



THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

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DECEMBER 1996

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| <i>SURVEY SALES</i> | <i>MAURICE HEWINS</i> |

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Club News

Wessex People

Congratulations to **Nick & Anna Williams** on the birth of Freya Shirley Williams on Thursday 15th August this year. She was born at 8.03pm and weighed in at 8lb 12oz. Sorry about the lateness of this bit of news but unfortunately the little one missed the Journal deadline by 24hours!

Please note a change of address for (Tall) **Graham Prole & Helen O'Driscoll**. Their permanent contact address is now:

4 Kilmacud Avenue, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin, Republic of Ireland. Tel: 010 353 12889565

Other News

During December the **MRO** will be holding a lecture on Head and Spinal Injuries. For further details contact the MRO Secretary, Dany Bradshaw, on 01749 672848. The MRO are also holding a number of other lectures in the New Year - for dates see the Club Diary on page 20.

To try to keep up-to-date with **tackle supplies**, please remember to book all tackle in and out of the tackle store. On the subject of tackle, if anyone has got in their possession the **letter stamps** for stamping names/numbers on WCC tackle such as ladders, keys, etc, please could they return them as soon as possible - thanks.

Congratulations to Vern Freeman who is now a leader for **St. Cuthbert's Swallet**. Anyone wanting a trip, contact him at the number in the front of the Journal.

Once again the Wessex vs. BEC "**Golden Gnome Skittles Challenge**" will be contested in the New Year. It will be held at the New Inn on Saturday 4th January starting at 7.30pm and everyone is welcome to come and uphold the honour of the Wessex. The cost will be £1.50 per skittle player, payable on the night. Thanks to Phil Hendy for organising this event

If you wish to visit any **particular caves in the Dales** that need permits booking, please let the Caving secretary know and he will attempt to arrange the necessary documentation.

It is with regret that we report the **recent deaths** of the CDG President Dan Hasell and one of the early Wessex members, Ruth (Pug) Murrell.

* ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS *

As requested at the AGM, a current membership list, complete with phone numbers, will be printed in the next Journal.

*If you **DO NOT** want your telephone number to be published, please contact the membership secretary, Dave Cooke, by the start of January at the latest.*

Hut News

A large depression in **Upper Pitts carpark** was dug by others/JCB over the August BH weekend. On the weekend of 14/15th September, this was filled back in and the boundary marked with a line of kerbs. Thanks to Tall Graham, Grandad Rands, Phil Hendy, Brian Pitman, Colin Masters & Maurice Hewins, and to Judy Hewins for refreshments. A sofa was also burnt (without BEC help) and an expedition was made to Dulcote tip. The car park is now much improved and is near completion.

New Members

Stephen John Tucker:

24 Winslow Rd., Bromyard, Hereford, HR7 4TN
01885 488422

Paul Callister:

14 Ellys Rd., Radford, Coventry, CV1 4EW
01203 520955

Nicholas John Blundell:

46 Ainsbury Rd., Beechwood Gardens, Coventry, CV5 6BB
01203713849

Ray Saxton:

67 Westbury Drive, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8LJ
01625433651

Tina Ann Pitman:

19 Belvoir Avenue, Bottesford, Nottingham, NG13 0BL
01949842798

Ian Durham:

The Red Lion, Grantham Rd., Bottesford Nottingham, NG13 0DB
01949842218

Caving News

General

The NCA has now published the Report of the Radon Working Party under the title '**Radon Underground**'. It is in the form of a 24-page booklet and includes Definitions, Legislation and Guidelines for Minimising Exposure to Radon. It costs £3.25 (inc. P&P) - cheques made payable to NCA - and is available from:

*NCA Training Officer, Priddy Green House,
Priddy, Wells, Somerset, BA5 3BE.*

The **NCA Website** is at:
<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/nca>

TrogNet is a virtual library designed as a single point of entry to key Internet data on the world's sub-surface cavities. The major divisions are Caves, Mines and Tunnels, complete with subheadings, and the keywords are: Cave, Tunnel, Underground, Mine & Subterranean. TrogNet is at:
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hape/>

Mendip

There has been a report of a **home-made P-anchor**, resembling a DMM, being found installed in the Avon Gorge. If you come across a P-anchor which you think may not be a genuine NCA-approved installation, please report it to your regional Equipment Officer or Bolting Co-ordinator so that it can be checked.

Avens CEG have stated that they are giving up access to **Triple Hole** as carcasses have been dumped and they feel it is "medically unsafe".

Yorkshire

Ireby Fell Cavern has now been re-bolted with DMM's. Rope lengths needed are as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Ding and Dong Pitches</i> | <i>40m</i> |
| <i>Bell Pitch</i> | <i>30m</i> |
| <i>Shadow Route</i> | <i>60m</i> |
| <i>Well Pitch</i> | <i>35m</i> |

Note that the **deviation on Bell Pitch** is a thread belay, not a DMM. No DMM's have been placed on Rope Pitch as there is a good natural belay, and none have been placed on Pussy as this is considered free-climbable. All existing Petzl anchors have been or will be removed. Work has also begun on **stabilising the entrance slope**. There are some delicately placed keystones here so take care - this work has yet to be finished.

Derbyshire

As reported in the last Journal (Vol 23 No 251), the Meccano Passage fixed ladder in **Knotlow** will be removed shortly. Until DMM's have been placed, it is not possible to do a pull-through trip from Hillocks - warning notices will be placed in the Hillocks system to advise cavers of this.

If you are in **Knotlow** and encounter pollution, please report the date, time and location to the DCA C&A Officer. They are going to correlate the information in order to track down the source and put a stop to it.

The new edition of the **Peak Rigging Guide** is now available and includes details of all the DMM's in Derbyshire and several systems not included in the 1st edition of the Guide. It is on sale from shops at a price of £5.00, or by post from the DCA Secretary, Jenny Potts (cheques to DCA for £5.50 inc. P&P).

There are currently new owners at both farms for access to **Oxlow** and **Giant's Hole** but access arrangements remain unchanged for the present - call at the farm to ask permission and pay the small "trespass fee".

Wales

The keys for access to **Llethrid Swallet** are no longer held by Norman Lloyd, but can still be obtained from Penwyllt, Elsie Little or Kilvrough Manor.

Tooth Cave, the longest cave on Gower, is once again open to cavers. However, some issues have arisen regarding insurance and access so contact SWCC for further information.

The length of **Ogof Draenen** now exceeds 49.2km, accurately surveyed, and is still growing. The newly formed Pwll Du Management Group have now taken on the task of maintaining access and looking after the cave.

There are now a number of **DMM's in Welsh caves**, including Agen Allwedd, Ogof Draenen, Llanelly Quarry Pot and Jackdaw Quarry Pot - see **SPELEOScene** No 25 Sept/Oct 1996 for a complete list.

continued on overleaf

Report on the formation of the Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Mark Helmore

A meeting of interested parties was called on the 14th July 1996 to promote the formation of a Cave Management Group for the Pwll Du area. The main aims of the group will be:

1. *To advise and promote the conservation, management, scientific study and exploration of the caves of the area*
2. *To advise cavers in the responsible use of, and access to, the area*
3. *To encourage a free exchange of information between interested parties*
4. *To control access to Ogot Draenen*

The meeting was well attended by various groups including the Wessex Cave Club and others too numerous to mention, and was chaired by Bill Gascoigne.

Various discussions ensued throughout the meeting with the result of the construction of the draft constitution.

Basically, each interested party has an appointed representative as a member of the group. This representative is able to vote on any matters discussed at future meetings on their Clubs behalf. The formation of this group will hopefully result in the continued exploration of the Pwll Du area without creating access problems found in other areas.

A full copy of the minutes of the meeting is available on request

Note:

The permit secretary has changed from Tim Long to Huw Jones. The WCC does have a club key which is available on request from Mark Helmore, so contact Mark if you want to visit Ogot Draenen.

WCC Meets

A Wessex meet has been arranged to visit **Gough's Cave** in Cheddar on **Saturday 18th January 1996** in the evening - meet at Upper Pitts. The **Devon Speleological Society** (DSS) Hut in Buckfastleigh, Devon has been booked for **24/25/26th January**. Basically you need to find the Waterman Arms the far side of Buckfastleigh and ask for directions, as the Hut can be hard to find. Read the article on page 13 to whet your appetite for this area of the world and what goes on there!

