil. Fire-setting the boulder. Lit fire, then, while it burned, wobbled along to other caves nearby. Back to the dig: just as the fire burned out. 5 gallons of water onto rock had very little effect. Bashed hell out of boulder for half an hour and then went to pub.”

23 April 1989:

“Drunkard’s Hole, GN, MK. Digging silted tube. Cleared it out and pushed into narrow vertical rift with gravel roof. Looks as though it might take a while to get through.”

13 May 1989:

“Eastwater - Beechen Series. GN. Round 2 to the boulder. Chemicals will be necessary. Still hopeful of useful extension.”

20 May 1989:

“Eastwater, Dark Cars - PM, AM, Nick P. Tav – back into Dark Cars to try and pump the sump. Found said sump to be much diminished. In fact it was too low to pump. (Before it was too high to pump.) Prospects look a bit grim. Looks like it will dry out if the fine weather continues.”

24 May 1989:

“A Portland evening. Nigel Graham & Martin Crocker visited the site of new (?) rift located by Phil and Martin the previous week. It may be the previously lost P155, found, buried then “re-found” by quarrying.”

27 May 1989:

“Welsh’s Green. Nick Pollard, Tav, Mark, Nick & Graham Johnson (BEC). Cave now 800ft. New stuff quite impressive but exceedingly muddy. Dug the end for an hour the exited to glorious sunshine.”

3 June 1989:

“Juniper Gulf: Ric and Pat Halliwell, Dave Hoggarth, Steve Pickersgill, Bert - ?, Maggie McPherson, Nigel Graham. All to the sump in very low water. Excellent trip.”

trip to see how the cave is coming on. Pollard’s description “Exceedingly Muddy” is an understatement (how would he describe the Sahara - large chamber with sandy floor!!). Could this possibly be another entrance to Fester Hole.”

6 June 1989:

“Welsh’s Green. Paul Lambert. Quick

Cenotaph Aven Continued

Geoff Newton

The survey proved a bit of a surprise: most people expected Cenotaph to be heading for Regent Street. Both passages are tall, rifted, mature passages with a lot of flow-stone. However, Regent Street apparently runs above Greek Street. Cenotaph is much further west, heading perhaps towards Eastwater Farm. However, the interesting thing is the powerful draught and the presence of Bat Droppings and dead flies in the furthest reaches of Cenotaph. Apart from North Hill which ends in a silt/gravel choke, Eastwater is the only known open entrance in the vicinity. The bats and dead flies must have come in through a network of passages which have yet to be found or passed by humans. Blackwall Tunnel is not a bat route having only been open a short time and being often sumped in the bat season. The other alternatives such as St. Cuthberts or Swildons are attractive ideas as a backdoor entrance to Eastwater, but perhaps in the realms of Fantasy.

Editorial Note:

There were a couple of omissions from the article in Journal 220. To set the record straight, the following should be noted:

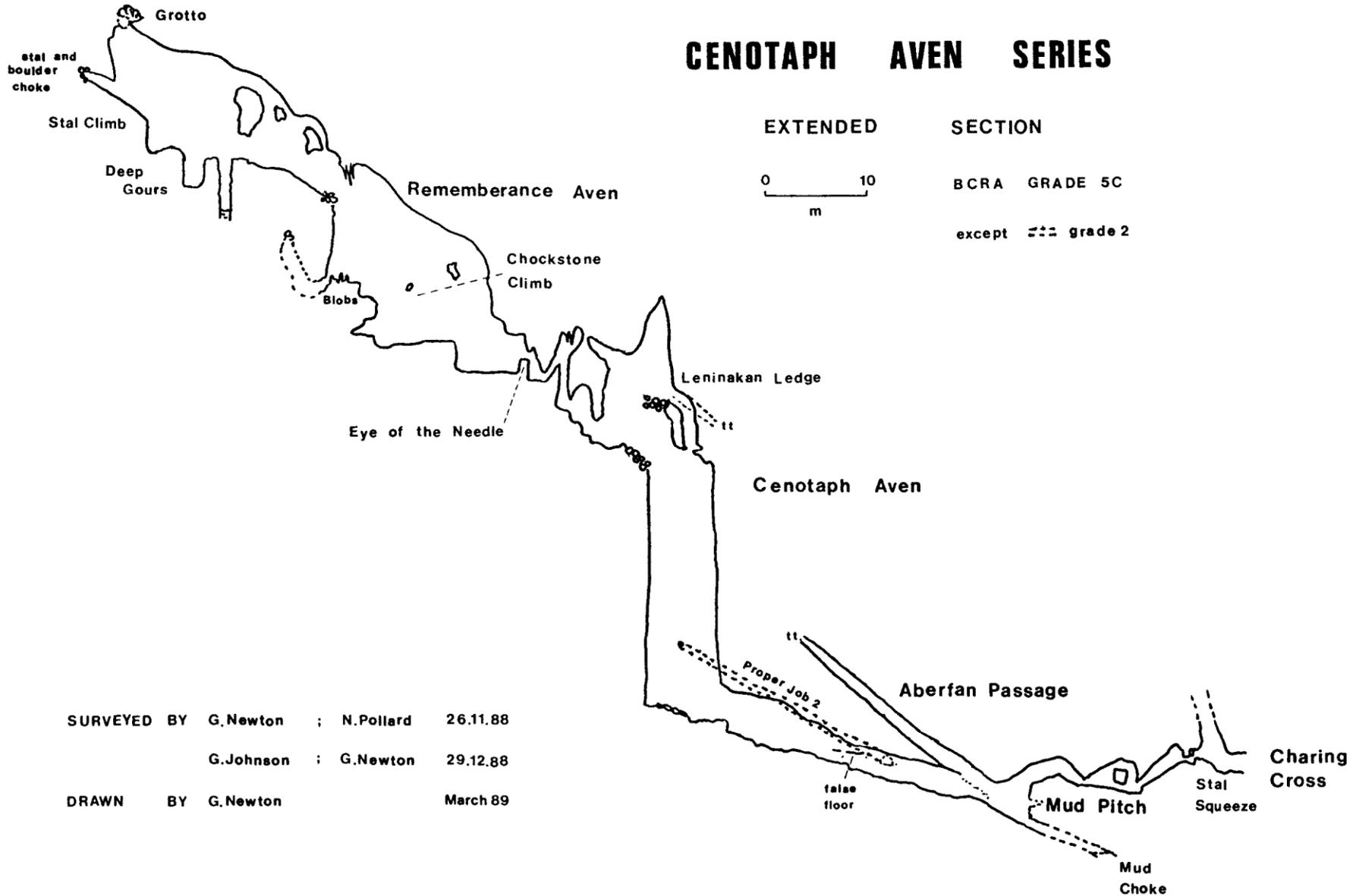
The following paragraph should be included between paragraphs six and seven (page 35):

