





# THE WESSEX CAVE CLUB JOURNAL

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<i>PRESIDENT</i>	<i>RICHARD KENNEY</i>
<i>VICE PRESIDENTS</i>	<i>PAUL DOLPHIN GRAHAM BALCOMBE JACK SHEPPARD</i>
<i>CHAIRMAN</i>	<i>DAVE MORRISON Windrush 42/45 Upper Bristol Rd Clutton BS18 4RH 01761 452437</i>
<i>SECRETARY</i>	<i>MARK KELLAWAY 5 Brunswick Close Twickenham Middlesex TW2 5ND 0181 943 2206 mak@euro.csg.mot.com</i>
<i>TREASURER &amp; MRO CO-ORDINATOR</i>	<i>MARK HELMORE 01761 416631</i>
<i>EDITOR</i>	<i>ROSIE FREEMAN 33 Alton Rd Fleet Hants GU13 9HW 01252 629621 rosie@libertus.demon.co.uk</i>
<i>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</i>	<i>DAVE COOKE 33 Laverstoke Gardens Roehampton London SW15 4JB 0181 788 9955 dave@alchemy.co.uk</i>
<i>CAVING SECRETARY TRAINING OFFICER &amp; C&amp;A OFFICER</i>	<i>LES WILLIAMS 01749 679839 les.williams@virgin.net</i>
<i>NORTHERN CAVING SECRETARY</i>	<i>KEITH SANDERSON 015242 51662</i>
<i>GEAR CURATOR</i>	<i>ANDY MORSE</i>
<i>HUT ADMIN. OFFICER</i>	<i>DAVE MEREDITH</i>
<i>HUT WARDEN</i>	<i>ANDYLADELL</i>
<i>COMMITTEE MEMBER &amp; LIBRARIAN</i>	<i>MIKE DEWDNEY-YORK</i>
<i>SALES OFFICER</i>	<i>DEBORAH MORGENSTERN</i>
<i>COMMITTEE MEMBER</i>	<i>SIMON RICHARDSON</i>
<i>SURVEY SALES</i>	<i>MAURICE HEWINS</i>

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WCC Headquarters, Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane  
Priddy, Somerset, BA5 3AX  
Telephone 01749 672310

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Opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily  
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# Club News Caving News

Full details of the **library contents** are being painstakingly entered by the Librarian onto the WCC database. Therefore, if you want to enquire whether or not the Club holds a publication, liaise with the Librarian to search this database. The library acquisitions listed on page 185 are only a limited selection of what is available and are those which the Editor feels may be more relevant to the membership.

**Congratulations** to Tina Pitman on her recent engagement to Steve. We wish them all the best for the future.

A big thank you to **Jon Palfrey** for assisting in the production of the Journal over the last 3 years. His hard work ensures that any photos sent in for publication can be reproduced in the Journal to a high quality, rather than some grainy photos or photocopies seen in other publications.

Also, thank you to **Andy Sparrow** for allowing us to use information from the Mendip Newpage on his website. This, at the moment, seems to be the only source of information about what is happening on Mendip. If you do have any news, however small it may be, please let us know.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of Pauline (formerly Gough) who married a member of this Club and, we think, lives in Sheffield, could they please contact the Editor or ask her to get in contact.

