

THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

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Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Club or the Editor.

Caving Notes

GENERAL

Roadside break-ins have occurred at **Maskill**, Derbyshire and in the **GB/Longwood** area again. Together with underground thefts from **Lower Cales Dale Barn** and **Giants Hole** it seems that nothing is safe anymore, even when it's in a cave. At least on the surface, suggest you take turns at 'car duty'.

With recent attention given to **Weil's Disease** following a case of it in a Mendip caver who had been digging in Priddy Green Sink, it should be realised that there are other areas of risk which include: the tidal stretch of the lower part of the Wye in the Forest of Dean and the Long Tor Grotto, the lower end of Youd's Level and the Stoney Middleton caves in Derbyshire, and basically any caves carrying drainage from farm land, stables or quarries. A free leaflet is available from the NCA, or why not buy a plastic credit card size information card to fit in your wallet. The cards cost only 20p each and are available from the NCA.

MENDIP

As mentioned in the last WCC Journal, **Priddy Green Sink** has finally been connected to Swildons at Cowsh Avens. The connection is tight, evil and smelly with exposed traverses on sloping slippery ledges over the top of avens. Do not attempt it unless you have first checked the route and are aware of potential problems - Tony Jarratt at Bat Products will advise.

Withyhill Cave is now closed, together with **Lamb Leer**, **Nine Barrows** and **Sludge Pit** which have been closed for some time now.

Bad air has recently been reported in **Little Crapnell Swallet** - be warned.

Following a recent injury in the entrance of **St Cuthberts Swallet**, the entrance pipes are to be laddered.

The gate on **Tynings Barrow** is missing. Clubs will get keys and CSCC will maintain the entrance

The ginging at the top of **Singing River Mine** will be inspected with work planned for later in the summer.

Further works have been carried out to replace the props in **Compton Martin Ochre Mine**.

A bolt which failed halfway down the 1st pitch of the right-hand route in **Rhino Rift** has been replaced by an 8mm spit in stal - take care.

Thrupe Lane Swallet - beware loose rock. Any rock knocked down the pitch will hit those below!!!

DERBYSHIRE

If you come across a **P-anchor** which you think may not be a genuine NCA/DCA installation or a **suspect bolt**, please report it directly to either Mark Lowe on 0161 330 5111 or Ralph Johnson on 01782 515753 for checking.

The DMM Eco-anchor deviation which replaced the re-belay on the **2nd pitch** in **Knotlow** (as mentioned in WCC Journal Vol 23 No 250) no longer exists. It has been decided not to attempt to place another DMM as the pitch can be safely rigged using one of the old eyebolts for a deviation using a **long** sling.

The fixed ladder up to Meccano in **Knotlow** is in a very poor state. It is possible that the whole thing will be scrapped and the pitch rigged with DMMs but this will be decided at a later date.

The last of the DMMs has now been placed in **Rowter Hole**.

Long Rake Mine, Bradwell Moor is now open again due to the end of the lambing season. Ring Mr Hadfield on 01298 22139 giving at least 2 days notice if you intend to visit this area - be aware that it is a sensitive site.

WALES

It is with regret that we recently heard that the **Severn Valley CC** has being wound up.

DMMs have been placed in Keyhole Chamber in **Agen Allwedd**.

There is a danger of rockfalls outside the entrance to **Ogof Craig-a-Ffynnon**.

Continued on next page ►

Club Notes

Wessex People

Congratulations to **Tim Feltham** who was recently married to Carla.

Congratulations are also due to **Ruth and Rob Delacour** who are now the proud parents of a healthy baby girl called Connie, born in June.

Hut News

Roz Fielder has retired from organising the **Hut Bookings**. Thanks go to her for doing this for so long, but now Wendy Williams has volunteered to do the job and so she is now the person to contact - phone number at front of Journal.

Thanks to Phil Hendy for manufacturing and fitting such splendid **shower doors**. Unfortunately they now make the rest of the changing room look very tatty, although the drying room should improve things out there - this is one of the next jobs to be completed.

The **WCC lounge** was painted over the weekend of 10/11th August - thanks to everyone involved. Much fun was had by all with music playing, numerous cups of tea and a trip to the cinema in the evening (to get away from the paint smell). All in all a good weekend! How long the ceiling will stay white is another matter!

THE NORTH

CNCC have negotiated access for **Skirwith Cave** which had been restricted at the landowner's request. For permission to enter call or write to Landale, Cold Cotes, Clapham, LA2 6HZ, or phone Mrs Smith on 015242 41788. Do not block the gateway as agricultural access is required at all times - if you do you will be clamped.

The **CNCC Eco-resin Rigging Guide No 2** is now on sale from Northern Caving shops priced at £4. It has information on rigging more Northern Caves, more test info and an excellent section on the care and maintenance of ropes.

Other News

A **taloretting (?) machine** has been purchased by the Wessex for making ladders - 5 to date.

If individuals would like to make a donation towards the digging costs (explosives, drill, etc) involved in **Priddy Green Sink**, the digging team would be very grateful. Resin anchors are in the process of being placed in there but, according to a certain extract written in the WCC logbook recently (see page 151), this may take some time!

The **Wessex Annual Dinner** forms and the **AGM** forms for nominations and motions for members are included with this Journal. The cost of the dinner is £15 which includes the coach there and back. On the Sunday, a 'Tuska Tour' is planned to Redcliffe Caves in Bristol - the cost of this is only £6 which includes the coach and lunch. On this basis you can have a great weekend for only £21 - who says the Wessex doesn't give you a good deal for your money!

Don't forget the BCRA Conference **Hidden Earth** in Sheffield on 13th-15th September. The WCC have reserved a stand - volunteers welcome - contact Dave Morrison.

West End, Cenotaph Aven and Southbank in **Eastwater**: - the pitches have been re-rigged with joint BEC-Wessex tackle and both are equipped for abseil and self-line (all you need is sit sling, krab, jammer & belay plate). If you do go down and you feel like it, by all means bring out any old ladders!?

At the **WCC vs BEC Challenge Cricket Match** held on 6th July, the WCC failed to hold on to the ashes (of a sofa) by 1 wicket. A good time was had by all with much ale consumed. Brian Pitman was a side screen. Rich Blake (bowling for BEC) was highest scorer for the Wessex. Shortest innings courtesy of Les Williams !!! and Max.

New Member

Paul Stillman:

5 Henry St, Totter down, Bristol

0117 923 0600 (Work)

CDG Activities

As most people will be aware, or at least will have heard, this year is the 50th anniversary of the forming of the Cave Diving Group (CDG). In preparation for the celebrations to mark this anniversary, a couple of CDG members had to practice diving (or rather bottom-walking) with the standard Siebe Gorman divers dress, and it was with interest that some members of the Wessex watched the events. The following has been compiled from the Club's logbook - thanks to Mike York for writing it up.

On a sunny Saturday in April at the Mineries, Rosie, Vern and Mike D-York from the WCC and Mike Thomas, Malc Foyle, Robin Brown and John Buxton from the CDG went to the Mineries to observe Robin, followed by Malcom, essay into the depths of the Pool emulating the "*man in a brass helmet*" (Copper in this case).

Suiting up:

Neck entry, followed by the thrusting of hands through the seals - KY jelly provided by Robin helped. Next the collar section goes in place, with its 6 bolts located through a rubber seal. This is made water-tight with a 2 piece confe-like sealing ring held in place by 6 butterfly nuts.

Weights:

Next the 30lb-a-piece boots are buckled and tied on, followed by a jock-strap harness which fixes back and front to the collar. The front and back weights are then fixed just below this collar - these also weigh about 30lb each.