“The end of the Blackwall Tunnel is marked by a series of tight, wet and muddy squeezes and a climb up into Charing Cross. The main way which was explored that day was turning left into Jubilee Line, Chamber of Horrors and Whitehall. There are many good prospects for major extensions here, but these stories will belong to others such as Tom Chapman, Snablet and the Moodies. Right at Charing Cross was a tight squeeze behind a curtain. Only Alison Moody could pass it.”

The last sentence of paragraph 34 (page 37) should read “However, this went in 20 minutes to yield an abrasive inclined thrutch which mercifully became too tight after thirty or forty metres.”

My apologies to Geoff, and anyone else whose enjoyment of the article was spoilt by these omissions.

NJW



Dowsing at Bowry Corner, Charterhouse Cave and Palmer's Cave

Tony Blick

On one of my all too rare visits to Mendip a day was spent dowsing at these three locations. Bowry Corner Swallet was visited with a number of BEC members and the rough sketch gives some indication of my findings.

The passage crosses under the road and seems to get larger under the layby. It goes under the field, about twenty feet from the gate, and continues in virtually a straight line descending at about 45 degrees and maintaining dimensions of about five feet by five feet. At a depth of about 240 feet it intercepts a large passage. This passage appears to be about sixty feet wide and fifty feet high, and contains a reasonable sized stream. It was followed in both directions for a short distance, and maintained these impressive dimensions. These findings indicate considerable potential exists at Bowry Corner.

Charterhouse Cave was then visited along with members of the WCC. The final Chamber was located by following the passage from the entrance. Two passages were located leading from the chamber. One goes straight under the Great Swallet and the other turns sharply to the left. This latter passage appears to be the main continuation, and appears to descend again at about 45 degrees. It continues in virtually a straight line to a point about sixty feet beyond the hedge. Here, the whole character of the cave changes completely. The width increases to about 150 feet and the height to between fifty and sixty feet. This huge canyon dips at about 45 degrees and attains a depth of over 500 feet over the next two to three hundred feet. The dimensions of this passage certainly surprised me, but it should not be dismissed given the proximity of G.B., the Great Swallet and the Charterhouse System. A rough sketch is provided below.

Palmer's Cave was next visited and the sketch below details my findings.

Before concluding it would be useful if I said a few words about the technique of dowsing.

A dowser obtains a reaction by the interaction between himself and his environment. It is not the rods which produce the result, they simply act as a magnifier. Consequently virtually any

instrument can be used, but I would recommend the L-shaped metal rods.

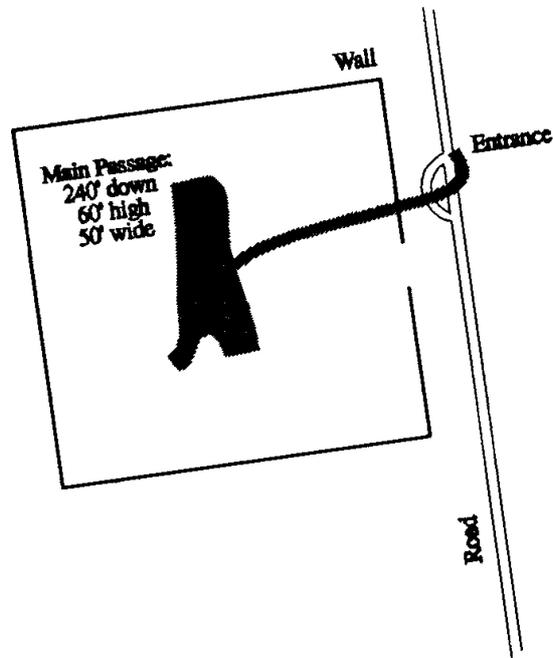
The initial technique is very simple. Select a promising site, hold the rods at chest height about 12 inch apart, and walk all the way around the selected site noting any reaction. Any discontinuation will result in the rods crossing. Take care not to hold the rods too tight or this will prevent any reactions, and this is done by focusing your attention on what you are looking for. Visualize a cave passage and repeat the exercise. If the rods fail to cross your earlier reaction was associated with something other than a cave passage. A test can be made for the presence of water using the same method.

Direction of flow can be determined by focussing your attention on flow and both rods will point in one direction. This test does not depend on the presence of water but a stronger reactions are obtained over fast flowing streams. Passage size and depth readings are obtained by the same methods.

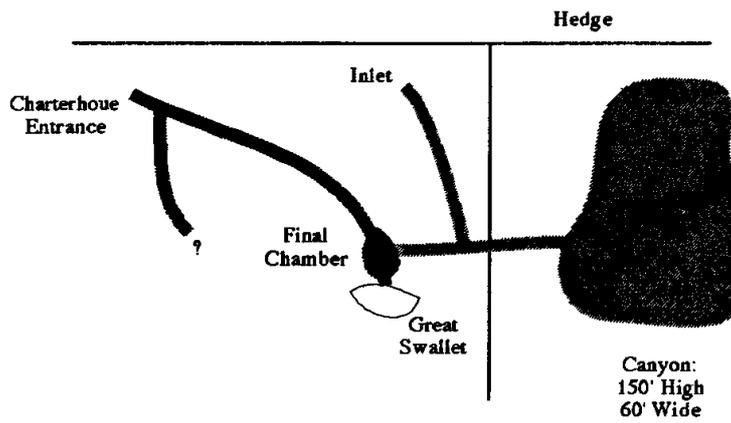
Depth readings will not be exact, but can give some indication of the likely depth. For example, above the final chamber in Charterhouse, I obtained a reading of 300 feet and I later learned the surveyed depth was 250 feet. A second point to note is that the dimensions you pick up are the actual structural passage size, very roughly, and take no account of fill. It is not possible to distinguish between an open passage and one blocked by boulders or glacial infill.