## New Members

**Laurie Orr**  
6 Stockmead, Langford, Bristol.  
BS40 5JD Tel: 01934 852912

**Keith James Palmer**  
60 High St., Banwell.  
BS24 6AG Tel: 01934 820535

**Paul David Wakeling**  
School Farm Annexe, School Lane, Rowberrow,  
Nr. Winscombe. BS25 1QP  
Tel: 01934 853185

**Aidan Harrison-Wolfe**  
Tithe Cottage, The Common, Pensford, Bristol.  
BS39 4AS Tel: 01761 490634

**Rosemary Harrison-Wolfe**  
Tithe Cottage, The Common, Pensford, Bristol.  
BS39 4AS Tel: 01761 490634

**Swildon's Forty** - What was the significance of the 10th July this year?

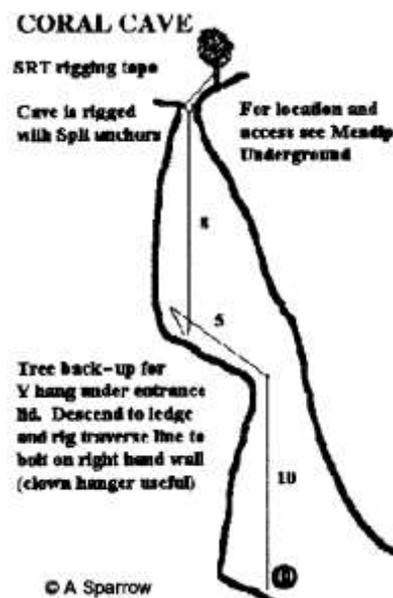
*Answer* - it marks 30 years since the Great Flood of '68 swept away the floor of the Water Rift and created the bypass to the Forty Foot Pot. To celebrate the anniversary members of the BEC laid a fire-hose from the Water Chamber to conduct water back over the Forty again. It was an impressive sight which turned the pot into a very cold and drafty spot. It makes you realise what a formidable obstacle this was and why rescues were so frequent to recover the cold and exhausted.

**Five Buddles Sink** - Tony Jarrat and crew continue work at this interesting site. Excavation of the second entrance by digging open the old mine shaft is now complete and the results are very impressive - a 3m by 11m shaft completely excavated. There are some interesting miner's relics in the passage beneath including original wooden flooring. The lower section is a short length of walking passage (completely excavated) with a natural rift leading on. Unfortunately this whole area has flooded and further work will be delayed until this drains or, more likely, is pumped out.

**Cairo Shaft** is in the Nordrach area. A 17m mined shaft enters about 100 metres of partly mined natural passage ending in a sump beyond a tight section. The sump appears to be a flooded mine level and will be dived soon.

**Bolt Update** - Resin anchors have been installed on the Entrance, New Atlas and High Atlas pitch heads in

Thrupe. The climb to Ladder Dig in GB has now been resin anchored and work will begin on Rhino Rift soon. There are two stripped spits in Hunter's Hole; one over the main pitch and one above Far Right Pitch. Coral Cave has recently been SRT bolted →



# Swildon's Mud Sump

## Reported by Mark Helmore

After several months of Mud Sump being un-bailable, and following unsuccessful attempts to unblock the drain hole, it was decided that an alternative course of action was required.

**Saturday 25 July** saw a motley crew of Wessex members (Dave Cooke, Andy Morse, Les William's and myself) descending Swildon's enroute to Mud Sump, complete with our secret weapon - a hand driven pump! Collecting some previously noted hose pipe from Water Chamber (we promise to return it!) we arrived at Mud Sump and proceeded to secure the pump in place adjacent the sump. With the hose pipe laid back to the Muddy Oxbow, pumping commenced!! Once the system was proven working an exit was made for a well-earned

drink. All that was now required was some willing volunteers to 'Pump that Sump'.

The following **Tuesday (28th)**, Les, myself and two prospective members arrived at Mud Sump and managed to lower the sump level by about 300mm before Roger called us out.

**Thursday 30 July** - Dave Edge, Danny and myself busily pumping away hoping to break the Sump. Even with a fleeting visit from Bean and Paula we had to leave with the Sump still unbroken, but lowered by another 200mm.

One more trip should see the Sump broken, so by the time you read this, the passage on the far side of the Sump should once again be open for non-divers.

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## Ceram Expedition

### Dave Cooke

A truly international team of cavers from England, Australia, New Zealand, America and Switzerland, recently completed a six week expedition to Ceram in the Maluku Islands (the fabled spice islands) of Indonesia. The Wessex contingent comprised of Sue Scott (nee Bonar), Andy Morse and Dave Cooke.

The main objective of the trip was to bottom the huge (30m diameter) shaft of Goa Hatu Saka. The recce, two year previous, had guesstimated the depth at 250 metres by throwing rocks over the edge. After several days of rigging, this figure turned out to be remarkably accurate. But it was not the bottom, a parallel shaft continued on down into a vast chamber with a flat glutinous mud floor. Several more days rigging gained the bottom at a total depth of 410 metres. Which we believe bestows the honour of the deepest cave in Indonesia upon Goa Hatu Saka. Surprisingly the main water from the stream does not enter this chamber but leaves the balcony via a different

route, still to be explored to a conclusion.

A second team, exploring a different part of the jungle, found a previously unknown system which we named Goa Api Lima. This is a much more horizontal system, entered via three short pitches. 1.5km of passage was surveyed, with plenty of going leads to look at next time. The cave contains a small but fast flowing river. This was pushed downstream to a second entrance just above its resurgence, making a through trip possible. Frustratingly the route upstream (to the big stuff) was impossible since the river completely filled the passage. Maybe it can be passed in the dry season.