Hoses:

Air and communication cables are attached to the helmet. The air flow and comms are checked out and the helmet is screwed into place. A further check of air and sound and the hoses are affixed to the suit. These stop the diver from being pulled over and prevent undue strain on the hose coupling.

Final Checks:

At last the little porthole at the front is screwed up. The diver opens the air escape valve and proceeds to enter the water helped by his friends "sic" After a bit of moaning, winging and going round in circles, the diver sank from sight in a cloud of silty bubbles. He returned to shore, de-kitted and pronounced himself pleased with his short training course. Foyle then

followed and returned to shore with much moaning about vis! (what ever that is?) Dekitted, cleaned away and returned home via the Belfrey car park.

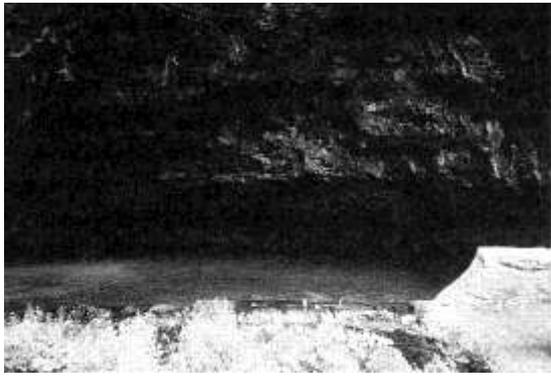
I have failed to mention John Buxton's part in all this - he was scuba diver support. Bolty turned up towards the end and proceeded to become an expert hard-hat dive controller in about 5 mins. Many thanks to Richard Bird from the Historical Diving Society. A most interesting and enjoyable 3 hours of entertainment and instruction.

Following this, Robin, Malc and Mike proceeded to Wookey Chamber 3 to continue their expertise with this kit. The following is also taken from the logbook - thanks for this Robin!

Robin's valued comments on the copper hat - Well it takes a long time to kit up and is heavy. You ask how heavy? - bloody heavy! Using it at the Mineries was OK but down at Wookey (start of a song here - Ed) on my home pitch, had a few problems getting the suit to seal. Then I fell over wearing the equivalent of 6 stones extra weight uttering the words "Shit, I have just fallen over" over the comms to 30 amused tourists. Some bugger then switched my air off - great! Crawled in to Chamber 4, found a rock to sit on and then crawled back. Couldn't get out of the water or stand up so they had to undress me. Nice? Well, the bloody suit leaked and I got wet. I was told to write this.

Wookey Hole, May 11th 1996, was the actual date set for the festivities. Once the preparations in Wookey's Chamber 3 had been completed early in the morning, the AGM got underway. This was followed by lunch (and beverages of course provided by Roger Dors) before the main program of events started.

Robin, diving in the standard Siebe Gorman gear, as described previously, set off for Chamber 4. Then, using Dany Bradshaw as a very commendable megaphone, divers in kit from the modern to the first beginnings of cave diving dived through into Chamber 3. completing their journey and surfacing to the sounds of The Belfry Boys singing verses of "The History of Wookey Hole Diving".



Wookey Hole Resurgence

The Atlantis Draeger Rebreather modelled by Mike Thomas was the first piece of equipment to be demonstrated, followed by Mike Barnes using modern day twin-set of tanks and valves which are a bit more affordable to the average cave-diver than the rebreather (unless you happen to work for Uwatec of course!).

Back in time we went: Brian Johnson came through using a tadpole and Snark and then Clive Stell followed in twin hose gear. John Buxton (one of the original divers) bottom-walked using oxygen equipment and finally, Pete Mulholland surfaced wearing the original kit worn by Jack Sheppard to pass Sump One in Swildons.

Finally - with a good selection of strong fit men pumping air to the suit - Robin Brown returned bottom-walking from Chamber 4.

The obligatory photographs were taken both in and outside the cave, being directed by Gavin Newman and so these should provide lasting evidence of this momentous event. I believe a video was also taken - let's hope that this is available to all.



Inside Wookey – Chamber 3



Cave-diver dress through the years

Other CDG News

Cheddar

During mid-July, diving was undertaken in Gough's Cave, Cheddar by Michael Thomas, Malc Foyle and Mike Barnes, with support from the complete Brown family! Mike Barnes cruised to -30m in sump 3 to have a look at the place in excellent vis and low flow. Mike Thomas continued digging the inlet in sump 2 and gained 2m of desperate passage! Before the vis went to chocolate soup the diver saw what looked like a large chamber, reversing out in zero vis was then the only thing to do! Malc Foyle then tried to get to the end of the line but decided the passage was too small, or the diver too big, so more digging followed!

Wookey Hole

Also in July, a fast trip was undertaken by Michael Thomas, Malc Foyle, Robin Brown to chamber 24 to put Mike Thomas in the sump between 24 and 25 in excellent vis to search for another way on to the middle of Mendip. A big light was used and NO other way on was seen at all. But an underwater route was found around the wall in 25. The line was left in, but will need replacing as it's only 2mm French string! This now removed the need to climb over large pieces of rock after deep dives risking DCI.

Taken from the WCC Logbook

'Bottom that Hole'

(Belfry Boys '96)

Come all you bold heroes lend an ear to my song,
We'll sing of cave divers - it should not take long,
There's many brave divers have been down below,
And at some of you we will now have a go,
We'll now have a go, We'll now have a go,
We think you might recognize some people you know.

We'll start off with Balcombe, a very nice bloke,
But not the one sung of from down Rodney Stoke,
He started cave diving down in Swildon's sump,
He breathed all his air from a bicycle pump (not),
A bicycle pump, A bicycle pump,
Him getting the credit gave Jack Sheppard the hump.

So what then of Sheppard when he had a look,
We've read all about it in Martyn's big book,
He got disconnected and lost his hosepipe,
Despite all the bubbles his language was ripe.
His language was ripe, his language was ripe,
He cursed the equipment - a load of old Cripe.
(Sic).

So then some years later came Buxton and Wells,
All dressed up in rubber to cover the smells,
They dived at the Mineries and frightened the coots,
Buxton wore flippers* and Wells he wore Boots.
And Wells he wore Boots and Wells he wore Boots,
The smells we referred to - Old Farts in wetsuits.

(* Yes we know they're called fins and that flipper
was a Dolphin - but it didn't scan.)

Now Grass he do disturb me as I lay supine,
He says 'Morning Men' in his nasal whine,
A diving examiner - put beer in his glass,
when you take your test you're assured of a pass.
Assured of a pass, assured of a pass,
But we all think privately he's a pain in the..... !

Now talking of Martyns there's another one here,
and some say its not just his methods are queer,
Dived in 'Damn near killed I' and out through Elm
Hole,
In Wales's green valleys he's digging Farr Coal*
He's dipping Farr Coal*, he's digging Farr Coal*,
We think he's been drinking that beer Felinfoel.
(* Try it ... we dare you)

Now Charles George and Brian found Oxygen Pot,
A fait accomplis despite water not hot,
Van der Graaf generated power we know,
Was this how he lit up his hand held A.F.L.O.
His hand held A.F.L.O. his hand held A.F.L.O.
Without which he'd never find his way out of O. (FD.)

Well Savage and Wooding and Drew (Now old men),
Were certainly quite independent back then,
They studied at Bristol and learned how to spell,
the words that they used to describe O.C.L.
Describe O.C.L., describe O.C.L.
But this was long after they had found Swildon's
Twel (ve).

We'll now sing of Crossley - a Yorkshire* man he,
Filmed rescue in Dido's for thee Bee Bee See...
He answered the three nines emergency call,
No mug shots - just three words, Huh - it's not much at
all,
It's not much at all, It's not much at all,
No fame for a lad thought so handsome, but small.