Dowsing works for about half of the people who attempt it, and there is no way to my knowledge of determining who can or cannot dowse. It has nothing to do with preconceived ideas about the technique. Many people will be sceptical about this technique and about my findings at these sites. I can only invite the sceptics to dig at these locations and prove me wrong.

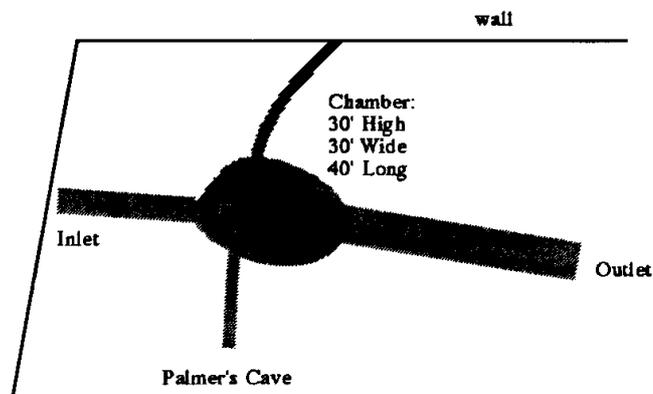
Tony Blick



(a) Findings at Bowry Corner Swallet



(b) Discoveries at Charterhouse Cave



(c) Findings at Palmer's Cave

Starry Eyed in the Starless River

Nigel Graham

Cavers are often a macho bunch, not given to expressing their true feelings about each other or the caves they visit. It makes something of a change, therefore, to find an article which makes no secret of the author's feelings when confronted with what is still a, if not the, major challenge to most British cavers. In the following article, written at the suggestion of other members of the trip (principally Ric and Pat Halliwell), Nigel Graham does not attempt to give a pitch by pitch account of the descent of the Berger, but rather a personal, and in many ways, private, account of how the challenge was met and the feelings it left behind.

A few years ago, if asked if I would ever visit the Gouffre Berger, I would have said, "no" - and few others who know me well may well have agreed... Then, about three years ago, I joined a bevy of Wessex members on training meets for the forthcoming BEC Berger trip (in 1986). I began to think Berger, reading other accounts of the cave, talking to participants on that trip. I looked at photographs of the Hall of the Thirteen - surely the best known of all cave scenes - and quietly thought, "I'm going to see that myself..." Then the Wessex booked the Gouffre Berger. "You'll get down there" Duncan Frew (who became in overall charge of planning) assured me.

Sunday, July 17th 1988. Arriving at the La Moliere camp site with Mairi Rands, Murray Knapp and fellow Portland mole Mike Read, we were greeted by Pete Hann, who explained the camp book and entrance camp rota to us. (Apart from the two cave signing-in books, one the property of the Mayor of Engins, the other our own trip log, we established a "base-camp" book as a precaution against anyone becoming lost in the forests.) That evening's entrance stint being vacant, Mike and I took it, giving our first view of the entrance.

The Gouffre Berger entrance is in a rift, deepening from the surface at one end (where a tree is an ideal belay) down to a short pitch. A nearby shrine commemorates several French cavers who have died in the cave: our members' views on this were mixed. Reached by a lengthy walk down through the forest, it lies in an idyllic spot in the corner of a flat terrace on the plateaux side. White, shelly limestone pavements support a wealth of flora growing in the deep grykes, attracting a variety of insects and huge snails.

We tossed a few fir cones on the fire,

then discovered there was no kettle with the brew-kit. Ingenuity won however, so soon we lay back for a night under the stars - no need to use the tent on a nearby terrace - sipping tea while a mouse scampered around our feet, doubtless investigating whatever delicacies the latest crop of cavers may have brought. Two riggers emerging in the early hours were very grateful for the tea, but seemed bemused as we calmly boiled the water in a cardboard milk carton on a gas stove, and in an empty glass bottle in the hot embers.

Tuesday, 19th July. Mike, Jim Rands, Martin Lockyer, Brian Gilbert (B.E.C.) and I entered the cave, with advice to make Camp One our destination on our first trip. "There's nothing down there you haven't done before" was Steve Pickersgill's parting shot as I clipped into the shake-hole line.

Ruiz, the first underground pitch, just inside the shake-hole, is not very welcoming. Approaching the edge, you see the scree "floor" covers a dubious old wooden lattice. Gingerly, I straddled the platform, feeling happier once on the way down. A feast of rebelays later, we assembled in Cairn Hall. This is a much more attractive spot; a scree-floored aven in light coloured rock, already some 250 feet down, on one, broken, pitch. I recalled Chelsea member Clive Gardener's account in Descent No. 60, he had "felt as if [he] was being invited in." I knew what he meant - I was going to like this cave, I knew.

The Meanders: long, awkward rifts which I had not been looking forward to. Actually they are laborious rather than difficult, no longer perhaps deserving their grim reputation albeit hard work to haul gear through. Garby's shaft, more meander, the equally fine Gontard's Shaft. Long traverse lines approaching these as we had are certainly needed: a fall there would probably precipitate you out high