The people of Ceram are exceptionally hospitable and we could not have succeeded without their considerable help. Hopefully I'll be able to meet them and their caves again before too long.

*Cookie*

# The NCA Caver's Fair

Dominic Sealy

This year's NCA Cavers' Fair was held on the weekend of the 4th-5th July down in the depths of darkest rural Somerset, otherwise known to most cavers as Mendip. The Cavers' Fair was originally developed as a complement to the more cerebral BCRA Conference, in as much as it was to be more practically based. The idea was that cavers from around the UK could come together to share new ideas, learn new techniques, do some caving and socialise. Mendip certainly had to be the premier place for the last of these four aims. And so it was that I found myself registering on a Friday night in the back room of the Hunters Lodge Inn.

Mendip has always been the home of all things small - caves, Wessex members (!), and this year's Cavers' Fair. Saturday morning saw a gathering of cavers stood around a small marquee on the village green. A range of trips and activities were being signed up for: a trip down Eastwater Cavern; Whitepit, a Mendip classic; basic rope work; SRT rigging; ladder & line; SRT rescue; cave photography and cave art to mention a few.

Never being one to turn down a bargain, I found myself going along on a workshop on SRT rescue based in Goughs Cave, Cheddar, and directed by Tony Flanagan. The session proved to be extremely valuable, with Tony's flexible approach allowing all individuals within the group to gain a lot. Whilst we were discussing the intricacies of counter balance and pitch head traverse rescue, the gangly frame of Andy Sparrow could be seen repeatedly falling from a caving ladder. Apparently this was to allow each individual within the group the opportunity to experience holding a falling climber with a range of belay systems, although a few older Mendip characters suggested that it was the result of dabbling in modern rope based caving methods for too long.

Returning at lunch, the cave photographers were back. Enthusiasm was high, with one individual having already taken his film off for one hour processing. Paul Stillman's quiet enthusiasm was obviously luring them into the thought that cave photography could be fun! Lunch was provided in the Village Hall and for me was to be followed by a session on Underground First Aid run by the MRO. True to MRO tradition, the session was meant to kick off at 1.30pm, but the cave rescuers didn't arrive until after the pub shut at 3pm. In Mendip, no one gets worried until at least one hour after the ETO!

The session was informal, with discussions on dealing with an underground emergency, assessing the situation and casualty, priority of actions, and the Mendip Cave Psychologist's ("Dr" Dany Bradshaw's) own method for intimidating (oops -I mean motivating) the casualty. All in all a thought provoking session.

That evening the 'inter club' Mendip Challenge was to take place, apparently organised by the BEC. All I know was that it was a race of some form involving the collection of concrete-filled wellies en route, finishing at the location of the evening stomp: the Village Hall. Somehow I found myself in the WCC team. So there I was, stood in a field, soaking wet, having swum across an icy cold pond, dragging three concrete wellies behind me, now coated in a liberal covering of cow shit. Yes, this could only be Mendip! .Despite devious tactics by the Wessex involving the use of a car relays, and the collection of all wellies, the Axbridge Caving Group team still managed to win. Still the losers did all receive a free pint which helped to lubricate those aching muscles as the BBQ and stomp progressed.

The following morning dawned slowly for many although workshops on basic SRT, SRT rigging knots & basic ropework, modern ladder rigging and rescue all went ahead. Another 'classic' Mendip trip down Honeyhead Hole went off, as well as a trip to Swildons. I opted to go along on the practical sessions held in Goughs Cave on SRT rigging and rescue. The session led by Robbie Walk proved to be useful and gave practical hands-on experience of a range & techniques and their merits.

Whilst some had gone on morning workshops others had started to make their way to Split Rock Quarry where Andy Sparrow had set up an SRT playground par excellence, including a tension-traverse 30 metres above the floor of the quarry. This proved to be truly popular and was a thoroughly enjoyable way to end the weekend. If nothing else, it was pleasing to see that you weren't the only one having difficulties in passing the grand mid-quarry deviation!!

The weekend was Mendip at its best: small informal and friendly with a great atmosphere, with cavers from a wide variety of caving backgrounds coming together to share in one another's experience.