(* Again 'Lancashireman' didn't scan. As I
explained to 'Mr C' - Scanning is something
'Northern scum' doesn't do)

Now Carter and Cordingley dive in Malham Cove.
Their taste is impeccable in Wetsuits of Mauve,
Their finds down in Malham are from Heaven sent
But John up in Derbyshire was MAGNIFICENT!
Was MAGNIFICENT was MAGNIFICENT,
He goes down so well - we suspect that he's bent*!!

(* Read what you will into that. We of course
refer to decompression sickness. At least that's
what our solicitor has advised us to say.)

Now your chairman Fish - he don't dive any more.
Just talks about bikes and God what a large Bore"
He rides his Ducati to France for the Bol,
Not bad for an old fart who lives on the dole.
He lives on the dole, he lives on the dole,
Lifelong unemployment is his personal goal.

(No fear of lawsuits on that verse its all true.'

Disclaimer:

Any similarity to persons either living or dead is entirely
intentional. Any offence caused through these lyrics ... is
a bonus.

The Belfry Boys Apologize Unreservedly to anyone
they've left out ... we'll get you later. If you war.:
revenge ... it was all Fred's idea ...!!

Around the Wessex (& partly Wessex) Digs

Richard Witcombe

Arachnid Rift NGR 66854777

An open cave in the west face of Cook's Wood Quarry, Stoke St Michael, spotted and probably first entered by Rob Taviner in early 1996. A tight 20' ladder climb drops into a roomy rift which heads straight into the hillside for about 40' in the general direction of Stoke 6. It terminates in a mud choked narrower section which has been dug for 10' or so.

Barrow Rake Swallet

Work recently resumed, and slumped material has been cleared out. The rift associated with the early digging has been relocated at a depth of 26'.

Bath Swallet

The diggers are working downwards beneath the breakthrough chamber about 20' in from the entrance. Much grouted walling has been built but at a depth of 15' more solid rock faces are emerging.

Car Lot Dig NGR 59834655

An uninspiring short-term dig (January 1996) in a partly rubbish-filled stone pit close to Little Crapnell Farm. No natural passage was found.

Charterhouse Cave

There has been no recent work in the terminal boulder choke.

Clay Holes

The trickle of a stream that enters Clay Holes for most of the year creates a deep pool at the bottom of the slope that takes a considerable pumping effort to clear. As a result digging is restricted to a short summer window each year. In 1995 the team managed nearly three months from July to September, excavating a totally choked, meandering phreatic tube which after ten feet or so entered a small mud filled chamber. Spoil is taken to the surface by means of a tractor hauled JCB bucket travelling up steel guide rails.

Cuckoo Cleeves

The attack on the inlet stream passage close to the bottom of the cave has been called off for the time being.

Drunkard's Hole

Another site that is being "rested".

Eighteen Acre Swallet

The 1994 dig followed a small mud choked rift - Dentistry Pot - off to the right of the main passage. When work resumed in June 1995, attention shifted to the ruckle floor of the main passage below the 6' drop. A depth of 10' has been reached, following one good wall, but a good deal of concrete walling has had to be built to safeguard the other faces.

Honeymead Hole NGR 60054620

This, the latest Hymac assisted dig, is situated 100 yards to the south of Little Crapnell Swallet. A shallow depression was mechanically excavated over the weekend of 27/28 April 1996 to reveal a huge, soil filled crater of indeterminate size but 25' to 30' deep in places. At the last minute on the Sunday, a draughting hole was opened up between a small cliff face and a crumbling mass of rock, and this was quickly safeguarded by a dry stone wall. Concrete rings have now been installed, and the ATLAS/Wessex diggers are following a loose, ruckly rift downwards, grouting and shoring as they go.

Hopeful Two NGR 64534694

Rob Taviner continues to toil away in this corner of the massive Blake's Farm Swallet complex. He has excavated about 60' of passage but has reached an area of confusing cross rifts.

Hurricane Hole NGR 66854790

A too tight rift in Cook's Wood Quarry emitting a very strong draught. It was spotted by Rob Taviner who is attempting to enlarge it using the plug and feathers technique. Like Arachnid Rift, it is heading along the strike towards the far reaches of Stoke Lane Slocker.

Lime Kiln Dig

This site conveniently placed alongside Nine Barrows Lane just above Upper Pitts was last dug seriously about fifteen years ago. The current diggers are enlarging a narrow inclined rift which heads underneath the lane towards shallow depressions in the field opposite.

Lodmore Swallet

NHASA continue their shaft sinking and concrete walling, and have now reached a depth of nearly 70', still following a continuous solid rock wall. Spirits are kept up by the occasional appearance of sizeable "holes among the boulders".

Longwood Vallev Sink

After ten years of effort, this ATLAS/Wessex dig has been reluctantly abandoned. Enlargement of the high level tube had involved drilling patterns of five or six shotholes in very hard rock, and the resultant bang had broken up little more than the length of the shotholes. The debris had then to be removed by tramway. Forty feet in, Clive North inserted a miniature video camera along the passage and could see no enlargement for thirty feet or so.

Parfitt's Cave NGR 65524718

A tiny field collapse 15' to the north east of the walled entrance to Withybrook Slocker was excavated by ATLAS/Wessex diggers in January 1996 to reveal a large steeply descending bedding plane chamber ending in a tight rubble and mud choke. The cave emits a powerful draught which may be associated with Withybrook Slocker or possibly the upper reaches of Withyhill Cave. Given the sensitivity of the Fairy Cave area, the cave is gated and locked (keys held by Rob Taviner and Rich Witcombe).

Resurrection Hole NGR 60154637

An intermittent sink in shaly limestone north of Little Crapnell Swallet excavated by Dave Speed using a tractor JCB in April 1996. The entrance has been piped and Shepton Mallet CC diggers are now enlarging some very small mud choked passages below.

Rolling Thunder. Swildon's Hole

Work recently resumed in this inlet below the old Forty Foot Pot. The diggers are now 70' in, widening a narrow rift which has large chunks of broken stal amongst the floor debris.

Rushy Ground Swallet

A small bedding plane chamber off to the left of the high level passage was the scene of regular digging during 1994 and 1995. A way on in the floor was followed for ten feet, but after passing beneath a tiny air space, the passage petered out in a packed mass of solution rotted boulders.

St Luke's Pot

Sporadic digging using a powered winch and impressive shaft headframe has taken the depth to 40'. Much of the walling is shattered scree and rocks, lightly cemented by stal, and more shoring and grouting will be needed to progress any further.

Viaduct Sink

The ATLAS/Wessex dig below Downside Aven has been abandoned. A small stream was encountered flowing down a low bedding plane but enlargement work ceased when the passage degenerated into a tiny rift which could be seen continuing without change for at least 15'. A narrow draughting slot in the roof of the main streamway beyond Bridged Rift Junction still needs to be examined.

"Other hands, in other days, will have much to add to my story."

H.E.Balch

WCC Bookings

A small Wessex contingent is visiting the **NAMHO Field Meet** on Dartmoor in September (27-29th) for which bookings have already been made. However, if you want to go as an individual and meet everyone down there, contact Pia Benson on 01822 855263.

Following the cancellation of the **Yorkshire meet** in June, it has been re-arranged for December 7th/8th, again staying at the YSS. Contact Les Williams if you are interested in going.

If you require directions to the club meet at **Assynt**, in October, please contact Tav on 01749 840747

25 years ago

Journal No. 136, Vol. 11. Aug 1971

CLUB NEWS - p275/6

... A.G.M. and the Annual Dinner arrangements ... Saturday the 16th of October 1971, the A.G.M. being at Priddy Village Hall starting at 1500hrs prompt. The Annual Dinner will be held once again at the Masonic Hall in Frome 1930hrs. for 2000hrs.