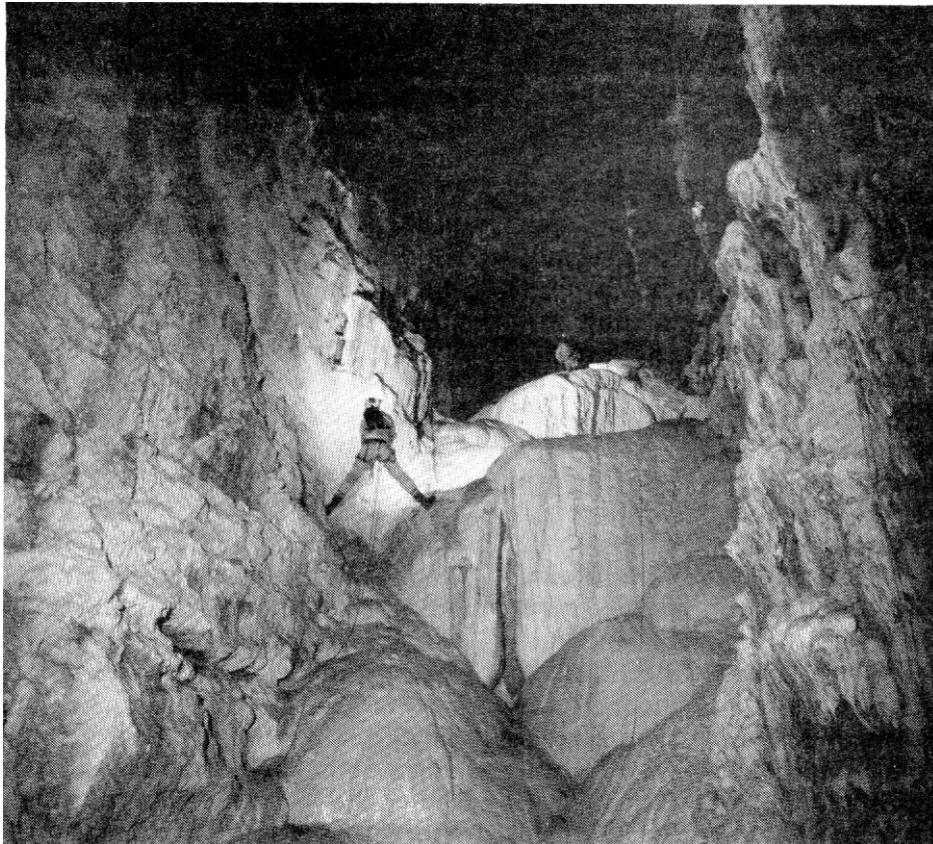
in the shaft wall. Three short ladder pitches, then an ominous lack of floor with a traverse line leading out round the corner, to ?. I moved carefully out, up onto a lovely flat ledge, clearly installed for the purpose, beyond which was just blackness. We were at Aldo's pitch. All the dangling down Sell Gill and Bull Pot was paying off, and the rigging down here was excellent. Still, I felt a long way up, and clipped into everything in sight. Once on the down rope I relaxed, then ambled down, enjoying both the abseil and the scenery. Aldo's is fittingly the largest and last shaft in the entrance series. The stream trench was a great deep gash in the wall behind me, above the shaft soared up out of sight. Ahead, the widest wall was a huge sheet of dark rock, unremittingly vertical. Far below, my companions' lamps twinkled like little yellow stars.

A bit of a tatty rift, then one is cast abruptly out into the grandeur of the Great Gallery of the Starless River, here some forty feet wide and over a hundred high. We sat awhile on the river bank, arranging kit and gazing expectantly down-cave. A little voice in my mind struggled to make itself heard: "You're in the Gouffre Berger, mate!" We followed the shallow river (dry conditions) over cobbles and greasy moonmilk. "Lake Cadoux" announced Jim, at a mud patch.

Attractive formations and Little General, a small but right awkward little b— of a pitch, down a sloping buttress. At a short cascade, Jim told us this had been his furthest point so far: coming over with the riggers a week early, he had been assisting them. Now we were all on new ground.

The river vanishes under debris as the gallery broadens suddenly into the vastness of the Great Rubble Heap. Straggling down here gave Jim and I a view that seems among the most abiding of visitors' memories of this cave - its sheer size, accentuated by the distance to the others' lamps and by the loss of the walls and roof. Eventually this dry, silent desolate passage narrows, and past a few old stals and the blocks of proverbial size we were at the head of the steep final ramp to Camp One. A couple of candles were stellar punctuation marks in the void.

Camp One is really a short, flat terrace about half way along a tremendous boulder slope, richly decorated beyond this point. Dropping our packs at the genteelly squalid camp-site (with its great carbide mound!), we walked down past a boulder knoll. Gours appeared, then a smattering of stalagmites. Then THOSE formations loomed spectrally out of the darkness - the Hall of the Thirteen, reflecting the number of the original explorers.



The gallery here is perhaps sixty feet wide, floored entirely by gently descending gour terraces, with the large stalagmites grouped in the middle. The 'mites are not exceptional by French standards, and the formations are perhaps richer further down, but it is the setting of the whole scene which must surely move anyone with any appreciation for cave scenery. The Hall of the Thirteen has become the Gouffre Berger's trade mark - now we were indeed viewing it for ourselves.

Eventually, we returned to the camp for a brew. "Grandad" Jim and "Uncle" Nigel, as we had nicknamed ourselves on a Penygent trip sometime previously, gave the others a start: they would move more quickly than us. We sat back, sipping tea, at peace with a world which hardly mattered anyway beyond this cave and our friends on the surface. A leisurely exit, but we were pretty tired by the time we reached Cairn Hall. I knew not to think about how far away the entrance was, but I did have two intermediate objectives whose attainment would be encouraging: the top of Aldo's and Cairn Hall. By the latter I was so tired my mind was blank, save for the department labelled "SRT". This had an odd effect. I suddenly realised I had not passed a rebelay for some time, and this threw me. Where was I? I sat back and looked around. The pitch head was out of sight, the floor was about forty feet away, and I had the curious feeling of having the entire cave to myself. Was anyone else down there at the time - Jim must have reached the surface by now. I was halfway up Ruiz, only a hundred feet to go, twelve hours after entering.

A welcome brew, then Grandad and Uncle collapsed back to the camp-site, under an astronomer's delight of a sky. None stirred, save the owner of a pair of bright beady eyes gleaming under the trees, watching us watching it - a marmot? A day of rest then the Berger lured us back.