There is a trip to **Bath Stone Mines** on **Saturday 15th February** - meet at Upper Pitts on the morning.

The Wessex has booked a **Derbyshire meet** on 21st/22nd/23rd February, staying at the TSG - Peak Cavern has been provisionally booked - more details to follow. There is also the possibility of an **Easter meet in Ireland** - contact the Caving Secretary so that he can get an idea of the number of people who may be interested.

For details of these or any other Wessex meets, please contact Les Williams, the Caving Secretary - address/telephone. number at front of Journal.

continued from page 3

Forest of Dean

Be warned that the rock in some of the Forest Caves, in particular that in **Wet Sink**, is not always secure, so hand- and foot-holds can break away.

Also, do not mistake the route to Zuree Aven in **Slaughter Stream Cave**. When approaching the area of Zuree Aven from the Grave Yard Chunnel direction, do not follow the passage going off to the right with the stream and a crossroads - this is not the route to Zuree Aven and the 8m drop at the end of this passage is not free-climbable.

Slaughter Stream Cave now has 4 DMM's on the **Wet Sink entrance pitch**. The left anchor point at the Pen Pot 40ft has been removed because of concern about the stability of the rock.

Foreign Exploits

The following is news taken from the WCC Logbook regarding exploits abroad. If anyone has any articles from their trips please write in and I'll publish them, but until then, here is a small taster of what lies beyond our shores:

13.8.96 – Groaning Cave, Flat Tops Wilderness White River Plateau, Colorado, USA

Andy & Joanna Sparrow, Bruce Albright (WCC & NSS) & 2 OUCC members

This is Colorado's longest cave at around 9 miles. The entrance is scenically situated at 10,000 feet making trips into the cave quite breathless and strenuous. A large entrance drops down to a locked gate, and then a short crawl enters a phreatic complex of mainly roomy and easy passages. The air temperature is quite cold at about 40F but the cave is bone-dry. There are some good formations including vast amounts of 'popcorn' concretions and delicate gypsum flowers. The system is complex and probably originates from ancient geo-thermal flow. An enjoyable time was had, although the altitude took its toll and prevented a long trip (12+ hours required) to the far reaches. 5 hrs.

14.8.96 - Fixin' to Die Cave

Andy Sparrow & Bruce Albright (WCC & NSS)

This is close to Groaning but requires a much longer walk including exposed scrambles and traverses. An easy entrance (where Bruce thinks he smelt mountain lion) descends to an easy traverse over a deep rift and an 80 foot handline descent. A climb up leads to a pleasant phreatic bore-tube of stooping and walking height. We took a side passage to Hanging Lake, a large suspended pool reached by a calcited chimney which proved to be the only water in the cave. Back on the main route we reached a dig and short crawl to the base of the Z-bend chimney, which rises in a series of easy climbs into more tube-ways. The main route terminated at a deep pit and Bruce had not explored the cave beyond this point. We traversed over a deep rift (The Widow Maker) but could find no viable way on beyond and so returned. An excellent cave. 3hrs.

14.9.96 - California USA

"Speleo Babe" *Carmen* goes caving with speleo guys of California. Crystal 67 in Sequoia National Park - let's show these yanks how it should be done!!

Keith & Derek Sanderson, plus Dave Ormrod & Colin Whitfield (BICC) received an invitation to join a French team visiting the Cigalere in the French Pyrenees from 1st-10th August earlier this year. The following is some of what they got up to:

3.8.96 – Gouffre Martel

Got down to about 700' and explored some newly found rifts. Bolted and dropped a new 50' pitch (Puits Anglais!) and found ourselves back in the lower streamway!. Interesting place. 5hrs.

4.8.96 – The Cigalere

Keith and Derek as far as the first cascade (about 1¼ miles) and photographed back. Lots of excellent crystal growths. Big streamway – 3hrs. Dave and Colin were taken to explore a new side passage near the 14th cascade. 7hrs.

7.8.96 - Cigalere

The four of us to the very end (a rise of 720'). The streamway from 16th to 26th cascade is a bit more serious - often low, some tight high-level passages, etc. Good crystals all the way. Made the sump in 3½ hrs. Visited Affluent du Porche on the way back (near 15th cascade) to see some formations we had heard about - good. Excellent trip. 8hrs. Only the 2nd party to reach the sump in 10yrs. - which is hardly surprising because they keep the cave locked most of the time!

SLOVENIA 1997

The Wessex are planning a holiday/expedition to 2 exploration areas of Slovenia that we have been allocated.

The dates will be from Saturday 26th July to Saturday 9th August 1997 (the 2 weeks before the Swiss Conference) so that on your return trip you can call in to Chaux-de-Fonds.

Further details from Les Williams or Dave Cooke - contact numbers/addresses at front of Journal

16.9.96 - Bay Bridge, San Francisco

Carmen and Viv - speleo girlies trip to climb the suspension bridge. Superb trip to be done at night only! Access arrangements - a cell in SFs finest prison for the night if you get caught. Good traverses, climb, few exposed bits, crawling, a lot of ladders. Trip length 3 hrs. Height 4-500 ft ish.

Expedition News

TONGASS CAVE PROJECT

The Ketchicave Expedition discovered 55 new caves on Heceta Island this summer and continued work in 5 known caves. Approximately 4300m (14,100ft) of new cave was surveyed and a similar amount of surface survey tied most entrances together. Vive Silva was surveyed to a constriction at -290m (-951ft) making it the deepest cave in the state at this point (and 10th deepest in the United States per 1993 NSS Manual list). Icy Fate opened into very big muddy passage during the last days of the expedition and will be a priority next year. Arabica continues to beckon - it is now connected with Big Fatty and many, many leads remain. Sinuous System is continuing to drop. Bad Light has blowing muddy leads remaining. Sibersky Sablya (Siberian Sword) is 445m (1460ft) long and 155m (508ft) deep (58th deepest in US) with leads blowing strongly but too tight in ice at the bottom. A later expedition next year, combined with a warmer winter, may allow us to continue in this alpine cave.

Several other deep caves were mapped in the alpine, and entrances remain. Aquatic Verticality is a spectacular pit in forest, taking a stream and dropping 102.7m (337ft) in several big steps. Everyone in the expedition agrees that there is enough cave and karst on Heceta to keep large expeditions going for several more years even if we quit finding new caves, certainly an unlikely event.

Early results from dye traces show that waters from Vive Silva, Great Abyss and Curmudgeon Sink all drain to the big resurgence at Warm Chuck Inlet and nowhere else, at least in June flow levels. This leads credence to the idea that all the caves we have explored in the Timber Knob, Bald Mountain Area will be connected hydrologically.

This year's expedition included cavers from Russia and England as well as from Alaska and several other states. International and American cavers with international experience were all awed at the Southeast Alaskan karst and caves. "Unique", "Fantastic", "Densest karst features anywhere we've ever seen" and "We'll return to explore this with more cavers from home" were comments heard from cavers who have explored karst systems in Russia, Mongolia, the Alps, England, Guatemala, Papua New Guinea, China, Mexico, and all over the United States. These cavers were all saddened to see the effects of past logging on

the karst ecosystems of Heceta and expressed a desire to see the Forest Service recognise the unique and delicate nature of this system by setting aside parts of the island as a karst reserve.

The above article is from Paul Hadfield "just to let the Wessex know what they are missing". For next year's trip, there will probably be a strong contingent of Derbyshire (Eldon) types plus a strong contingent of Russians and so if you're interested in going out next year on a sponsored trip, you need to contact him soon:

*Paul Hadfield
Box 791, Stewart, BC, Canada, VOT 1W0
Number: 604-636-2302*

CAVES OF MARBLE NORWAY 1997

- * Prospect for caves in magnificent scenery amidst lakes, mountains, waterfalls and forests
- * Find open, unexplored caves, no digging necessary
- * Experience the unique beauty of Norway's marble stream caves
- * Camp in an unspoilt wilderness, miles from civilisation

Norway is an ideal introduction to expedition caving. There is an opportunity for cavers of all standards to contribute to the success of the expedition. Our Norway expeditions have a good record of finding, exploring and surveying new caves.