... Richard Kenney was appointed to look after the Clubs premises at Upper Pitts. ... involves the responsibility of the upkeep of the Headquarters and site. If the building is not properly maintained it will soon deteriorate, as indeed it has since it was built just over a year ago. ... At the moment it does not present an imposing picture with a rusty oil tank and fire escape, leaking drains and broken windows. The Headquarters is used regularly by only a small proportion of the Club membership, and of these an even smaller number actually help in the work there.

... the South Wales Caving Club have broken through from Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I to II. ... Closer to home the N.A.S.A. diggers have at long last been rewarded after many years of digging at North Hill. ... the air circulation is practically non existent ... Rumour has it that even the candles declined to burn on one survey trip.

Committee Abstracts - p276

The bill for printing The Great Storms and Floods on Mendip 1968 had now been paid and the sales were said to be satisfactory.

... the County Planning Authorities seemed to be quite happy about the proposed extension the H.Q., provided it was constructed of the same materials of the H.Q.

The Club would negotiate on behalf of Sidcot School S.S., as they wished to have an Official Wessex Dig in Charterhouse area.

'Friday Night' Caving Group

... smallest party to date has been one of 4. On that occasion it was too wet to go caving and we observed several new sumps forming in Hunters Lodge. Our records to date have been a party of 22 to G.B. - all with permits etc and another of 18 to Lamb Leer. We didn't meet the farmer but we left his weeks beer money on the front doorstep - lucky man.

ARTICLES

Mendip Exhibition Preview	- by Mrs Blakeney-Edwards	- p280
In Search of Palmers (Lamb Leer)	- by Mike Haselden	- p285
The Great Cave of Chevre-Eglise	- by N Castanet	- p289
Trog of the Trias	- by Dave Drew	- p2 91

OTHER

Forthcoming Events	- B. S. A. National Speleological Conference/Exhibition
	- Evening Symposium on Prussiking
List of Members	- interesting to see who's still around!

The Bishop's Bones

Maurice Hewins

Banwell Caves are rightly scheduled as an SSSI because of their extensive archaeological contents. They are also a major bat roost, so access times are somewhat restricted.



Main Chamber in Stalactite Cave

Early in the last century, Banwell was arguably the most important Mendip cave site apart from Wookey. Miners had worked Banwell Hill for years, winning lead, calamine and ochre. Just prior to 1800, a large void was discovered, only to be subsequently lost for 30 years. Then, an enterprising local farmer William Beard, engaged two old miners to search. A blocked shaft was excavated and the Stalactite Cave was explored as far as the famous "Bishop's Chair". The first man to sit in it was the philanthropic Bishop, George Henry Law, of Bath and Wells. With his support and that of the local vicar, Beard set out to open the cave to the public. Proceeds were intended to fund a new charitable school.



Iron Ladder to Stalactite Cave

However, while digging a more convenient entrance, Beard struck the Bone Cave with a rich deposit of dismembered animal bones. At the time most learned opinions attributed such finds to Noah's flood. Bishop Law must have been chuffed to have this on his land.



Bone wall in Bone Cave

Beard, a worthy predecessor to Herbert Balch, meticulously removed the better specimens for study and neatly stacked the rest round the walls. Many were there to see, when a mixed ability group of 19 Wessex members visited on May 18th this year.

Below the floor just off Bone Chamber, Ruby Chamber was reached by a fixed ladder and a short crawl. Red ochre colours the stalagmite columns, many of which were found to be broken, when the Axbridge first entered.

The Stalactite Cave descended steeply to a short fixed ladder, which led us into Main Chamber. There were fine rock formations and beyond what Brian Pitman called a squeeze, some residual stalactite flows marked the end of Beard's Cave. With childish glee most of us stopped to sit in the "Bishop's Chair".



Bishop Jim on the Throne

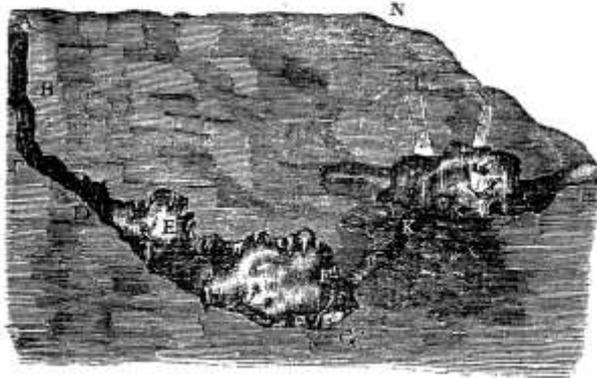
The Great Chamber was reached by some 20ft of crawling through a boulder choke which Axbridge had opened in 1970. Few of us were expecting such an impressive cave. The floor sweeps down to a great mass of boulders. The more foolhardy amongst us worked their way through the unstable looking ruckle into Green Lake Chamber.

We all agreed that Banwell is a classic collectors item, so a collection was made towards the restoration of the prospect tower on Banwell Hill.

Thanks are due to John Chapman and Cliff Dockerell of the Axbridge for arranging the trip.

BANWELL CAVERNS

FROM "THE DELINEATIONS OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET
BY JOHN RUTTER 1829



EXPLANATION OF THE VERTICAL SECTION

- A. The Entrance at the side of the hill of the Stalactite cave leading to
- B. The original shaft, which was sunk about thirty years since. It was re-sunk under the direction of Mr. Beard
- C. The second landing plaice, where was found a piece of candle incrusted with a coating of stalagmite.
- D. The continuation of the shaft, leading by a rough flight of slippery steps to
- E. The immediate entrance, or upper division of the cavern.
- F. The Stalactite cave; being an immense vaulted apartment, about 150 feet in length and 35 feet in height. The arched roof is hung with stalactites, and the floor strewn with fragments of rock, partially covered with the same material.
- G. The Bishop's Chair, formed of a mass of rock, covered with stalagmite.
- H. The entrance to the bone cavern, leading to the almost horizontal shaft, originally sunk with the intention of making a more convenient entrance to the stalactite cave; but which unexpectedly led to the discovery of
- I. The bone cavern; the floor of which was covered to the depth of several feet with loose stones and fragments of rock, intermingled with a large quantity of bones, and smaller portions of mud, sand and gravel.
- K. The descending fissure, in which the bones are left in their original state. It has not been thoroughly explored, but it evidently communicated at some early period with the Stalactite cave.
- L.M. Two natural entrances to the cave, now filled up with a broken and rubbly mass.
- N. The relative situation of the Bishop's Cottage.

Wookey Tiger

Bob "the bast'd" Scammell

This rather characteristic photo-study of a well known Wessex "Tiger" in action was taken at Wookey on the 3rd of Feb this year.



Les "Thundergob" Williams (T) said he was there to do his utmost to further the advancement of this well-worn hole.

At the moment of the photo he was busy explaining to an awe-struck crowd that by hanging on some ropes and metalwork he was about to; "go in search of the so-far undiscovered reaches of the 'Wessex Series'", but this time starting at the actual resurgence and working backwards with hopes of finding the connection fairly quickly, because he only had an hour or so before the Hunters closed and his batteries were already running low. We desperately wanted to explain that the foundations of the New Severn Crossing might well impede his progress in that direction, but couldn't, because as time passed it gradually dawned on us, that Les is able to speak even when he's breathing in!

To cut a short story shorter; in true "Tiger" fashion Les eventually swung off into the darkness, and we swung off to the pub. Did he ever find the connection? - apparently not, the congratulatory pint sat warming steadily on the bar but he never made it there either.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Rosie

I see little point in prolonging the correspondence about Club use of SRT equipment unnecessarily, but Nick Williams' reply to my letter in the Journal deserves a few comments.