Brian, Jim and I were "soon" at camp one to meet Mike and Martin. We had already met several others: Ric Halliwell racing up Aldo's (we had thought someone was ropewalking towards us), Jan, Oggy and co. at Little General, and Duncan trotting out from a solo quickie to the bottom. Jim and I were wryly amused by Dunc, "Dalek" (Bradford P.C.) and one or two others' cave racing. Dalek bottomed it and was out in under eleven hours: then subsequently blew it two months later by his hilariously spectacular participation in the B.C.R.A. Conference SRT race.....

For the moment, Hall of the Thirteen was

occupied by Steve Pick's photographic team. We waited, over a cuppa, then I pressed on down with Mike and Martin whilst Jim and Brian followed as far as they wished. The cave becomes more serious; hard work rather than difficult, with steep climbs over huge stal slopes. Balcony Pitch had the first deviation of the cave. I really struggled with it. It was close to the top belay, and at a wide angle. I fought to move the rope over a krab's length. I just did not have the reach, or soon, the strength in my arms. Somehow, lying horizontally out from a greasy wall with an arm wrapped round the deviation cord, I overcame it and slithered to the floor.

I'm not a fast caver, and keeping up with the others was tiring. Arms aching from that deviation, I stopped at the Canals for a rest. Mike came back to me, and Jim appeared. I decided to turn back; I could have gone on, more slowly, but not much further. Jim and Brian had in fact stopped a little earlier, and Brian was now on his way back up to Camp One. Disappointed with myself but more than happy with what I had seen, I conceded to the cave. We wished Mike a good trip (he did, in fact, bottom the cave), took photo's of each other at the start of the canals (at -2000ft) and set off back. Quite a few visitors have confessed to feeling unhappy down there, despite being perfectly able to negotiate the Berger, and I must admit I found the short stretch of regained streamway heralding the Canals to be a rather hostile spot. I don't doubt, however that this was simply my own reaction as I realised I had gone to my limit on that trip. "It's the depth..." others had intoned, "and the size of the place", one or two had added. Perhaps, but then those are the Gouffre Berger's qualities, and the essence of its challenge - certainly that is how I saw, and still see, it. Grandad and Uncle wended their slow way back up through the various Halls, stopping to admire formations. We spent a while at the Enormous Cascade, taking pictures of it. A bizarre feature: a small waterspout falls from a stalactite bell into a deep pool about ten feet below. Calcite banks round the pool form a superb acoustic amplifier horn, so the thing generates a roar out of all proportion to its size. The first explorers probably thought they were approaching a river! A bit of help on that deviation, a last slog up into the Hall of the Thirteen, and we were back with Brian at Camp One. Brian had realised his ambition, to view the Enormous Cascade. Like us, he had been fascinated and amused by its sheer effrontery.

We lay in our pits, sipping coffee. It's a peaceful, almost friendly, spot, Camp One; with the pattering of the formations' water in the Hall of the Thirteen just below contrasting with the dry silence of the Great Rubble Heap just above. Then the cave sounds were interrupted by a shuffling and a clanging, and the photographic convoy hove into view: Tony Littler and Dave (Tufty) Tuffery of the MNRC, Rich Websell and Malc. Foyle, assisting Pete Hann. Very sociable this cave - you never know quite who you would meet next and where. A brew and a chat, then they were off again, Pete pointing theatrically down-cave and declaiming "That way!"

I was cold that night, getting up once and putting my oversuit back on. I was sure the water flow increased slightly at some stage, imagination surely, but Jim thought the same. Had some little flood pulse finally found the Hall? A hot breakfast, probably psychologically rather than physically beneficial but what's wrong with a touch of luxury, then it was time to go. Kit packed, together with some rubbish to take out from the camp; a last brew, which I took up on the boulder knoll. I gazed down into the darkness, reflectively, almost fourteen years after my first French caving trip (Gouffre de Grange-Mathieu). Then another wry memory: last time I had been on the Vercors high plateau was with a girlfriend on a day alone from a caving holiday at Choranche (Goumier, etc.). Very pleasant though that sun-dappled forest afternoon of love-making had been, now I was back on the hill for something rather more sublime. The main formations were out of sight, but nearer stalagmites gleamed in my lamplight. Suddenly I had an unearthly feeling of not wanting to leave, something I had never previously experienced no matter how successful and enjoyable the trip. Feeling a little melancholy, I rejoined the others. Brian, Jim and I bade the photographers farewell, and we started up the Great Rubble Heap.

Our exit was smooth and uneventful, save for some fun when I jammed a safety-cord krab over the cam of my chest ascender (don't ask!). The cairn in Cairn Hall marks the very first limit of exploration, now it held sprays of fresh wild flowers, quietly brought in by Club members....

Three hours from Camp One, I neared the head of Ruiz Pitch. Jim was out about now. The prusiking was warm work even in just a thin undersuit (not too comfortable in a tight harness). I studied the platform and the boulders under it: yuk,

as in Cow Hole. I shrugged my shoulders (difficult in a tight harness) and carried on, as Jim called down "Coffee's on!" I relayed the news to Brian, then "With topless waitress service!!" sang Jim. That encouraged me (...!...), a bit more effort and I was at the belay tree, with Mairi handing me a cup of coffee.

The last night, for many, at La Moliere was marked by various expeditions to restaurants around Autrans, with the conversation turning to plans for the following week. Then some two dozen of us would camp municipally at La Chapelle en Vercors, for a week's sightseeing and gentle caving. Then too, at a last group dinner in the Hotel du Sports, would be revealed the nature of a sweepstake Duncan had run, artlessly selling me ticket 6 on "how many to bottom the Berger" whilst I prepared for our first trip down. In fact the betting was on how far I would get! Six? - sixth pitch: Gontard's.

On this evening though, with the Gouffre Berger becoming only fond memories as the rest of the holiday would become, stopping at the canals no longer seemed to matter: I'd want to go deeper, but...I'd enjoyed what I had achieved. Would I ever return? That too seemed irrelevant then, only later would the cave's magic work on me. Unimportant that evening, too, were the valuable lessons learned on my own approach to such caves; objective assessments could wait awhile. For now, as we returned to the campsite and dispersed to our tents, the "high" was still working itself out. Whether anyone else felt as I did then I would not know: what we gain from our own caving can only be deeply personal, but if we gained nothing or felt no emotional reaction, the caves might as well not exist.