Other outdoor activities are possible for the less dedicated, including mountain climbing, fishing and canoeing. The journey through Norway to the main expedition area is most attractive, passing as it does through the Fjord Country and Norway's highest mountain range, Jotunheim (Land of the Giants). It finishes with a boat trip up a fjord.

The main expedition group will leave the UK on Saturday 19th July and arrive back in the UK on Saturday 9th August. For further details, please contact the organiser:

Geoff Newton: 01372 726405

Blowing Hot and Cold with the Karst Police

Maurice Hewins

The object of our 1996 Wessex Challenge was to obtain a photograph of an Austrian ice cave, using only our wits, a cheap camera and the resources of a package tour company. Having recently watched Sid Perou's "Caves of Glass", Judy and I scanned the brochures and found that a trip to an ice cave at Dachstein was indeed advertised from the resort of Schladming.

This must be Sid's Eisriesenwelt (World of the Ice Giants) we thought - but no. The ad. referred to another place above Obertraun, confusingly called Rieseneishohle (Giant Ice Cave), so we could try and see them both. However, neither the company rep, nor the local taxi firm showed any willingness to even admit that Eisriesenwelt existed and we began to think that the Austrian Karst Police had hidden it. We eventually found it on a map bought in Aldershot! Armed with a German phrase book, we set out for Werfen by train; only to be put on a bus, round cunningly-placed engineering work, by a red-capped Karst Police Cadet.

From Werfen, a sporting bus ride up a mountain wall and a fine cable car soon had us on a scenic track leading to Eisriesenwelt's impressive entrance.

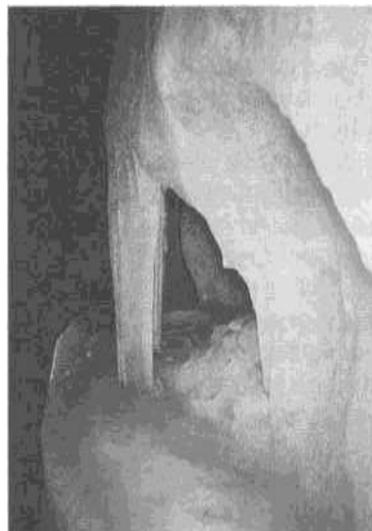


Eisriesenwelt

Photo: Karst Police

Any chance of a photo vanished, when we saw a notice banning pictures and an English speaking guide herded the few Brits present to the front. Perhaps the Karst Police had spotted our club sweatshirts!

In many ways, Eisriesenwelt is a show cave in a time-warp. There is no electric lighting and we were



Rieseneishohle

Photo: Wessex Journal Staff Photographer

given ancient hand-held carbide lamps. To light the principle formations, the guide burnt magnesium ribbon. The entrance chamber is certainly the largest I have been in and visitors move on steep wooden walkways fixed to permanent sheets of ice.

The frozen columns, 'stalactites' and flows were awe-inspiring. At the end of the tourist section is a moving memorial, with an urn containing the ashes of one of the exploration team who died in the futility of the Great War. Beyond lay miles of wild cave.



Burning Taxi at Radstadt

Photo: Reuter

Two days later, feeling very much like weegies, we set off by taxi on our pre-booked trip to Rieseneishohle.

Despite what we had been told at home, the cable car and cave entrance cost extra! Herman, our little driver was dressed in Tyrolean hat and shorts which we knew was the full-dress uniform of the Karst Police. My camera rested uncomfortably in my pocket.

As at Werfen, a well-engineered cable car smoothly lifted us up through a layer of cloud into bright sunlight, just below Rieseneishohle. It is one of three contrasting caves at Obertraun run by the Austrian Forestry Commission. Access is well thought out and educational interpretation is good - if you understand German.

Passing through a roomy, but uninspiring, stalactite grotto, we came to a colossal boulder chamber. It had more of a show cave feel, with effective electric lighting and far easier walk-ways than at Eisriesenwelt. From here, a narrow rising section entered the area of ice.

The delicate glassy stalactites were of more familiar proportions. Dropping discretely to the rear, I sneaked a couple of photos. If we could get them home, we'd win the challenge.

We caught up with the guide in a vast, stunningly beautiful chamber. The underground icebergs appeared translucent with back lighting, and dripping melt water made the cave feel alive. In one corner, a diving line dipped into a freezing sump. We reminded ourselves it was just a show cave. But it was quite unlike one we had seen before.

On the return trip to Schladming, the Karst Police struck. By the time Herman stopped, under the pretext of having coffee, we both had headaches. We now suspect it was from monoxide fumes from the engine. In a final attempt to destroy my film he apparently scuttled his taxi.

Despite an overheating engine and black fumes coming through the floor he raced onto the autobahn. Soon, sounds of fracturing metal and a loud claxon were heard and we prepared to jump out. The doomed vehicle rolled into a parking area and Herman ran off. The front end went up in flames and the taxi was a write off.

Three police cars (traffic not Karst) and a fire engine arrived and our passports were examined but Judy had swallowed the film.

If there were an overseas driver of the year award, we would nominate Karst Policeman Herman.

Editorial

Welcome to a **new volume** of the Journal. You may notice some minor changes but hopefully all your old favourites are still there. As usual, if you have anything that you feel should be included in the Journal, please let me know.

Thanks to Pete Cousins for producing indexes for the volumes of the Journal previously. However, if anyone would like to produce an **Index** for the **last volume** of the Wessex Journal (volume 23), please contact me, as Pete has decided that he has been doing it for long enough now.

I'm sure you will all join me in a **vote of thanks** to Christine Lumb for organising such a splendid dinner and entertainment at the Crossways Inn for our annual dinner - see report on page 10. Also our thanks to Tuska for organising a successful visit to Redcliff Caves on the Sunday and to Mike D-York and Wendy Williams for the preparation of the food after this visit.

Currently I have **very few articles** for the next Journal. If anyone wants to write something, please feel free and get them to me as soon as possible.

Please remember that the Club now has an **Agen Allwedd** key for use by our members. Basically, "*use it or lose it!*" - one of the requirements to keep the permit is at least 4 trips per year.

Lockers

The following is a list of the people we know to have lockers in the locker room at Upper Pitts:-

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Jackie Dallman | Max Midlen |
| Mike Dewdney-York | Aubrey Newport |
| Steve Deacon | Jim Rands |
| Malcolm Foyle | Dominic Sealy |
| Vern & Rosie Freeman | John Thomas |
| Pete Hann | Stephen Waite |
| Mark Helmore | Nick Williams |
| Maurice Hewins | Black Wol |
| Ian Jepson | Beth Yates |

If your name does not appear on this list and you wish to keep your locker and contents, please contact the Membership Secretary ASAP. If these lockers are not claimed by the New Year the padlocks shall be removed, the contents auctioned off and the locker given to people who have been on the waiting list for some time.

A. G. M. Precis

Minutes of the 1995 AGM

Concerns were raised that there was too little detail to the minutes of the 1995 AGM, but it was explained that the minutes were not a word for word transcript of the meeting. It was suggested that the new Secretary should consider recording the meeting. The minutes of the 1995 AGM were then accepted as being an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes

The A Surrel money was used to fund the Swildons Survey, and then used to fund the Portland publication. The Luke Devenish Memorial Lecture is still under consideration.

Discussion of Financial Reports

More details on hut expenditure were requested for the future, although most money was spent on the kitchen last year. A discussion was had on the cost of the Journal. It was asked if more money should be spent on directly caving related matters, but was also stated that the Journal was the only tangible item that many members received for their subscriptions. It was stated that the committee had carefully discussed all aspects of club expenditure before deciding what to recommend for the rate of subscription. Gas costs were almost 50% higher than last year, however last year's costs were exceptionally low. Hut insulation had been taking place and was almost complete.

Membership Secretary's Report

It was requested that a membership list be published in the Journal. Another request was that an up-to-date membership list be included in each volume of the Journal. A request that the MRO be supplied with a list of local members who were prepared to help out was also stated.