# Library Acquisitions

## **BELFRY BULLETIN Vol 50 No 2 No 495**

Tackle Store Report – tackle wardens world-wide should take this as a blue print

Where to go in Wookey? – possible routes that may have been neglected  
The Eifel Volcanoes of Germany - holiday trip and snaps

The Mines of Le Saut, near Meribel. Les Trois Vallees, France - history, description and map  
Goodness Me, Has It Been That Long? - Swildons Hole's Sump 12 as she now lies - an account of the present position, with survey - well worth a read

Welshes Green Swallet - The Survey (or The Mud Pile Strikes Back) - historical, survey notes and survey  
Dragged from Cuthberts - some background notes & photos on rescue routes and aides  
Notes and Queries on Five Buddles - text, engravings and a map

## **CHELSEA SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

**Jan-March 1998 Vol 40 Nos 1-3**

AGM reports

Dodgy Mines of Dudle - history, exploration, geology and access  
Club news & White Walls log  
Picos de Europa - the other bits! - Nigeling around Tresviso

## **MNRC NEWSLETTER Feb/March 1998 No 64**

Nedd-Fachan - Little Neath River Caves

Symonds Yat, blocked caves and brambles, Cross joints Swallet  
Scottish New Year - tourist trip report  
MNRC in Virginia 1997 (3rd and final part to the saga) - caving, eating and finally saying goodbye

## **THE GRAMPIAN SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP BULLETIN Third Series**

**March 1998 Vol 4**

Another Small cave in Appin - Ash Cave NGR NN028495 - history, exploration and a survey  
Caving in the Abode of the Clouds - Meghalaya 1997 - historical, exploration, access, descriptions, photo's and surveys  
Another Night on the Tiles - diving and further exploration in Claonaite

Word's Can Paint a Thousand Pictures - accounts of those trips in The Stygeian Darkness under the limestone mantle of the Hills and Mountains of the Earth

Dicking About in the Desert, or 'Never Mind the Kalashnikov, What About the Pomegranate Stains?' - history and exploration in Pakistan (Baluchistan) - access, transport, food, religion, photos and survey  
Index to Caving International: 1978-1982

## **CRAVEN RECORD April 1998 No 50**

Malham Water Tracing Presentation  
New World Depth Record - Gouffre Minolda

Beverly Cave - history & exploration  
Extending Bucklands Windypit  
Slip Caves in Corallian Limestone  
Malham Area Water Testing - dye tracing results, history, tables & maps

Access to the Open Countryside in England and Wales - review. This article should be read in conjunction with the Government Publication of the same name; a copy of which is lodged in the Club Library  
Caves of Assynt - tourist trip  
Obit's:  
*Alfred Bogli* - author of Radiant Darkness & The Wonderful World of Caves  
*Peter Livesey* - caver and climber, latterly the proprietor of the Malham Cafe

*Haroun Tazief* - vulcanologist & author of 'Craters of Fire'. Better known to cavers for being on the exploration of the Pierre St Martin, when Loubens died

## **UBSS NEWSLETTER March 1998 Vol 14 No 1**

Five go Trespassing in the Dordogne - prehistoric art, karst, exploration and lots of big scrummy teas

New Year in the Russian North - visiting the Pinega Caves. This must be done in the Winter as they're rather damp in the Summer - access, Ice formations, certain Russian practises in Bayne, food and drink  
Painted Caves in Winter, France - access, history, archaeology, Prehistoric art, excavation, karst, and caves

The Rescuer, Defective Equipment & the Law or: "The strange affair of the karabiner that failed in the night" - the legal position of Cave Rescuers; The distinction between Civil and Criminal Law

British Cave Rescue Council Coroner's Inquests Briefing Notes  
From Honorary Legal Adviser: 01-02-95

Legal Issues in Search and Rescue Operations

## **LIBRARIANS' GROUP NEWSLETTER**

**Oct 1997 & Jan 1988 Nos 1 & 2**

This group has been set up to get a better understanding of what each Library holds and make that information more accessible to the wider caving public

Example: the Wessex holds a complete run of Speleo Dordogne - believed to be the only set in the Country  
Swaps List

## **GUIDE**

Discover the Caves of Meghalaya. Directorate of Tourisme, Government of Meghalaya

One for the Wessex: Tetengkol-Balwakol. (Cave of the Dwarfs with inverted feet) - exploration, history, caves karst, photos, map and survey's

## **MAXIM MAGAZINE Outake from March 1998**

In Derbyshire - a very tongue-in-cheek account of a novice trip  
Double Entendre Syndrome at its ?