While visiting Upper Pitts recently, I found the tackle store unlocked (which I believe is now Club policy) and an amount of SRT gear - ropes, belays, etc - readily available therein.

This begs the question: is this tackle the property of the Club? If so, it tends to negate Nick's assertion that 'it may be more than a year before we can actually put the AGM's decision into effect'. If it belongs to a private individual, then there seems nothing to stop any casual member from booking it out and using it. Either way, there appears to be no control on who uses this tackle, or where or how. There would also seem to be no way of logging its use, cleaning, storage, or possible damage. This is exactly the scenario I have been concerned about. The mere fact that this tackle is readily available to anyone would put the Club in a very invidious position should there be an accident resulting from its failure.

On the subject of liability, those Wessex who were members in the early seventies may recall an incident in Lamb Leer where a claim was made against the Club for personal injury. Admittedly, the injured party was a minor, but in the event, the insurance company settled out of court for an undisclosed sum, and the case was never subjected to scrutiny in a court of law. The whole area of legal liability is largely uncharted, but there is a growing tendency for people to seek substantial sums for alleged injuries, and it is well-accepted that if the party perceived to be at fault is insured, then it is more likely that a claim will be pursued. It is not inconceivable that an insurance company will show that for some reason its policy was invalidated, and then the burden of meeting a claim for damages will fall equally on every member of the Club, whether or not they were directly or indirectly involved with the incident, or even if they are no longer active cavers.

I suggest that the Tackle Officer should remove these items of equipment from the tackle store forthwith, and that no SRT gear should be available as Club tackle until the matter has been discussed again at the AGM

All the best, Phil

1st August 1996

Editorial

Well, I've survived my first year as Editor of the Wessex Cave Club and it certainly seems to have gone quickly. Generally I have received favourable comments but if there is something you don't agree with, please let me know so that I can put it right - I'm still learning the boundaries of this job! Also, I'd like to hear of any changes that you, the members, would like so that I can produce a Journal that contains what you want to see.

This year I haven't been able to do as much caving as I'd have liked due to illness, but hopefully I can redress this situation during the next year. Due to this, there may be some things that I haven't been able to keep up-to-date with - if this is the case, please accept my apologies.

Don't forget to keep writing what you've been doing in the logbook - as you can see from Nigel's article (page 147), it can trigger some one's mind to write about a previous experience.

On a very out-of-date note, does anyone know the whereabouts of the first aid kit that was taken out to the Berger last year? Seeing as how I'm in the medical profession, I'm trying to update the first aid kit in the hut. I know that there were some useful items which travelled (and presumably returned *somewhere!*) to France - please contact me if you have any ideas.

I presume I'll still be doing this job next year, so until the next Journal, happy caving

Rosie

Library Acquisitions

PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL March 1996 No 125

Little Bounds Lode, Nanpaen Mine - history, current state and survey
New constitution 1996
Club trip to Spain 1995 - Santander and the Matienzo area. This is a worthwhile read for anyone visiting the region
Porthledden Mine, St Just, Cornwall - history, description and current activity
The Seal Hole Cavern, Cornwall - large sea cave near St Agnes which is connected to parts of Polberro Mine. Also has one of the best excuses for not going caving - a large angry seal. The cave is tidal and reached by a rather sporting swim. Sketch plan of the cave.
Cueva Valline, Arrendondo, Spain - description of the continuing work in the Matienzo Area in conjunction with Espeleo Climb Tortosa Group, who hold the permit for this cave

NSS NEWS April 1996 Vol 54 No 4

Barrack Zourie Cave, Schoharie Co. New York State, USA - the discovery of Barrack Zourie, description, photographs and surveys

UNIANO PAULISTA DE ESPELEOGIA DESNIVEL Nov 1995 Vol 1 No 3

XI Expedicao Sao Vicente 1995 - general resume with further reports on the expedition's achievements
Diagrams, tables, etc
Pra Nao Dizer que Falei das Flores - blunders and mistakes on the expedition
Internet report
I Expedicao Lapa Sem Fim preliminary results - Endless Cave is a maze cave in the north of Minas Gerias State, mined for saltpeter, but lost for a number of years. History, maps and a line survey

UNIANO PAULISTA DE ESPELEOGIA DESNIVEL Feb 1996 Vol 1 No 4

Relatorio de Actividades 1995 - a summary of the U P de E 1995 activities
II Expedicao Lapa Sem Fim - Endless cave second expedition report and a survey
Lapa de Sao Vicente Salao Talameira - this is the last of the known caves along the Sao Vicente River. Some 2500m of streamway surveyed and a further 2000m of new cave with ongoing leads. Survey included
Caverns na Eslovenia Uma Rapida Viita - a brief trot round the tourist caves of Slovenia with photographs
Relato de Incident - a survey party caught out by a flash flood
Log: Jan-Dec 1995 - what the members have been doing

WSG NEWSLETTER March 1996 No 15

Internal Club activities

WSG Library Catalogue 1995

Compiled by Mathew Setchfield. April 1994 - December 1995. This is a very comprehensive document. Published in looseleaf form, for easier updating

BELFRY BULLETIN Vol 49 No 458

Uranium Series Dating of St Cuthbert's Swallet - the how, the why and the wherefore, with diagrams, sketches and maps

MNRC NEWSLETTER June-July 1996 No 54

Club & caving news, Mendip DIY, and an introduction to diving in a manner not to be recommended.
Revenge of the 'Whimps' - a few days caving in Wales
Better Days - mountaineering on the Kletterstieg in Germany
Cuevas de Los Verdes (Green Caves), Lanzarote - a volcanic tube cave 7km long

JOURNAL OF CAVES AND KARST STUDIES Vol 58 No 1

Previously published as the NSS Bulletin Journal of Caves and Karst Studies
The role of Cave Exploration in Karst Research, Mexico - geology and hydrology of a large, high-relief, sub-tropical cave system - sistema Purification Tamaulipas Pleistocene Cave Fauna from Peninsular India
Extremely low frequency radio emissions in Bat Caves, USA
Cave Pseudosinella and Oncopodura new to science, USA
What are "Anthodites?"
What are Anthodites? reply
Bulgarian Archaeoastronomy Site or Bulgarian Quarry Site? - "Shades of Chariots of the Gods"

DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER April - June 1996 No 91

Regional important geological sites working party - Report to the Assistant Conservation and Access Officer for DCA
Lathkill Dale SSSI - Nov 95 - a review of the site and the implications for the future
The radon principle made simple - "in a series of questions and answers it is proposed to clarify the problem of radon in caves and put the matter to rest"
Conservation and Access in Derbyshire
Hagg Gill, Yorkshire - club trip

UNIANO PAULISTA DE ESPELEOGIA DESNIVEL May 1996 Vol 2 No 1

Cabana Cave - a surveying trip that seems to have gone well, but on the 5hr back-pack out from the cave entrance, some of the party were held up by flooded rivers, nearly resulting in a callout
Casa da Pedra, Abismos Sobre o Portico - the entrance of the Casa da Pedra is some 215m deep and the cavers have been trying to find an alternative high-level route. This is the results so far, with 3 surveys

**MORGANNWG CAVING CLUB
JOURNAL June 1986 No 1**

Picos de Europa, Spain - brief history of UK caving in the Picos - a rather handy, if dated, guide
Zen and the Art of Sheep Rescue
Cavers and the National Museum of Wales - invitation for cavers to use the National Museum
Going Underground with the World Wide Magazine - these magazines were full of true stories of daring and heroics always slightly understated. Caves are of course places of mystery and so are quite well- represented - Martel, Baker, etc
Carry on Caving - poetry!
Logbook - reports of caving trips
The factor of crawlability - unpublished research paper
Climbing in Daren Cilau - the Time Machine area
Caving: a first impression Paris in the Spring - a visit to the Catacombes