Hut Warden's Report

Regarding banning individuals from the hut when damage is done to the hut, it was stated that the committee has, and will, consider each incident on an individual basis as and when they occur.

The new committee was asked to investigate the annual service of all gas appliances due to new gas regulations, and the sending of Journals to a national archive which is possibly required by law

Motions for consideration

Further to the motion in the 1996 AGM Handbook regarding the accounts, an amendment f) was proposed, and passed. A vote was then taken on the complete motion. This was passed unanimously and so now reads:

"That the treatment and reporting of separate funds maintained by the club should be agreed as follows:

- a) separate bank accounts need not be maintained for any funds
- b) a new publication fund should be set up, initially funded by the donation from A Surrel
- c) hut fund assets will be reported in the body of the main balance sheet
- d) all movements of funds must be approved by members in the Annual General Meeting
- e) balances and movements on all funds must be clearly reported as a footnote to the accounts
- f) the cave survey fund should be paid into the main bank account and its assets reported in the body of the main balance sheet"

An amendment to the motion regarding annual subscription rates was that:

"the early renewal rate should be raised to £20"

This was defeated and so the original proposal was passed - the new rates are detailed below.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The new subscriptions set at the AGM are as follows, but remember 'early renewal rates' are only applicable if you pay before 31st December this year.

| | <i>Early Renewal Rate</i> | <i>After Jan 1st</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Single member | £19.00 | £25.00 |
| Joint members (1 vote) | £23.75 | £31.25 |
| Joint members (2 votes) | £33.25 | £43.75 |
| Senior Citizen rate | £6.65 | £8.75 |

The cost for food boxes and lockers remains as for last year - £2.50 and £5 respectively. To renew your membership, please send a cheque with your name, address and tel. no. (and details of the rates paid) to the Membership Secretary - address at front of Journal.

Wessex Dinner and AGM Weekend

Vern Freeman

After a horrendous 2½ hour journey to Mendip, (one which usually only takes 1¾ hours) with half-term traffic & atrocious weather conditions, it was with much relief that we finally arrived at Upper Pitts on the Friday evening of the AGM & Dinner weekend. Surprisingly quite a few people had already arrived & after the arrival of a few more cars & people, the scene was set for a good weekend.

Of course getting down to Mendip 3 hours earlier than usual meant a few more hours available to be sociable in the Hunters - which of course had to be done. Needless to say by the time we arrived back at the hut after closing time, the festivities continued. As usual the best place seemed to be in the kitchen & so with an encouraging audience, table-walking seemed to be the order of the day. This was tried in many different ways & the next day many people seemed to be walking 'John Wayne-like' with bruises on their thighs (that's their excuse anyway & I don't think we really want to know anymore!). A vague attempt to pass through a broomstick was made by Rosie who, as usual, failed

The AGM the following morning was one of the shortest on record - only 1¾ hours. After this, the majority of people frequented the Hunters (again!) before the newly elected committee members had their first meeting in the afternoon. A couple of strange people decided to inspect North Hill Swallet (even though it had been passed OK for the Dinner a couple of weeks before).

During the afternoon people transformed into Prince Charmings and Princesses. Despite the fact that due to the number of showers had, the water was a bit on the cool side later on, most people managed to get changed & ready in time, leaving the bunk rooms smelling like a perfumery in a department store!

An epic journey to the end of the lane to catch the coach was then undertaken at full speed. An interesting sight involved the majority of females wearing smart dresses together with walking boots - definitely a sight to be seen.

After a bit of a scenic route in North Wootton to find the Crossways Inn, most people were pleasantly surprised to find a nice choice of beer. Dinner was served & the waitresses certainly very clued up as to how many of what dish was placed on each table. The Belfry Boys presented some of their songs between courses. Phil Hendy played Master of

Ceremonies & introduced Graham Balcombe who talked on his starting years caving & diving - he looked particularly splendid in his kilt. After another course, it was the turn of John Buxton who went back to his childhood dreams of exploring caves. The meal finished up with more Belfry Boys ditties including a topical song about certain Wessex members - see opposite!

The annual awards were presented and included: **'The best excuse for not going caving'** - Malc Foyle for bringing his dustbin of rubbish instead of his caving barrel

'The Jackanory award' - Bob Scammell for the content of the majority of his numerous stories **'Navigator of the year'** - Andy Ladell for his trip to Pwll Du involving an overnight stop at the WSG.

Nigel Graham was presented with number 1 of 25 of the hard-bound copies presented by the Club for thanks for writing & compiling the Caves of Portland. A copy also will be sent to Mike O'Connor.

Unfortunately, due to a gossiping wife, we missed the coach back. However we managed to get a lift with Dominic - 4 in the back of an Orion is quite interesting. Despite this, we still beat the coach back to Upper Pitts.

Having left some stuff on the coach earlier, I had to meet it at the bottom of the lane & arrived to see Butch being carried off the coach in a drunken stupor. Anyway, back to the hut 1½ barrels of beer & quantities of wine & cider were consumed, but this time one of the main places to be seemed to be the library. Max cooked up a delicious-looking (?) concoction & the conversation turned interesting in the library (the manuscript, carefully scribed by Bob Scammell, is available on request at very high cost - Editor!). Meanwhile in the lounge (and outside) rather a lot of wood was burnt - see Max.

We woke up on the Sunday to more rain, but at least this time we were more suitably dressed for running to catch the coach again. We arrived in Bristol & met up with some members of the Axbridge Caving Group who had agreed to show us around Redcliff Caves. After an interesting trip (which if someone would like to write up for an article for the Journal, the Editor would be grateful) we arrived back at Upper Pitts for a hearty meal of bread, cheese & soup prepared by Wendy Williams & Mike York - thanks to them. In summary, a very good turnout & one of the most successful dinner weekends for quite a while.

'Bottom that Hole' (Belfry Boys 18/10/96)

Now come Wessex cavers - lend an ear to our
song,
We'll sing of your exploits, ha-ha-ha, that won't
take long,
You've asked us to sing at your dinner this year,
And after we've finished, you'll wish we weren't
here,
wish we weren't here
We'll murder your characters, of that have no
fear.

Now Balcombe Vice-President, at dinners wears
kilts,
Unlike other members he's no use for stilts,
From reading old journals, we know that it's true,
His diving career spanned a decade or two, a
decade or two
Cold water in Wookey turned his gonads bright
blue.

Jim Rands. Though quite wrinkly. Still goes
underground,
And under the table at pubs can be found,
He drinks from a tankard that states Beer is Best,
But nights at the Belfry put him to test,
put him to test.....
Oh he'll buy his own beer - but bugger the rest.

Now Mike York wears spectacles and through
these he looks,
Whilst locked in his library of old caving books,
Ascerbic by nature - dry wit is his goal,
He only goes caving by proxy or pole,
proxy or pole
He sweats at the very thought of Aveline's Hole.

Now Max tried some dancing with the Morris
Men,
But he buggered it up, again and again
Despite all his efforts he failed. For you see,
The Cam Valley Morris Men are all BEC are all
BEC
So Max he will never dance with Dick-Fred and
Me.

Now Graham and Dominic. AKA the gnomes,
Are known to use Lego bricks for building their
homes,
No gnomes though but trolls. Wearing suits that
are orange,
They go to the Vercors on trips carefully
arranged,
carefully arranged
It takes them so long 'cos they're vertically
challenged.

Now Pete Hann he rides a bike through Swildon's
"And that's about it....."

A verse now for Foyley and all his cohorts,
For taking the piss out of Dobbin's tight shorts,
Now Malcolm and Michael go diving in France,
And Dobbin would drown them if he had the
chance,
if he had the chance
But who'd take him seriously in tight Lycra pants.

Now Malcolm's a diver - at this he's no slouch,
and under his wetsuit is a posing pouch,
Emblazoned by Roland - we think it's a rat,
and dressed up like that doesn't he look a prat
doesn't he look a prat
We think he's auditioning to be in Take That.

And now to the hut wot is called Upper Pitts,
Not just in the toilet do we find little people,
The kitchen is stainless, the windows went red,
And all this was done whilst the club was in bed,
the club was in bed
With who's wife or husband, it's better not said.