## **WHITE ROSE POTHOLE CLUB Feb 1988 Vol 17 No 1**

The Passing of Winter in Antarctica - while this is not directly about caving it's worth a read

Lost Johns, Short Drop Cave - tourist trip with attitude

Potting Notes: Conistone Moor area  
South Cockrake Vein, High Swineber Pot, Blizzard Pot, Topham Pots Sleet Pot, Blach Keld, and an excellent site location map

The Ebbing and Flowing Well, Buckhaw Brow – observations

Lancaster Hole - a small extension to a very big cave

MacKenzie, Wolfstone and the Girls from Kentucky - wandering in Scotland

# A Fathers Day To Remember

Malcolm (Herbie) Plant

"Right Dad, you need some training for the Berger in August, so for Fathers Day I'm going to take you on a through trip down Bar Pot and back up Stream. SUSS (Sheffield University Speleo Soc. {of which my daughter Abby is a member}) are leaving the ropes in so we can do it and de-rig".

It sounded fine, for many years I've been wanting to do some of the Gaping Gill system; an opportunity at last. We left home (Morecambe) at 11am telling Kath (my wife) that we would ring before 10pm to let her know that we were out safely. The customary call in at Inglesport saw me once again using my flexible friend to update my antique sit harness with a much needed new one. And so, on to Clapham car park, get changed and spend half an hour adjusting new sit harness. We are now one hour behind our intended schedule, never mind, we've allowed plenty of time.

So, up the long path we trek. It's nice not having to carry the ropes up. Takes us about an hour. Over to Bar Pot, get kit on and sorted and down we go. I might have guessed it was going to be a bad day when I got jammed at the top of the first pitch and had a real struggle to press in the handle of my Petzl Descender. (Isn't it strange how gaps get narrower as you get older!) However, down the first and then down the second pitch no problem.

Abby. "I wonder which way it is now"

Me. "Don't you know?"

Abby. "No, I've never done it this way before"

Me. "Well, haven't you got a survey?"

Abby. "Didn't think I'd need one, and I thought that somebody else from SUSS would be caving with us"

Me. "Well, you're in charge, so you can decide"

Abby. "OK, I think it's this way"

Yes, you've guessed, 'this way' was the 'wrong way', and for those who know this system, they are aware of how easy it is to get lost. And so for the next three and a half hours we wandered, crawled, thrutched, went round in loops until we eventually found ourselves back at the bottom of the second pitch of Bar Pot. Did we try the other exit out of the chamber? No! Abby knew where the top entrance to Stream was and decided that we should go back up Bar, de-rigging it, and then go over to Stream and just go down and de-rig. So up we go, I de-rig the bottom pitch and Abby de-rigs the top one. The time is now 6.30pm and we know it's going to take a good two hours to de-rig Stream. Oh well, we've still got time. At 7pm we find the entrance to Stream and descend the entry tube. At the top of the first pitch Abby decides that maybe Dad is getting a bit

old and decrepit (at 53 yrs) and is looking a bit tired and that maybe she can do the job quicker on her own.

Abby. "You wait here Dad, I'll go and de-rig the other two pitches (yes, there are in fact three more), I'll be about two hours".

Now I don't know if you have ever waited alone for someone in the dark and cold. It is not a pleasant experience, especially when you know that the other person is also on their own, and with nothing else to do, you get to thinking of all the things that can go wrong. So I sat, I worried and I fretted for what turned out to be three hours (I didn't have my watch on) before I definitely heard the sound of metal clinking on rock (many times whilst waiting I thought I'd heard that sound) and heard a very tired voice from below shout "Daaad". (She told me afterwards that she was very relieved to hear me reply, as she thought I might have gone to get help by now, and didn't like the prospect of having to haul all the tackle up by herself). She tied the tackle bags she had onto the rope and I hauled them up while she went back for the other one (she was now too knackered to manage them all at once). I hauled that up and then Abby struggled up and went on up and out, leaving the tackle bags for me to manage (I was glad to be active again and start getting warmed up a bit). I de-rigged the first pitch and got the bags to the bottom of the entry tube, Abby hauled them up and I followed. Time is now 11.15pm! "Oh dear!, Mum will have called Cave Rescue by now, we'll probably meet them on the way up as we're going down".