Words came back to me:

"You'll get down there"

"There's nothing ... you haven't done before"

"I felt as if I was being invited in"

Then, far greater than these, was the memory of that moment, indescribable, unforgettable and utterly unrepeatable however many times I may descend the Gouffre Berger, when on our first trip, the five of us walked down past the Camp One knoll and into the Hall of the Thirteen. I crawled into my pit, and silently wept.

Nigel Graham

Mendip Rescue Organisation Annual Report

Report by the Hon Secretary and Treasurer for the Year to 31st December, 1988

The log of incidents that follows this report shows that our response times to emergencies continues to improve because of better communications and, of course, the willingness of experienced cavers in Mendip based clubs to turn out and help. In this way, cavers on Mendip are seen to be helping themselves rather than relying on others, whoever these might be. MRO provides the necessary organisation and equipment.

Our links with the Police are vital and their provision of new pagers provides us with a sure means of being alerted should established methods fail. We are fortunate that the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, Mr. Ronald Broome, serves as the ACPO representative on the Mountain Rescue Committee and has first hand knowledge of potholing. It was a pleasure to support his nomination as the current President of the South West England Rescue Association.

We gave a lecture and dry demonstration of Sump Rescue techniques to a SWERA Conference at the Devon and Cornwall Police Headquarters, Exeter, last summer. With great support from Fred Barlow and Pete Rees at Mountain Rescue Committee meetings, approval was given for the purchase of a KMB set for MRO. We are most grateful for this as it will enable more training to be undertaken in sump rescue by cave divers.

At Easter, we had the unusual experience of meeting the general public at the Somerset Saves

Exhibition held in Wells Cathedral. It was also useful to meet colleagues from other emergency services. Richard West manned our display for the three days and many contacts were made. Subsequently, we met with senior Fire Brigade officers and made a tour of cave sites with flood risks.

The equipment highlight of the year was our purchase of neoprene splints and a skid sheet-cum-stretcher through G. & W. Bonser in Gwent. These ingenious and functional items have already proved their worth on actual rescues. They were demonstrated at First Aid lectures held at Priddy during the summer for cavers. We are especially grateful to Paul Fry of the Wells St. John's Ambulance for giving such useful and well received lectures.

The accounts are better than ever thanks to generous donations, not least from wardens who also give time and effort to actual rescues. Our aim is to provide an up-to-date cave rescue service which commands the full respect of those involved professionally in emergency work. Times have changed considerably since I first became a MRO warden over thirty years ago, but the commitment of cavers to help others is just the same.

Jim Hanwell
Honorary Secretary and Treasurer MRO
January 1989

Sat 23rd Jan	Swildon's Hole	1	Exhaustion, unable to climb	(8)
Tue 16th Feb	Longwood Swallet	6	Trapped, locked in	(4)
Fri 4th Mar	Swildon's Hole	1	Fall, concussed, cut scalp	(5)
Sat 19th Mar	G.B. Cavern	1	Fall, broken leg, back injury	(16)
Sun 20th Mar	G.B. Cavern	?	Flood alert	(3)
Tue 5th Apl	Swildon's Hole	?	Missing party alert	(4)
Sun 15th May	Eastwater Cavern	6+	Overdue party	(6)
Sun 17th Jul	Swildon's Hole	1	Fall, injured ankle	(17)
Thu 29th Dec	Swildon's Hole	2	Overdue	(1)

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1988

1987		£	£	£
£	<u>Income</u>			
	Donations:-			
901	General Appeal		1,135	
152	Collection Boxes		97	
208	Rescued Parties		65	
-----			-----	
1,261				1,297
287	Hire of MRO Nife Cells			327
-	Sale of Equipmeent			56
103	Bank Deposit Interest			130
-----				-----
1,651				1,810

	<u>Expenditure</u>			
	Equipment:-			
140	Radios	-		
133	General	172	172	

44	Medical Supplies		556	
53	Belfry Store Repairs		280	
90	Insurance of Equipment		90	
63	Postage, Stationery and Duplicating		76	
	Donations:-			
10	S.W.E.R.A.	10		
20	B.C.R.C.	10		

			20	
22	Meetings and Information		47	
-----			-----	
575				1,241

£1,076	Surplus for Year			£569
=====				=====

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1988

<u>1987</u>		£	£
<u>Current Assets</u>			
	Balance at Bank:-		
2,400	Deposit Account	3,300	
815	Current Account	492	
-----		-----	
3,215			3,792
8	Cash with Hon. Treasurer and Equipment Warden		Nil
-----			-----
£3,223			£3,792
=====			=====
 <u>Representing:-</u> <u>Accumulated Funds</u>			
	Balance at January 1, 1988		3,223
2,147			
1,076	Surplus for year		569
-----			-----
£3,223			£3,792
=====			=====

J.D. Hanwell,
Hon. Treasurer,
50 Wells Road,
Wookey Hole,
Somerset.

I have reviewed the above Balance Sheet and attached Income and Expenditure Account which have been prepared from the books and records of the Mendip Rescue Organisation. In my opinion, and to the best of my knowledge, the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the Organisation's funds as at December 31, 1988 and the surplus for the year ended on that date.



R. Chant ACA, FTII

Bali,
Milton Lane,
Wells,
Somerset.

February 1989

Cave Rescues and Incidents for the Year ending 31st December 1988

There were only nine incidents during the year. Most took place in the first seven months, following the previous year's record trend, and then there was a welcome lull throughout the summer and autumn. The alert for overdue cavers at the end of the year was more the result of vigilance than any accident.

This usual annual summary does not include occasional scares that are reported to us after the event; for example, a local group brought out one of their party with a broken wrist themselves, and schoolboys who chose to explore Box Mines with candles were fortunately chanced upon by experienced cavers when shouting for help after running out of matches. Also, I have not included one of the briefest calls on record when a worried wife contacted the Police on 8th July only to have the slightly overdue party report surfacing safely just as details were being relayed to us. Two calls for the Cheddar Gorge Cliff Rescue Team were passed on for them to deal with.