So now that you've listened to our little ditty,
and realised that some of your stories aren't
pretty,
Well those not here mentioned may sigh with
relief,
But who knows the next song might cause you
some grief,
might cause you some grief
And as for that Uzi - He's beyond belief.

Thanks to the Belfry Boys for allowing me to publish the above song they wrote for the Wessex Dinner

Blast From The Past!

(previously printed in Hillgrove Logbook, taken from Supplement to Vol. VIII)

Log Book: 26th June 1954 to 6th August 1955.

26th June 1954

SWILDONS

An attempt on Swildons III. The party consisted of 2 divers - Bob Davies and Graham Balcombe - and five sherpas-tiger sherpas, Oliver Lloyd, Oliver Wells, Phil Davies, Derek Thorpe (UBSS) and Struan Robertson (UBSS).

The baggage - about 23 packages - had mostly been taken down on the 19/20th June and again on the 24th June - St. John the Baptists' day: then whose name knows more of total immersion in sumps!

The base was the sandbank by the bend of the streamway just short of Creep II. We arrived there at about 7pm after starting at 3.50pm.

The two divers spent 2 1/2 hours - from 9.50pm to 12.30am on the 27th June exploring the waterways beyond Sump II and (i) reached a new small bell chamber - Bob's bell - west of Sump II. (ii) reached the Great Bell Chamber and continued by a duck to a Southward continuation of similar general size - St. John's Bell - followed the streamway a further 25ft. approx under the West wall of this new chamber and showed it to be impassably low at about 15ft. depth. (iii) re-visited the Little Bell and confirmed that no outlet exists on the East Wall at or beyond Sump II.

The conclusions from a complete circuit of the sump system are that the divers are satisfied that no way on exists which is passable and the main stream passage of Swildons Hole can be written off. The terrain is very muddy and visibility is only about 2 inches: this in spite of the fact that precautions were taken to avoid disturbance of the higher streamway. The circuit of the sump system is about 300ft. and greatest radial distance reached about 100ft. The system explored is a shallow one, about 5ft. below the water level, except at the final hole.

Party repacked kit and left base at 3.5am and by 6am had got all kit through Sump I, emerging into fresh air and sunlight at 9am.

O.C.Lloyd

A thousand thanks to O.C.L. and everyone of his magnificent party. To the undaunted baggage party, at this moment struggling with the enormous pile of weighty bags:- my conscience is seared when I think especially of AFLOTOP, but alas! not yet to the extent of going right down after that nights work to give a hand. (Perhaps later on they'll forgive me as a relatively old and decrepit caver and rejoice that at least this chapter of Swildons explorations has been satisfactorily concluded).

To Bob Davies, trusted companion of many dives and leading diver on this trip:- my deeply felt commendations on his courage and tenacity in pushing his way through this intimidating murky system. I am proud to have accompanied him.

Graham Balcombe 27.6.54.

“You Should’ve Been There, Man”

(An Account of the Devon Meet: 14-16th June 1996)

Deborah Morgenstern

Not the best turn out for a Wessex Meet; there was me, Cookie, Les, Dave Meredith and our local guide Ali (from the Plymouth Cave Club), with Carmen joining us on the Saturday night. We stayed at the Devon Caving Club, a fact that seemed to surprise everyone we met, who asked why we hadn't chosen the local outdoor centre, the Pengelly. The DCC, as well as being considerably cheaper than the Pengelly, is a perfectly adequate hut, with a sound bunkroom and novel fire escape, and is fine as long as you don't mind an electricity meter that makes fridge noises.

On the Saturday, after breakfast at the The Waterman (the nearest pub), a long and scenic drive through Dartmoor to Bodmin Moor in Cornwall took us to our destination - Wheal Phoenix, an old copper mine with a couple of CLASSIC abseils - the daylight shaft of 50m, the only pitch I've ever attempted that takes longer to abseil in than prussik out, and later a 5m tube which opens out, after a rebelay, to a truly breathtaking void, the source of many a strangled "hooohooooo" (and the mention of a hit song by Berlin), and descends another 35m.

As luck would have it, Alistair "Hidden Agenda" Neil just happened to find a survey tape and compass in his tackle sack, so that some surveying could be completed before the serious boulder rumbling could start (Les's idea of fun - pushing huge great boulders off balance to rumble down a slope and into a pool of water, in an already unstable mine). Saturday night found us in the White Hart, where the good ale is served, swapping caving news and dire jokes with another local caver, Spike.

On Sunday, after a truly excellent breakfast (but no mushrooms!) at the White Hart, as organised for us by Spike, we were deserted by Ali, and made our own way to Bakers Pit, clutching a hand-drawn survey of the cave, which we thoughtfully left in the car. The entrance is situated in a landfill site opposite the graveyard of a burnt out church, which boasts a gate that creaks in just the right way for a star part in a horror film, and the peculiar grave of a local bad guy. This Lord of the Manor, whose name escapes me, would send his gang, The Baskervilles, around to fetch taxes with their ferocious hounds (yes, Conan Doyle did live in the area). When he died, he was buried above ground

so that the devil couldn't take his soul. The story goes, however, that Lucifer tried to take him anyway by sucking his soul down through the earth, only to be stopped by the "little man". The little man is a small formation in Read's Cavern, directly below the graveyard. He stands with his back to the beholder in a small crevice with arms outstretched as if blocking a path. Ali assured us that it was indeed a male, as he admitted to taking a small mirror down and inserting it into the rock crevice to check that Beelzebub's traffic warden had all the vital parts!

The entrance shaft was ... different, we soon learned what Ali had meant by "down two pipes" and it didn't mean a piece of pipe two sections long - the pipe with fixed rungs goes on a bit (and then some), and on reaching the bottom, you find another of equal length a metre to your right. Bakers Pit is a muddy labyrinth, somewhat reminiscent of Lionel's Hole, and we crawled a fair bit of its 5km length in unprecedented high spirits, composing new caving songs and using somewhat less conventional caving terminology ("ckhhh...bip!...er, Houston, do we have clearing for the next squeeze?...bip!...").

Thrutching through a tube for what seemed like an age, Les was performing at the front, with me close behind him. He decided that if he got all enthusiastic, adrenaline flowing, the passage was BOUND to open out. A few seconds later he yelled an "On Back". I crept up next to him to see what the obstruction was - the passage HAD opened up into a huge chamber, but it had opened up in the wrong direction - downwards. There was no way that it was free climbable, and a small tube heading off to the left would not even let Assistant Mad Dog Cooke ("that's my doggie") through. On back then.

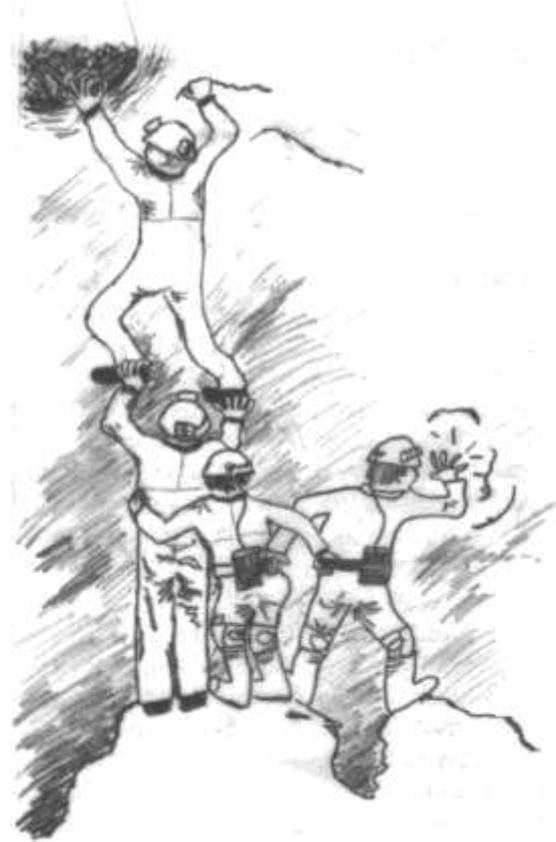
Les, however, was not to be beaten - the through trip would be accomplished. When we later found the aforementioned chamber, Les came up with the unpopular idea of climbing up into the hole. The plan was as follows: Les would balance precariously on a boulder 8ft up in the air, supported somehow by myself and Dave, while Cookie climbed up onto his shoulders and into the hole. Cookie was having none of it, and after Les had aborted his attempt via Cookie's back, Dave volunteered.