**MORGANNWG CAVING CLUB
JOURNAL Dec 1986 No 2**

Annual Report of Scottish Branch
Cave diving in Danny Rogoff - Spike Milligan appears to have had a hand in writing this report
Speleological Palaeontology
Caving with Cubes - the use of flash cubes, etc underground
Scientific Applications of Cave Photography Equipment - yet another unpublished paper
Wild World Magazine - continued from Vol 1
Bridge Cave, Skutustadir, Iceland - description of the cave, its formation and a survey with inset map of Iceland
The Patron St of Cavers - St Benedict according to Brewsters Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. (Now I always thought it was St Wadsworth, and in the North, St Theakstone)
In memorium: Walter Fogg - - a belated appreciation of W Fogg (Cave dwellers in the Loire Valley, France)
Embryo Hydrology - a brief history of water tracing
Excuses: how to avoid going caving - no really great excuses here
A life in the day of..... - more activities in the Hard Rock area of Daren Cilau
First impressions of Andros, Bahamas

**THE MILWR TUNNEL
Chris Ebbs
1897 - 1987**

This 67 page well-illustrated book describes the history of the tunnel in North Wales and its rationale for being constructed, plus caves intercepted

**REGARDS 1996/23
BULLETIN DE L'UNION
BELGE
DE SPELEOLOGIE**

El Barro (Mexico): P410 (-455m) - the story of a trip into this incredible open air pit of 455m depth, with photos and diagrams
La Challe et les Ruines du Chateau de Beaufort (Belgium) - the climbing routes (mostly easy) at the old limestone quarry of Beaufort, and some of the history of the Solier Valley, with photographs and diagram
Latraversee du Kilimanjaro (East Africa) - a Kilimanjaro crossing, by an Alpine route with a final ascent to the summit (up by Machame and down by Mweka), with map and photographs
Les Chauves-souris (3rd and final report of this bat series) - deals with the characteristics of their way of life and the problems they face to survive
Meandres Forces (S.F.) - in an undated future, a renegade is condemned to 35 years of subterranean imprisonment in a computer simulator. A *not very original* story that smacks of Tron
Canyoning dans l'Osans (France) - 3 canyons of varying difficulty
New finds: Chantoir Krypta. Province of Liege (Belgium), Grotte de Bleurmont, Liege and Le Chantoir de Beron R, Liege

**CAVES AND CAVE LIFE
Philip Chapman**

First published 1993. £12.99 soft bound. Remaindered at £7. Good general guide to the more academic side of caving; an easy read

SOUTH WALES SURVEY

A copy of the results of the Penffordd-goch Borehole NGR SO2553-10580. This is the mystery missing Data Logger borehole log

Donations to the Library:

Northern Caves 1: Wharfedale and the North-east

D Brook, G M Davies, M H Long and P F Ryder
Dalesman Books 1988
Donated by Michael Cooper

Postlethwaits: Mines and Mining in the English Lake District

Republished by Michael Moon at the Beckermet Bookshop, Beckermet, Cumbria 1975
Donated by Michael Cooper

Climbing Terms and Techniques

Ken Crocket
Published Fraissr Stewart 1993
Donated by Jim Rands

The Caves of Karst

Lee Hoffman
Dobson science fiction 1969
Ex libris Winchester Public Library Service
Good working copy with slightly torn dust wrapper
Karst is limestone planet, which has large underwater cave systems which are exploited for their minerals, an underwater space cowboy western
To SF buffs, worth a read
To cave divers, pick the holes in the plot
Donated by Jim Rands

Caves and the Marvellous World Beneath Us

Robert Stenuit with Mark Jasinski
Nicholas Vane, London 1966
Translated Barry Pearman
Donated by Peter Hann

The Wooden Horse

Eric Williams
A 2nd World War tunnelling story
Donated by Tusker

Pigeon Post

Arthur Ransome
Children's novel about the Lake District and the old mine workings
Donated by Tusker

Thanks very much. All donations are more than welcome. The librarian would also like to thank Alan D Constance (late of Old Market, Bristol) for publications and a large number of storage boxes

Hensler's Dig: Continued

Nigel Graham

I was interested to read, as they say in certain other publications (!), that Wessex interest in Hensler's Dig in Swildon's Hole has been re-awakened ("Logbook Extracts" J.WCC 23 (248) p90). "A couple of inches" progress is about the normal per session in there, due to its nature!

For those unfamiliar with it, it is the passage up in the Water Chamber wall, in the lower true-right corner. It starts as a big passage, but then shrinks....

It was started by the late Eric Hensler while stationed "somewhere in England", during the War. Apparently, what with clothes rationing and suchlike, Eric used to strip off just inside the cave and dig practically in the buff, so not wearing his clothes out. Swildon's was not the teeming place it is now, especially during the War. I can truthfully say I did not emulate Eric, but the Dry Ways are useful in that I could reach the dig dry, so I needed only "dry grots": more comfortable clothing for dry, warm digs.

I took on the dig some time in the '80s, and as far as I can gather from talking to him at a Wessex Dinner, was the first to work on it since Eric left it. "*I'll have to get my caving jacket out and come and have a look*", he had commented, but I don't think he did.

Eric had left it as a diminishing crawl ending where a thick stalagmite floor approached the roof. He had made a small hole through the calcite into the sediment below. I enlarged the hole and cut the stalagmite back until I could excavate the sediment easily. This point is the step a few feet back from the sharp bend.

To facilitate manoeuvring - and the climb in and out of the passage, for which I need a short sling to aid the descent - I also lowered the floor for some way in from the passage entrance.

This became my veranda for refreshment breaks, when I spent a few hours at a time digging. It could be an entertaining spot, especially in dry conditions, when I could watch the antics of confused visitors trying to find their way back up-cave with no

stream to follow. Frequently they would try to navigate from the bottom of the trench below my eyrie, instead of looking around from the higher parts of the chamber floor. It was difficult to resist giving them such advice as, "Aim for the soft black bit between the hard grey bits!"

Digging became slow and arduous as I approached and rounded the corner. Working solo usually, I would fill a paint-can with spoil, wriggle round and empty it into a drag-bucket for eventual emptying into the streamway. The depth of the excavation around the corner was a compromise between maximum headroom and not getting my feet jammed in the tapering cleft!

The fill is coarse sediment reinforced with stalagmite, as tough as an old Wessex Wonderboot. There are no voids for a driven chisel to displace the material into, hence the slow forwards progress. The last time I worked it - and I did not abandon it, just did not get a "round tuit" - I estimated I'd reached about halfway horizontally between the dig entrance and a prominent joint in the Water Chamber wall.

That joint may have turned the passage back parallel to the Water Rift, heading into the unknown. Jim Rands and I examined the Water Rift carefully. Jim, a far better climber than I, worked along high in the roof. We found no trace of Hensler's Dig re-entering there, unless it is hidden by flowstone around the head of the Old Forty, so it may be more than merely an oxbow.

So good luck, Tall Graham, Jim, Debs, Samira and Gareth: you might inspire me to get back in there again myself!

Before leaving the Water Chamber, let us have a look at one or two other byways. Climb into a roof passage on the true left at the upstream entrance to the chamber, and you are in the lower OXBOWS, leading off left up-cave to rejoin the Wet Way elsewhere - and to the Wednesday-Nighters' BUTCOMBE CHAMBER, a large, hading rift quite unlike the surrounding passages. Ahead is a crawl into an oddity here: a phreatic tube ascending

steeply to boulders. Right is LOWBOW, dug by Pete Hann et al through a tight zig-zag to a none-too-pleasant choke.