Saturday 23rd January: Swildon's Hole

Brian Prewer was called by Yeovil Police at 8.40 p.m. A Mr. Hawk had phoned from the New Inn, Priddy, to report a party of eight still underground. He was concerned because water levels were rising after heavy rain. No further information was available because the informant could not be contacted.

Tony Jarratt was alerted to find out further details first hand on Priddy Green and a party of Wessex cavers was raised from Upper Pitts. All met at Manor Farm shortly afterwards. Apparently, Elaine Cheng, aged 22, in a London University Caving Club, party of five (from Royal Holloway and Bedford New College) was exhausted and unable to climb the 8 Foot Pot at the bottom of the old Forty against the swollen waterfall. Her party had been to Shatter Pot and water levels rose on the return journey. She had fallen into the Double Pots several times and, wearing a furry suit and oversuit, became waterlogged, cold and very tired. The prospect of hypothermia was feared. Whilst having caved once in South Wales and in Yorkshire, this was her first trip to Mendip.

Brian Prewer took control on the Green, Tony Jarratt stayed at the cave entrance and Alison Moody laid out flashing beacons across the field owing to the thick fog. A combined Wessex and Cambridge University Caving Club team of eight went underground with hot air, food, heat packs and spare clothing. They were: Pete Hann, Nick Pollard, Graham Johnson, P. Metcalfe, D. Wright, A. Taylor, M. Richardson and Patrick Warren who is also a Craven Pothole Club member. Elaine Cheng was assisted out the cave by 10.30 p.m.

Tuesday 16th February: Longwood Swallet.

Yeovil Police contacted Brian Prewer at 3.30 a.m. and reported that a party was long

overdue from a Mendip cave. The exact site was unknown since two calls had been received; one claiming that the party was down Hunters' Hole and another that it was Longwood. The former was ruled out when one informant from Bleadon was able to give details of the trip and vehicles used. A Police patrol located the cars near Longwood Grange. It became apparent that six members of the West Mendip Caving Club, mainly from Weston-s-Mare, had failed to surface after an evening trip.

Brian Prewer contacted Nigel Taylor and both set out to locate the missing party. Pete and Alison Moody stood by at Priddy. Nigel soon contacted the missing cavers trapped beneath the entrance door. They had snapped the key off in the lock and so were stranded. Tools to chisel open the hasp were collected from John Beecham's house nearby. Also, Mercan Jefferies and a friend turned up from Manor Farm, Charterhouse, with more tools, many suggestions and lots of liquid refreshment!

After about 90 minutes, the substantial door was prised open and the captives released unharmed. The stand down was at 6.10 a.m.

Friday 4th March: Swildon's Hole.

A party of Plymouth Polytechnic cavers was on the way out the cave about 10.30 p.m. when one of them, Joan Edwards, fell backwards off the Showerbath climb just inside the entrance. Her helmet came off and she banged the back of her head sustaining slight concussion and a scalp cut that needed stitches.

After learning that most wardens were at the Hunters' Lodge Inn, a local Police patrol arrived there to contact Jim Hanwell at 11 p.m. He experienced little difficulty in raising a strong rescue party, and the place emptied more rapidly than usual.

The patient was whisked out of the cave within 30 minutes, somewhat bewildered by the attention of so many. She was taken by ambulance to Wells Cottage Hospital for a check up and treatment.

Saturday 19th March: G.B. Cavern.

Brian Prewer was alerted by the Police from Yeovil at 12.40 p.m. A caver had rung from Mendip Heights Camp Site, Priddy, to report that a girl in his party had fallen off the top of the Waterfall climb and sustained unspecified leg and back injuries.

Venessa Gouldsmith, aged 22, from Southend was a complete novice in a party of Thurrock Adventure Club cavers staying at the Scouts H.Q. in Wells over the weekend. She was wearing trainers. On descending the Waterfall climb on a handline, she slipped off the large ledge and fell about 20 feet. Compound fractures of both tibia and fibia resulted and her back was severely bruised. The accident happened at about 11.45 a.m. It took almost an hour for the caller to leave the cave and raise the alarm. Precious time was wasted in travelling to Priddy to do this.

The first rescue team went down the cave at 1 p.m. within twenty minutes of receiving the call-out. This group comprised of Stuart McManus, Jim Smart, Nick Saunders, Tom Chapman, Sarah McDonald, Martin Potts and young Pete McNab. They carried First Aid kit, plaster, stretcher and comforts. Another team followed shortly afterwards with more medical supplies, hauling ropes and the Grunterphone. This group had two First Aiders, Dave Pike and Rob. Taviner, and included Tony Jarratt, Nigel Graham, Henry Bennett, Pete and Alison Moody. Phil Romford went down later. Richard West took over surface control whilst Brian Prewer and Bob Drake manned the Grunterphone to maintain contact with the underground parties. Brian Workman and Phil Hendy stood by. Dr. Tony Boycott was called and went down the cave at 2 p.m.

After making the patient comfortable, Dave Pike plastered the broken leg and Tony Boycott carried out a medical examination to assess the extent of injuries, especially to the back. Hauling started at about 2.34 p.m. and the patient reached the surface at 4.18 p.m. She was taken by ambulance shortly afterwards to Weston-s-Mare Hospital.

Sunday 20th March: G.B. Cavern.

Nigel Graham alerted MRO through Yeovil Police at 6 p.m. as he was concerned to hear of a

party entering the Ladder Dig with water levels rising rapidly. There had been two days of prolonged rain and a heavy storm was crossing Mendip. Brian Prewer contacted Jim Hanwell who obtained an up-dated weather report from the Bristol Weather Centre. He was told that radar pictures showed the storm would not ease until about 8 p.m. when clear skies were forecast.