So there we all were, balanced on this rock, with Cookie leaning on the wall holding me up, and me holding Cookie's belt with one hand while hugging Les in a desperate attempt to keep him upright with the other, while Les pushed at Dave's feet, shouting "c'mon, man, you WILL get in that hole" (more of a command than an encouraging faith in Dave's climbing ability). Just for the record, he made it.

And we also made it to the other entrance to the cave, about which we were told "you're not supposed to use it but don't worry, you'll never find it". Finding our way to the upper series, however, remains as a challenge for the next trip.

The rest of the afternoon was spent mineral hunting (you have to creep up on them, especially purple fluorspar) in the grounds of Brook Manor. The couple who own the palatial accommodation were quite happy for us to drive through their estate, climb their avalanche-prone slag heaps in sandals, and hit rocks with geological hammers without any form of eye protection, but became quite hostile when we suggested entering the mines, "because of the liability".

Still, we had a wander round and discovered a few historically interesting mine shafts (viewed only from the top, of course), one of which still had its pump rod in place. We left Brook Manor quite late, but still found time for a swift drink before departing our separate ways.



So there we all were, balanced on this rock,..

And a final word from the weekend - SOCK! If you don't understand, well...you should have been there, man.

Donations to the Library

Thanks to **Brian Hansford** for the gift of the following maps and guides:

Snowdonia National Park - Ordnance Survey - Cader Idris/Dovey Forest
Snowdonia National Park - Ordnance Survey - Snowdon
Snowdonia National Park - Ordnance Survey - Bala
Snowdonia National Park - Ordnance Survey - Harlech
The English Lakes - North East Sheet - OS - Ullswater and Hawswater
The English Lakes - South West Sheet - OS - Wastwater and Coniston
The English Lakes - South East Sheet - OS - Windermere and Kendal
Edinburgh and Midlothian - Sheet 66 - 1:50,000 - Landranger

Hereford and Leominster - Sheet 149 - 1:50,000 - Landranger
Presteigne and Hay-on-Wye - Sheet 148 - 1:50,000 - Landranger
Newtown and Llanidloes - Sheet 136 - 1:50,000 - Landranger
Afon Elan - OS - Sheet SN 87 - 2 1/2 inch
Isle of Skye Guide - published 1993
Northampton Kalbarri, Western Australia - Central Map Agency, Perth.

"The Killer Mine" - Hammond Innes. Fontana Books - 10th impression - 1972. A novel about Cornwall and its tin mines and smuggling Ex Libris. *Bob Scammell*.

The Librarian would also like to thank *Dave Morrison* for numerous surveys and miscellaneous publications.

Library Acquisitions

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER **1996 Vol 38 No 6**

A look at where the CSS are going and the changing patterns of membership, etc
Conservation of a cave

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER **1996 Vol 38 No 7**

Quiet on the Western Front? - an up-date on the digging activities on the Black Mountains
Ogof Draenen survey - incomplete survey of CSS Extensions

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER **1996 Vol 38 No 8**

Electrokinetic surveying (or electronic dowsing) - out-take from an unspecified publication
Pwll Du Cave Management Group - the constitution of this new group

CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER **1996 Vol 38 No 9**

Webcaving: Go surfing - Young person
<http://www.demon.co.uk/stonecot/css>
Igg-Igue deToulze, Lot, France, July 1996 - description of a trip down this hole, useful if you're thinking of having a pot at it

CRAVEN RECORD **July 1996 No 43**

Club news, meets, Winchmeet at Gaping Gill, Northern Cave diving news, Germany, Cave diving & Russell's cycle ride, from Lands End to John O'Groats
Some notes on ladders on Club Meets
Bill Spencer - an obituary

THE RED DRAGON CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL ANNUAL JOURNAL **1996-1997**

This publication is really too vast in it's subject matter to cover in a few short lines, sufficient to say that if your interest is access, conservation, funding, books, surveys, etc, then this is a must be read

DESCENT **June/July 1996 No 130**

UK, international, mining and Internet news
Turkish Delight - a humorous, but politically incorrect account of a caving trip
Potholing with a pencil - advice on comfort underground
Ogof Draenen: Up at the Sharp End (Big Country, Wild West) - Big Country and the Bloreng streamway
British Cave Rescue Council Report 1995
Thailand: To Find Charlie A Cave - history, description, survey and photos of Tham Chet Mit
Rubbed up the wrong way, France - bad rigging practice can lead to a near disaster A very frank report of a canyoning trip that nearly went very wrong
Cave Therapy - working with adults with learning disabilities

DESCENT

August/Sept 1996 No 131

Caves be where you make 'em: Swildon's Hole to Priddy Green Sink - the completion of a dream. Photos and survey
50 years beneath the surface - describes the 50th year bash of the Cave Diving Group at Wookey Hole with "Quotes" & photos
Under Dentdale - continues the story of Ibbeth-Peril 1&2 and Upper Hackergill connection and the discovery of Twany Cave - survey, diagram and photos
Beyond Turkish Calcite - the conclusion of Jim Eyre's Turkish adventures
Guns, dust and raw goat - expedition to the Bale region of Ethiopia. Problems encountered, findings, map, survey & photos
Into the digital age - a description of what can be done after the expenditure of lots of drinking vouchers
Hexamine Highways - a family team break into a new section of Ogof Draenen - survey of the new section

SPELEO DORDOGNE **Speleo-Club Perigues** **1996 No 1**

The reasons we go caving - charts, diagrams, cartoons and drawings

CERBERUS SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL May 1996 Vol 23 No 6

Timber Hole - a discussion, it's geology, etc and 2 maps
Timber Hole - the CSS dig - its history as a CSS dig from 1982.
Little Crapnell Swallet - description of a visit
Dark Cave, Batu Caves, Malaysia - history of the cave, fauna, flora, summary and a survey
Archeological discoveries in Kelantan Caves, Malaysia description of the sites and what they mean to the archeological knowledge of the peoples and culture of that area
Abseiling safety - NCA equipment committee

MORGANNWG CAVING CLUB **JOURNAL Circa 1993 No 3**

Giles Barker: a celebration
A walk on the West Side - Kitan Cave and a visit to the caving elephants, Kenya
Peak Cavern's Halfway House - climbing in Halfway House passage and its pitfalls
Did Neanderthal Man co-exist with homo sapiens?
An A-Z of Caving
The Image Of Surveying - the use and interpretation of photographs in underground surveys
Nine hours down Dan-Yr-Ogof - a Yank's view of the cave
Photographic Conservation for Cavers - best way to protect your pictures - well-written and clear
Storey Arms Outdoor Education Centre Hungarian Caving Expedition - August 91
Caving in the Czech Republic and Slovakia - a general guide to how, why and where
Porth-Yr-Ogof: Deaths, Safety Improvements and the Resurgence Pool - description, plan and section
Cardiff Naturalists Society Transactions Index to cave and mine references Vols 1-100
Wide World Magazine - continued from Vols 1-2
Speleospil - a humorous view of caving terminology

BELFREY BULLETIN No 486 Vol 49/5

Internal news of interest to BEC

**AXBRIDGE CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER July 1996**

Shute Shelve update, new passage in Singing River Mine, Hey Wood Rift Cave (NGR 3460 5812) dig
Axbridge Caving Group - contents of the library
Redcliff Caves
Tufa Calcium Carbonate Formations - in a dried up lake in the Mono Lake State Reserve, Southern California

**CAVES AND CAVING
August 1996 No 37**

CRA Regional Symposium - Ogof Draenen - report on the meeting
Forest of Dean; the work goes on - predictions, maps & photos, plus locations of various sites
Coarvvekraigi - a new cave system north of Boda - photo, location map and survey
Radon: the end of the beginning, where next? - risk assessment and management, plus the legal guidelines
Kaninchenhohle System, Austria - 1-8kms of new passage, more to find - photos and a survey
The Hidden Depths of Peter Plummet, Spain - description of this seemingly bottomless sump pool, it's history and dive, with a survey and photographs
Caving in Transylvania, Romania - visit to the Cluj-Napaco Region in 1994-5. Maps and photos
Copyright on Cave Surveys - attempt to find some answers

**MNRC NEWSLETTER
Aug/Sept 1996 No 55**

90th year anniversary edition
MNRC History - extracts from the 1986 anniversary newsletter
A brief introduction to the MNRC
The History of the Mendip Nature Research Station
90 years at the MNRC
Better Days - continued from the last newsletter
Ghosts - MNRC swinging about on string

Congratulations to the long life of the MNRC - 90 years and still well and healthy. The librarian is looking forward to another 90 years of publications!