Back in the Water Chamber, climbing up left of the huge block (once held against the roof by a column of infill) enters a muddy passage to another Hann & co dig. Water and bad air were problems there, and Hensler's Dig can become airless. I wondered if they could be ventilated by an ejector. Making the ejector would be reasonably easy on a suitable lathe. Plumbing would require a water-supply hose run from some distance upstream, in a heavily-used passage.

In passing, I may mention one or two other antics in the cave. Ever wonder who was digging opposite

the top of Shatter Pot? Alison Moody and I were, at her instigation, in apparently a tube descending parallel to the main passage. Alison pointed out other possibilities nearby, but we did not pursue them.

Perhaps the prize for optimism must go to a former Wessex member who swore blind that glory awaits he who enlarges the joint leading straight on from the sharp-right bend by those beautiful corrugated folds, beyond the Old Forty! He eventually conceded that a mere joint does not always mean miles of cave!

The Wessex has a long and proud history of finds large and small in Swildon's Hole, and Hensler's Dig does seem to point off the survey, as it were....

Isle of Portland

104 Page A4 Book

Written by Nigel Graham and Mike O'Connor

Written by local people who know the area and the caves.

This book covers more than just the caves; it has chapters on Lost Caves, Geology, History of Quarrying and notes on the coast path, Accommodation and the Portland Museum.

Together with 40+ surveys, diagrams and photo's.

No caving book is complete without caving songs which are a historical record of people, events and the caves themselves.

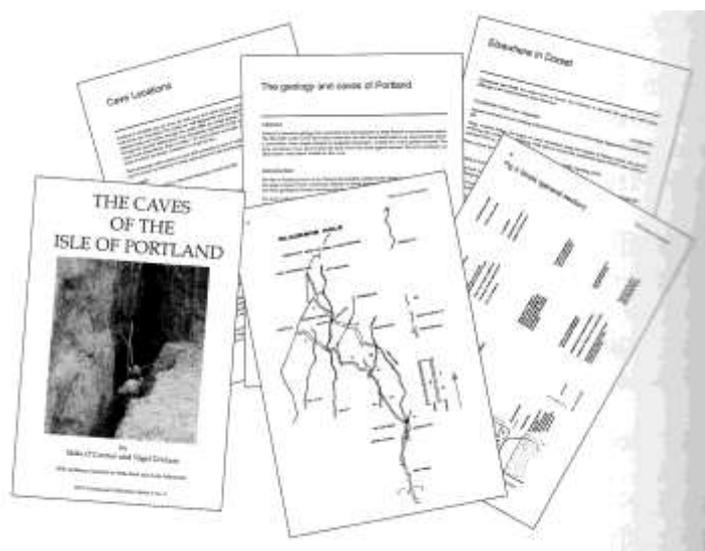
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This book is published by the
Wessex Caving Club.

Price of book £10.00 non members, £7.50 WCC members. P&P£1.50(GB)



Ghar Parau Foundation

Report on expeditions supported in 1995

1994/16 – Philippines

BEC

9 people 12 weeks £1600

Further exploration in collaboration with local cavers. Some new caving areas investigated and several new caves (up to 4km) were mapped.

1995/1(1) – Diving in the Dordogne, France

Rupert Skorupka

2 people 4 weeks £300

Attempt to extend a major resurgence (Emergence de Boulet) was abandoned due to poor support from French cavers. Attention diverted to use the Emergence do Ressel as a location for training in deep diving which was successfully accomplished and some useful new contacts made with the French.

1995/1(2) – Totesgibirge Austria

Cambridge University CC

16 people 5 weeks £500

A team with a large proportion of new faces went with the intention of looking for a complete new cave system rather than to return to previous leads. However, due mainly to poor weather they ended up returning to Kaninchenhole, with some considerable success. In all 2km was added to the system (now 14km+) and 72 leads were left for a return planned in 1996.

1995/1(3) – Matienzo, Spain

Juan Corrin

42 people 5 weeks £900

Continuing work in a number of caves, including diving projects. Over 7km of new cave was surveyed on a trip which concentrated on consolidating previous years' work and finding leads for the future.

1995/1(4) – Llambrion, Picos d'Europa, Spain

Tim Nichols

10 people 3 weeks £1100

Aimed at one of the toughest objectives in Europe, the British cavers joined an equal number of Spanish and Flemish cavers to explore and extend some very deep (1100m) caves in the Picos. Two new caves were explored, and one provides some promising leads for the coming year.

1995/1(5) - Picos, Spain

Gavin Newman

5 people 2 weeks £400

Small expedition to push a particular site was hampered by poor weather.

1995/1(6) – Slovenia

Imperial College Caving Club

No grant, no report (expedition received substantial alternative funding).

1995/1(7) - Saklikent Gorge, Turkey

Tim Stratford

5 people 2 weeks £500

A disappointing trip in terms of the amount of cave discovered (under 1k total) but a worthwhile exercise in systematic exploration of the gorge. One very large resurgence was noted, but unchoked entrances proved elusive and must be located at high altitude.

1995/1(8) - Southern Russia

Gay Outdoor Club

7 people 4 weeks £800

A collaborative venture with the Moscow University CC which built on previous trips to the same area. No major new finds were made. Contact with the locals is good and there will be a joint trip to the Gouffre Berger (France) in 1997.

1995/1(9) – Mongolia

Margaret Richardson

3 people 5 weeks £500

Small trip continuing previous work to add to the knowledge of caves in Mongolia. About 60 assorted small caves explored (including some in sandstone) but no major finds. Contacts made with Mongolian military.

1995/1(10) - Flor Botavia, Mexico

Jonathan Sims

No grant. No report

1995/1(11) – Thailand

Nicola Pickering

No grant, no report.

1995/1(12) – Honduras

Howard Jones

3 people 2 weeks £800

A reconnaissance trip hampered by poor weather

and illness/injury. Even so, 1km of new passage was explored and over 50 sites were visited although not the two most exciting areas which had been the original objectives. A return is planned.

1995/1(13) and 1995/1(14) – Laos

Adrian Gregory

3 people 2 weeks £1400

A reconnaissance trip successfully made several political contacts in the country and a return is anticipated in 1996 with a larger team to visit several areas of interest which were noted by the team.

1995/1(15) – Ethiopia

Huddersfield University SS

12 people 8 weeks £1700

A large expedition by inexperienced group to completely new area which discovered a number of new caves including the second longest in the country (3.3km). Good contacts with locals (including the formation of an indigenous caving group) and good prospects for future work.

1995/1(16) – Canada

Lancaster University SS

Expedition aborted due to lack of support in host country. Some participants went to Spain instead (see 1995/2(2)).

1995/2(1) - Diving in Matienzo, Spain

Rupert Skorupka

3 people 10 days £300

Attempt to extend a previously explored site using mixed gas to go below the previous limit (established on air) was thwarted by the physical size and dive profile of the access which prevented practical use of the available cylinders. Training dives were undertaken elsewhere and a return with different equipment is planned.

1995/2(2) - Tresviso, Spain

Lancaster University SS

6 people 2 weeks £400

Previous exploration had revealed a serious constriction in the main target site, but this was not passed this year. A couple of other minor sites were also investigated.

1995/2(4) – China

Andy Eavis

2 people 2 weeks £500

A reconnaissance trip in anticipation of a major expedition in 1996. Much useful information on potential sites for exploration and on political clearances gathered.

1995/2(4) - Irian Jaya

Andy Eavis

£1000

Delayed due to political situation in IJ.