It was decided to send an experienced party underground to assess the flood risk. This group comprised of Pete McNab, Jim Smart and Tom Chapman. Others stood by with Brian Prewer and Richard West on the surface. By the time all arrived on the scene, the party concerned had safely surfaced. They reported that the water had only risen about 3 feet up the Ladder Dig pitch. In fact, Pete McNab's party found it to be only 3 feet from the top of the pitch and in danger of overflowing! The rapidity at which flooding occurs here must be taken into account by all visiting this part of the system. It appears that the streamway is now choked and unable to cope with high flows.

Tuesday 5th April: Swildon's Hole.

Ric and Pat Halliwell were entertaining several wardens and friends at Upper Pitts when the Police called them at 10.10 p.m. P.C. Gerry Brice on local patrol also heard the message and arrived to assist. A report had been given by some cavers from Aldershot, who had just come out of Swildons Two, that a ladder was still hanging on the Twenty Foot Pot and a rope had been found somewhere else. As these had been there earlier according to another group encountered, they reasonably thought that yet another party might still be in the cave and now overdue. In fact, Ric. Halliwell had noted the same ladder on the pitch on a trip to Swildons Four during the morning. It was decided to check other sources to confirm whether anyone was still in the cave. To be sure, Gerry took Jim Hanwell, Fred Davies, Brian Workman and Tony Jarratt to see for themselves and meet the informants for further questioning.

No cars were left on Priddy Green and there were no reports of any overdue parties. Yet again, it appears that someone had not bothered to remove their tackle on a trip sometime over the Easter Holiday weekend!

Sunday 15th May: Eastwater Cavern

A party from Exeter University led by experienced cavers became between two to three

hours overdue from a first trip to the bottom of the old cave via the Twin Verticals. The non-caving member of the group on the surface raised the alarm at 8.50 p.m. The cavers had been down for about eight hours.

Brian Prewer received the call and alerted Duncan Frew, Pete Hann, Nigel Graham, Jim Rands and two others from the Wessex Cave Club. This search party found the Exeter University speleologists just inside the entrance on their way out. They were safe and well and had only under-estimated the route finding problems in the system.

Sunday 17th July: Swildon's Hole.

Richard West received a call from Yeovil Police at 3.50 p.m. He was told that a female caver in a party of seven from the London area had possibly broken her ankle just upstream of Sump One. Brian Prewer was contacted to meet the informant on the Green for further details and rescue teams were raised from the Belfry through Mark Lumley and from Upper Pitts by Jeff Price. Richard advised Jim Hanwell of the incident and left to take control at Manor Farm.

A strong rescue party entered the cave at 4.10 p.m. only 20 minutes after the initial call. The team comprised of Mark Lumley, Jeff Price, Robin Taviner, Jim Smart, Nick Pollard, Graham Johnson, Adrian Williams, Paul Lambert and Stuart Lain, the Essex caver who had surfaced to raise the alarm. They carried in First Aid kits, medical supplies, new neoprene splints, hot air and heat packs, the Mager stretcher and food. A second party followed with hauling ropes at 4.34 p.m. including Dany Bradshaw, Doug Adams, Jim Moon and Pete Moody who agreed to be "runner".

At 5.20 p.m. Pete Moody surfaced to say that the patient had been splinted and was attempting to help herself out with assistance. She was also being carried by Dany Bradshaw where possible to speed things up. Dr. Tony Boycott went down the cave at 5.33 p.m. with Tom Chapman, Dave and Alan Turner. They took in tackle to haul the patient up the Twenty Foot Pot, including the "baby bouncer". It was reported that this pitch had been passed at about 6 p.m. and good progress was being made. An ambulance was called from Shepton Mallet and arrived 16 minutes before the patient surfaced. She was stretchered across the fields and the neoprene splints exchanged for an inflatable one in the ambulance with assistance from Entonox.

The injured girl, Barbara Williams, aged 29, from Northwood in Middlesex, had gone down

the cave at about 1.10 p.m. She had slipped on the sloping boulder just before Sump One. Two tablets of Temgesic were taken to ease pain and the new neoprene splints proved to be excellent.

Thursday 29th December: Swildon's Hole.

Tony and Denise Knibbs spent longer in the cave than had been planned through giving assistance to a party of scouts experiencing some difficulties (too many cold, wet and miserable novices with only one leader). For their pains, they themselves were then reported as an hour overdue! Brian Prewer was alerted by the Police at 6 p.m. He could not locate Tony's distinctive French registered car on the Green but found that all had surfaced recently. Tony Knibbs rang shortly afterwards to confirm what had happened.

Earlier in the day, Robin Main had expressed concern about a car that had been parked overnight outside Manor Farm, Priddy, that clearly belonged to a caver. After enquiries, it turned out that the owner had gone for drinks in the New Inn after a trip the previous evening. He had been given a lift back to where he was staying on Mendip and intended to retrieve his car after sobering up!

Jim Hanwell.

Notes for Contributors

If you have any article, letter, comment, news, photograph, or anything else which you would like to see published in the Journal, please do not hesitate to send it to me at the address below. Preferably, text should be typed on one side of the paper only, with wide margins and double spaces between the lines, but I'd rather have it scrawled on the back of a cigarette packet than not get it at all.

The main requirement for photographs is that they should not have too much contrast as otherwise they are unrecognizable when printed. Prints or slides, in black and white or colour are acceptable, but bear in mind that they will come out as black and white prints when they appear, so if the colour is an important feature they will not be a lot of use when printed. Please make sure that your prints or transparencies are clearly labelled, and send the appropriate captions for each label on a separate sheet.

For those who have access to a wordprocessor, I may be able to accept contributions on floppy disc. Please give me a ring so that we can discuss whether or not your software is compatible with mine.

Line drawings, sketch maps and diagrams are all welcome. They should be supplied at the size at which they are to be printed.

If you copy drawings or photos, or

quote, from another publication, please make sure you inform me before publication so that I can make arrangements regarding copyright.

Authors may obtain a laser-written copy of their article for the production of further off-prints by contacting me, although I may have to make a small charge for this service.

The Journal is produced on an Apple Macintosh Plus computer using Microsoft Word 3 software and a LaserWriter IISC to produce camera-ready artwork.

I would like to thank Nick Marochov for the use of his LaserWriter in the production of this issue, and Paul Lambert for his assistance with the photographs.

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