BINDING

The GSG Index to Publications, Library Catalogue, & The Caving Song of Mendip'.

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

June 1995 No 246

Practice Rescue, Rods Pot
Bone Hole, Cheddar - brief report on the excavation
Upper Flood II - Rescue Archaeology 1995 - day by day account of the diggings
MCG Constitution & Rules as of 1.4.95

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

September 1995 No 247

Pilgrimage to the lair of The Big Mole
Trip to Ogof Draenen, helping out with CSS survey
Fragments from France - a French show cave trip to Gouffre Geante de Cabrespine
Upper Flood II Update - two excellent photographs of the protection of the entrance

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

November 1995 No 248

Dallimores: the Oxford Extensions
Fragments from France - caving in the region of the Ardeche
Aven de Neol, sherpering for the French divers in the Reseau Saint Marcel
Chartreuse Expedition: the other bits

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

December 1995 No 249

Report on the Suicro Conference 1995
The Spoil Scene - MCG digging report - covers Bone Hole, Pine Tree Pot and Upper Flood
A Tourist Underground in France - a family holiday

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

January 1996 No 250

Dan-Yr-Ogof Access - yet another set of arrangements
Mendip Collector's Items: Rushey Ground Swallet (NGR 5775 5350) & Little Crapnell Swallet (NGR 4625 6015)

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

February 1996 No 251

Italy 1996 - the MCG's Summer Expedition to the Marguaries Region of the Alps Maritimes, near the French/Italian border, with the Piaggia Bella system on hand - map and survey

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

April 1996 No 252

1996 MCG Rescue Practice in and out of Gough's Cave - this is Phil Ingold's view of his excursion to Gough's Cave as a victim

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

May 1996 No 253

Cave Del Agua '96 - winter trip to the Picos, the theory being that all the water would be locked up in snow and the sump at the end of the road to Wigan Pier would be an easier dive - a theory that was to prove wrong

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

June 1996 No 254

MCG Rescue Practice - Longwood
The Romans at Charterhouse on Mendip - some notes taken by Joan Goddard from a lecture given by Professor Malcolm Todd
Caving in Virginia - a brief account of a trip to a secret cave - no details are given. With a trip to Raspberry Hollow Cave, a flood bypass was dug open

**MENDIP CAVING GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

July 1996 No 255

Priddy Green Sink - Swildon's Connection - Anon
A brief description of a trip down T hole. With a sectional survey
MCG doings, hut and trips

**THE CAVES OF THE
ISLE OF PORTLAND
Wessex Cave Club
Occasional Publication
Series 3 No 3**

Written by Nigel Graham and Mike O'Connor, this long awaited publication is all that it promised to be; a must for every caving library. A complete guide to the caves with photographs, surveys and engravings. Soft bound with a laminated cover at £7.50 to members and £10 to non-members. Twenty five hard bound, numbered copies (£12.50 and £15) signed by the two major authors. Total print run 250

**ST CUTHBERT'S SWALLET
D J Irwin et al**

Bristol Exploration Club 1991

A well-illustrated publication, complete with a large survey



12th International Congress of Speleology 1997 La Chaux-de-Fonds (Neuchâtel, Switzerland) August 10-17, 1997

The 12th International Congress of Speleology will take place in La Chaux-de-Fonds (canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland), heartland of the watch making industry, a town of 40,000 inhabitants located in the karst of the Jura mountains.

- The main guidelines in the preparation of this Congress are:
 - to bring together cave explorers and scientists
 - to organize a regional attraction for the general public
 - to do everything possible to turn the International Congress back into the 4-yearly speleological get together event it should be

The Congress itself, the associated general meetings and UIS commissions, will be held in the city college building or within 2 miles of that central location. Most of the lodging and camping will also be located in that area. Access by train, road or even by special flights from Geneva or Zurich airport will be arranged depending on the need.

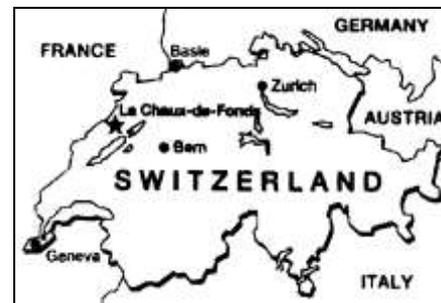
Scientific Program

The Congress backbone will consist of a rich program covering all the aspects of speleology and karst study. Every one is called upon to present their discoveries in caves, karst, or other related fields of study in form of an oral or a poster presentation. Workshops and public round tables will be organised to allow everyone to share their experiences. Oral presentations, posters, workshops and round tables will be grouped in sessions for which themes will be defined in order to facilitate discussions and exchanges. Some of the themes defined in the various fields linked to speleology can already be named: in the geomorphology session: "Karstic Fill and Paleoclimates", "Speleogenesis of the Large Alpine Systems"; in the exploration speleology session, "Exploration in Tropical Areas", "Alpine Speleology"; in the topography and techniques session: "Underground Topography: What's New?", "Cave Diving Techniques"; in the archeology session: "Man and Caves: 200,000 years of Dialogue", etc ... The biospeleology session will emphasize bat studies.

All the "Hydrogeology" part of the Congress will be integrated into the traditional "6^e Colloque d'Hydrologie en pays calcaire et en milieu fissure"

organized for the 6th time by the Universities of Neuchâtel and Besancon. A couple of themes have already been defined: "Hydrogeological Behaviour of Karst Aquifers" and "Use of Speleological Observations and Measurements to the Karstic Hydrogeology".

A more regional symposia will treat, through conferences, expositions and excursions, the various aspects of the karst and speleology in the Jura mountain, the area in which the Congress will take place.



Excursions and Camps

One day dedicated to field trips will be included in the Congress in order to allow the participants to leave the conference rooms.

Before the Congress (from 27th July) and after (until August 30th) scientific excursions and camps will be organised in Switzerland and across the border: Sieben Hengste, Holloch, Jean-Bernard, Parmelan, Dent de Crolles, Franche-Comte, Slovenian Karst and many other systems and well known regions will be waiting for you ...

During the Congress, tired participants and companions will have the opportunity to take underground breaks during the day (or the night).

Attractions

- Opening gala and closing banquet for everyone
- Multi-media festival August 7th-9th as an introduction to the Congress
- Howdy party in a pure Swiss style (food and attractions) for everyone to get to know other cavers

- Diverse program for participants and companions featuring touristic excursions, competitions and exhibitions, meeting places with live music, etc
- In addition to the usual gear and book selling booths on the Congress site, specific exhibitions will be featured throughout the town:
 - Speleology and biospeleology at the Natural History Museum
 - Cave paintings and engravings at the Museum of Fine Arts
 - Cave books and documents at the Documentation Centre of the UIS-SSS located in the town's library
- Pass to the regional museums: The International Clockwork museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Archaeology and Ethnography Museum in Neuchâtel, Underground Water Mills in Le Locle.

Congress address: SubLime, PO Box 4093
CH-2304 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland

Pre-registration is possible through the Internet to:
<http://www.unine.ch/UIS97/>

E-mail: congress.uis97@chyn.unine.ch

Food, Lodging and Transport

Lodging is planned to accommodate all participants (approximate fees per person and per night in Swiss Francs): Camping, dormitory (10 to 25), Guest room (25 to 50), hotel room (single 60 to 140, double 40 to 110).