1995/2(6) - Cuetzalen, Mexico

Anthony Revell

£1000

No report (still within reporting period at time of writing).

1995/2(7) - Chaipas, Mexico

Michael King

No grant, no report (expedition did not take place).

1995/2(8) - Florida diver training

Rick Stanton

£600

No report (still within reporting period at time of writing).

1995/2(9) - Flor Botavia, Mexico

Peter Ward

£600

No report (still within reporting period at time of writing).

Nick Williams

**Royal Geographical Society
Expedition Planning Seminar
9 - 10th November 1996**

This annual weekend seminar, with an extensive programme of talks and workshops, is where you'll find all the information you need for expedition planning - equipment, fund-raising, medical matters, etc

Over 50 leading field scientists and explorers from around the UK and Europe will gather in London for the weekend to be on hand to offer advice and share the benefit of their expertise.

Howard Jones will be running a caving workshop at the seminar in addition to speaking on the essential subject of budgeting and fundraising.

The cost is £50 for the weekend, including lunch, and will be on an advance booking basis only. For further information contact Fay Hercod on: 0171 581 2057 or email f.hercod@rgs.org

WCC Logbook Extracts

7.6.96 - Priddy Green Sink

Dom & Andy Sparrow

To Swildon's Hole - 7/8th person through. What a superb trip - the Mendip caving trip! 10/10 to the BEC boys..... Steady on Dominic!

14th - 16th June - Priddy Folk Festival

Maurice

Where have all the cavers gone? Fine weekend of splendid music, dance and family fun. Warm sunshine and excellent Butcombe. Oh why do the summers seem shorter with age? Another 27 weeks and the days start to lengthen again

21.6.96 - Watergate connection - Swildons

Dominic

A "pleasant" afternoon. What a trip this will make combined with PGS in and out

24.6.96 - Swildon's "Short" Round - 5½ hrs

Debs & Samira

A route finding exercise (neither of us had gone there before!) we KNOW that route now (and a few others besides!!!) Dominic obviously doesn't do the trip properly if he takes 1½ hrs!

29.6.96 - Priddy Green Sink -> Swildon's

Debs, Cookie & Adrian Hole (BEC)

Made it through without epics, injury or a lump hammer and chisel. Oh ye of little faith!

29.6.96 - Priddy Green Sink -> Swildon's

Les, Andy, Jeremy & Becky (BEC)

A slight hold up at the connection. Les might be officially thin but a lot of rock had other ideas. Some rocks were persuaded to move, thanks to a handy lump hammer.

2.7.96 - Stoke Lane

Dom & Martyn (SMCC)

Impending rain and high water levels ... caused me to wimp - came out ... to sunshine!

19.6.96 - Portland Evening

Steve Gobey & Nigel Graham

Wombled through end-to-end of Grove Cliff Caves. Yes, Portland's "Black Beast" was sighted in one of his lairs!

5.7.96 - West End, Cenotaph Aven and Southbank

Dom & Adrian (BEC)

Pitches re-rigged with joint BEC-Wessex tackle and both equipped for abseil and self-line. Adrian had a ladder snap so perhaps it's worth self-lining?!!!

16.6.96 - Baker's Pit

Les, Debs, Dave & Cookie

Did the "You'll never find the way" through trip and back (not allowed to use second entrance!)

6.7.96 - Shopping expedition to Bath

Rosie

Solo trip. Survived the tourists, held back on the money-spending and much more pleasant than going underground!!

6.7.96 - GB

Jo, Vern, Andy L, Mak

... avoided interrogation by Mendip Karst Police. Very little water around and few drips apart from the obvious 4

13.7.96

TNBD

I came, I saw, I got drunk! One lesson has been learnt:- "Always read your Journal, thoroughly, and check club dates, or you'll find out every bastard's gone to North Wales!" (and no, the Editor didn't ask him to write that - Rosie!!)

14.7.96

Hut like a graveyard. Sold a Swildon's survey. Returned a GB key downstairs. Went home

20.7.96 - Priddy Green -> Swildons

Max & Big Vern (perhaps not so big)

Classic Mendip trip. What tight bit!??

22.7.96

Maurice

Woke up in the mood for caving but nobody to go with. Decided to follow example of Victorian gentlemen and hire a guide. Went in search of Dominic Sealey (master caver) at Goughs. Actually quite interesting with several semi sporting bits. Very suitable for a geriatric

20.7.96- Priddy Green Sink -> Swildons

Simon & large unimportant guest ... I did wonder what the Bible was for but having reached those knackered old ropes we did think about going back for it

24.7.96- Priddy Green Bolting Trip

Andy Sparrow, Dom, Jamie, Simon & Dave

It all seemed so plausible at the outset - nice new shiny P-hangers throughout the cave - easy! However, the battery packs (for the drill) had other ideas - happy to come along for the trip but not

prepared to do any work - and then there was the resin ! Yes Dom, what happened to the resin??

13.7.96 - Ogof Hesp Alyn (dry Alyn cave)

Les, Andy, Debs, Cookie, Bean, Dave, Kier, Cal & Ann

The entrance is a free climb, whatever the locals may tell you. You do not need 100m of rope (down the 30ft pitch) and you do not need a full SRT kit

14.7.96 - Milwr Tunnel

Andy, Debs, Kier, Cris, Ebbs & John Lovejoy

Never have I heard a sound so enchanting as 12 cavers climbing down 25 fixed ladders in a 135m shaft, all calling "Ladder Free"! Nice trip to the lake - what can we say - it's a lake, it's a stunning azure blue, and if you fell in, you'd probably get wet ...excellent tour of the mine

14.7.96 - Milwr Tunnel Tiger's Trip

Mad Mick, Les, Dave, Cookie, Bean & Cal

Down Olun Goch Shaft. Tight-rope walked the rails over the stream cos the planks ain't too solid. Went up Powel's Lode, had a mooch up a natural aven discovered only the week before. Found evidence for a suspended railway across a natural chamber, now filled to the level of the passage. Off to a big water pump ... found a box marked explosives - on gingerly opening, was found to contain some dets, fuse cord and battery

21.7.96 - Skirwith Cave

Debs & Cookie, Andy & Simon

Not bad once you find the easy entrance. After Cookie and I had thrutched elbow-deep and sideways through a rift, came out at a collapse to find a nice big tunnel-shaped entrance into the real ex-showcave

21.7.96 - Swildons

Les, Mark & Julia

Weegie trip - Swildons dryways and down to Barnes' Loop. Kept socks dry whole trip!! (Dry Feet Caving Club - DFCC)

28.7.96 - GB Cavern

Les, Cookie, Julia

DFCC ride again ...proper job trip to view Les' prospective dig - draughting like a bastard. Cookie 9/10 for artistic style 3/10 for climbing ability

29.7.96 - Swildons Hole - Cowsh Aven Series

Dom & Martin (SMCC)

Continued bolting work down to 4 streamway. Much fun with just 2 people

Club Diary

1996

September

7th	Otter Hole trip
13-15th	Hidden Earth - Sheffield
22nd	WCC Committee meeting
27-29th	NAHMO Meet, Dartmoor
27-29th	BCRC Conference, Penwyllt, South Wales

October

10-14th	Assynt, Scotland 19th WCC AGM & Dinner
20th	Tuska Tour

November

1st/2nd	Derbyshire Meet
23rd	MRO Stomp

December

7/8th	Yorkshire Meet
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1997

March

22nd	NCA AGM
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June

23rd-27th	NSS Convention, Sullivan, Missouri, USA
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July

14th-17 th	NAMHO Conference, Matlock
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August

10th-17th	12th International Congress of Speleology, La Chaux de Fonds Switzerland
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