Food service is planned for the lunches at the congress site for 7 to 10 SFR. Other meal arrangements will be available in the 89 restaurants in town. It will also be possible to cook (barbeque) your own meals at the campground.

A pass to the town's public transportation services will be available during the Congress.

A children's day care service is also planned.

Registration

The registration fees for participants will be about 120 SFR.

Calendar

- Pre-registration as soon as possible in order to receive the second call for participation with the congress program (Address below)
- Second call brochure for the Congress with complete information and firm registration form will be available March 1996.

STOP PRESS

From SPELEOScene No 25 Sept/Oct 1996

The Detailed Program and the General Program are now out. Associated with the Congress is SPELEMEDIA, the International Multi-media Festival for Speleology and Underground Images, which takes place at La Chaux-de-Fonds from 6-10th August. Prices quoted in Swiss Francs (about 1.9 SFR to the £) are:

Basic Congress Fee for all participants (over 14 years old) - **SFR 120**

(The Basic Fee includes Congress Guide, participation in the opening ceremony, UIS meetings, reception, a traditional/folk outing with food and drinks, the SPELEMEDIA festival gala, access to all conferences, film projections, symposiums, special expositions, use of caravan park, public transport, child care centre and one volume of your choice from the Congress proceedings.)

Basic Congress Fee + SPELEMEDIA Festival - SFR 170.

Congress Fee with everything included plus closing banquet and complete 5-volume set of Congress Proceedings - SFR 300.

These prices stand until 31 December - after this they rise to SFR 160, SFR 215 & SFR 350 until 31 May 1997. After this they rise again!

Contact addresses and for booking forms: 'Sublime', Case Postale 4093, 2304 La Chaux-des-Fonds, Switzerland.

Any further information we receive on the Congress will be in the next Journal.

Logbook Extracts

4.8.96 - Priddy Green Sink

Tall Graham & Colin McLaren God it's tight. Done it. Glad I don't have to go back. NB Relying on instructions written on the back of a receipt, given by an inebriated J-Rat is not recommended for this cave. Only half made it.

3.8.96 - Swildons Upper Series

Debs & Ruth (prospective member)

Ruth came out smiling - obviously didn't take her on a long enough trip!

4.8.96 - Eastwater

Steve Tucker & Carmen

To Primrose Pot and back. Wot squeeze!!

10.8.96 - Aggy

Dorn & Adrian Hole (BEC)

...took in a few wrong turnings on route ... superb trip ... Maytime streamway is 'spectacular' man!!

17.8.96 - Swildons

Debs, Paul Stillman & Tony Robinson ... tried to convince the others it was the same distance to continue out around Short Round as going back ... they weren't convinced.

18.8.96 - Manor Farm Swallet

Tim NBD & Pete Williams (prospective member)

...to Florence's Bathtub - no water! Cave very clean. BEWARE! - on approaching the farmer, pay your money and run, otherwise he will try and palm you off with ten kittens!

24.8.96 - Hunters Hole - Sago Pot

Tall Graham & Les

Tall Graham's first rigging trip .. classic deviation constructed - see logbook (it has to be seen to be believed - Ed).

25.8.96 - Swildons - Blue Pencil

Tall Graham & Grandad Rands Will people ever learn? Party of 10 (3 leaders fully equipped in wetsuits etc and 7 kids - approx 7 years old - in T-shirts track suits, trainers) to sump 1. Kids frozen and coming out the Wet ways!

26.8.96 - *Brian Pitman* bought a round but he gave Tina a £20 note so she bought the whole table a drink including Bob Cross and Al Mills! Total cost £11.60. Quote by Brian "I won't sleep tonight!"

30.8.96 - Ogof Draenen

Dom (solo)

Round trip 3hrs 30mins. A fine trip. Ooh eek!!!

31.8.96 - Swildons

Maurice & John carefully escorted by *Malc & Mike* Pleasant trip ... to Trats. Firmly refused to be led further into Paradise. Out successfully. Malc said it's his first trip in the Long Dry since he was a kid.

30.8.96 - 1.9.96

The Club's Guest was the *Rubber Duck Caving Club* who entertained us royally with song and verse and led Maurice Hewins astray.

24.8.96 - Ogof Draenen

Cookie, Debs & Andy Ladell

Cookie disappeared down a tight hole for an hour

24.8.96 - Bunkroom Series

Everyone at Pwll Du

After a serious amount of alcohol, attempts were made to traverse tables, squeeze through chairs, & do round-trips on shelving - much of which was captured on video by Rosie. Available soon at a cinema near Fleet. Cert X.

1.9.96 - Rhino Rift/ Priddy Green Sink through-trip

Mega keen Steve & Carmen Decided to make the most of BEC's rigging of Rhino seeing as it meant we didn't have to carry any tackle ourselves!

1.9.96 - Swildons

Debs & Daniel G (crazy Israeli)

Sump 1 is considerably tighter than usual - needs a good flood to wash sediment through.

(or a slimmer bottom!)

7.9.96 - Rhino Rift

Malc Foyle & Parrot (on his way to Turkey to flog Mars Bars in the face of the enemy) went down Rhino and got scared shitless by the BEC rigging. Need to be sent to Yorkshire to see what proper rigging's like.

25.8.96 - Ogof Draenen

Rosie & Vern

Gilwern Passage ... better than boulder-hopping. ... Entrance Series (much more like Mendip!)

7.9.96 - The Otter Hole Experience

Tim, Martin, Debs, Tim NBD & Mark LBS

Went in without a leader (excellent!!) as he had broken his leg in Slaughter Stream to avoid this trip ... remember: when you slide, you slide! Returned to sump to shiver and dance plus quiz night.

12.9.96 - Swildon's Hole

Simon, Sherry & Dave

Had a frightening experience going through sump 1. What the hell happened about the air gap Simon? There was none!

Great excuses for not going caving No. 325:

"I would love to go but the Gent's Pissaroo is blocked and I must dear it" MDY

14.9.96 - Swildons

Colin & Andy

Mike had used our last excuse (No. 325) so we went caving

14.9.96 - North Hill

Colin & Andy

We got caving fever but this cave soon cured us. No blockages in cave - ready for Wessex Dinner.

5.9.96 - Rhino Rift

Dom, Rich Websell & Rob Harper

Started scaffold wall

11.9.96 - Rhino Rift

Dom & Rob Harper

Continued scaffold wall

18.9.96 - Growling Hole, East Kingsdale

Dom & Mark Champion (ACG)

Got half way down 250' pitch at end to be told single bolt belay at head of pitch was making tapping sounds. Nearly lost some weight into my undersuit and very gingerly prussiked up - suggest you take a bolting kit!! PS Watch out for the hanging death at top of big pitch.

19.9.96 - Alum Pot New Route

Dom & Mark Champion (ACG)

Mark said "It's not like Mendip is it" NO

21st - 22nd Sept

Knockhundred return to Mendip

We have some budding new WCC members in the making, Very nice to be back on the hill

22.9.96 - Hunter's Hole

Simon & Steve

Why don't ropes fit in the bag on the way back out???

28.9.96 - St. Cuthbert's

Maurice & Vern

¾ hrs trying to get stereo-pictures of the entrance rift. Vern went down it - I didn't. Took a dozen shots - one must be OK

28.9.96 - Wigmore Swallet

Vern, Graham & Max

Nice novice trip!!! Prospective members possibly!

Club Diary

1996 December

7/8th WCC Yorkshire Meet
7th CSCC Meeting
8th WCC Committee Meeting
MRO - Head & Spinal Injuries

1997 January

4th WCC vs. BEC Skittles Match WCC
18th Gough's Cave Meet, Cheddar
25th MRO - Resuscitation Lecture
24/25/26th WCC Devon Meet - DSS

February

15th WCC Bath Stone Mines Meet MRO
Lecture on Legal Commitments for
Cave Rescue - *date to be arranged*

March

15th BCRA Cave Science Symposium
University of Huddersfield NCA AGM
22nd MRO Lecture on Communication
across Eastern Mendip - *date to be
arranged*

May

May BH South Wales Meet - WSG
Spring BH North Wales Meet

June

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

July

14th-17th NAMHO Conference, Matlock

August

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

September

12th-14th BCRA Conference, Bristol