Yes, she did call them, but, bless her, had waited until 11pm before doing so. This was fortunate as they also allowed us another hours grace (having learned from my wife that we were experienced(?) cavers and were de-rigging Stream). Quarter past midnight found us back at the car park to find a note from the Police asking us to contact them to let them know we were out safely, then as we were getting changed, the CRO van pulled up and a voice from within said "That's what we like to see we didn't really fancy going down tonight. We'll 'phone your wife to let her know your OK while you finish getting changed". The Police also returned whilst we were changing (saved making a call after which we went to the CRO hut to give them our details, thank them and have a brew with them A donation to funds was also made.

Eventually made it home about 2am.

Thanks Abby, but I think I'll spend next years Fathers Day at home!!

# The Rescue of Malc Foyle and His Tin Fish

## Robin Thomas

The weekend of the 29th to 31st of May 1998 will be one never to be forgotten ! The great rain gods in the sky had blessed the Yorkshire Dales with exceptional weather and diving conditions were excellent. With this in mind the three Wessex cave divers M.Foyle, R.Brown and M.Thomas headed north once again to pay homage to J.N.C. and all things good about northern cave diving, apart from the beer!

Mike took the Friday off work and was at Green Close in time to join John Cordingley, Russell Carter and company for a dive in Keld Head. More equipment, than you would find in your local dive shop was assembled on the banks of Keld Head , including two Aqua-zepp scooters, more affectionately known as tin fish. The tin fish were owned by John and Russell and they were using them to explore a new passage 1 km from the entrance. Mike's dive was delayed due to a number of small air leaks that needed to be sorted, but this did allow the two scooter pilots to effortlessly move off into the cave without the hindrance of a slow swimming diver in the way.(The word effortlessly is one that needs to be remembered when talking about the use of scooters.) The visibility was 8 metres, give or take a bit, depending on whether or not the tin fish had passed over or around the silt banks! John managed to lay a complete reel of line in his new passage with Russell in support and Mike had a long swim up to around 700 metres before hitting thirds.

Back at Green Close that evening the usual fettling of diving equipment and cylinder filling took place until late into the night, everyone was in bed by midnight without even going to the pub! Malc and Robin turned up about 12.30 am and Malc was visibly shaken by the professionalism of his fellow divers, and wondered where he had gone wrong in training them all to be beer monsters.

Saturday morning was a glorious day in the dales, the sun was out, the birds were singing even the polar bears were happy! And then it all went wrong, Malc Foyle went to the back of his van and pulled out a brand new, shiny tin fish and said " So chaps how do I make it work ?" Everyone ran away.

Malc and Robin were dispatched to Hurtle pot for scooter driving lessons and the rest of us went back to Keld Head. John again supported by Russell carried on laying line, Mike did a stage dive to 960 metres just beyond Dead Mans Handshake, which by the way looks just like the drawing and description in Martyn's big book and the rest of the team did various dives up to 700 metres. The one thing though that stayed the topic of conversation all day was just how Malcolm was getting on, trying to tame his tin fish?

That afternoon we all met up in Inglesport for tea and medals and Malcolm was interrogated about his scooter driving lessons. He mumbled something about easy to use and not crashing it, Robin said nothing.

More fettling took place on Saturday night and Malc got very excitable about the fact that no one was going to the pub, So he decided that he and Robin should go to the New Inn and drink lots of beer to make up for everyone else, so they did.

It was a late start on Sunday as all the diver's opted for a long stay in bed, lots of tea drinking and lots of divers bull-shit stories. Eventually Mike managed to persuade Malc and Robin that they wanted to go for another dive in Hurtle pot, anyway the vis was still good and Malc needed some more practise with his tin fish! On the way to the dive site Malc stopped to look at the water levels in joint hole, it was here that he met Dave Ryall from the Bradford caving club and persuaded him to go diving with us, that was a good thing !

The plan was for Robin to dive downstream to Midge Hole and back, Mike was doing some equipment testing and training at the Hindenburgh wall, Dave was to dive upstream and Malc was to continue scooter driving lessons by piloting his tin fish to Jingle pot and back again. So off we all went and had a very good dive, well most of us anyway.

The first two divers in the water were Mike followed by Robin, so they were also the first back. After an hour had gone by we started to wonder were the other two had got to. On walking back down to the sump pool we found Dave fettling his kit after a short dive but no Malc!

As Dave had plenty of gas left we sent him back in to look for Malc, but he returned a short time later saying that he could not find him and the line going towards Jingle was broken and he could not have gone there! This concerned us a little, as by now Mike had worked out that one and a half hours had gone by since he had seen Malc scooter passed him on the way into the cave. Malc was only using two 12 L cylinders and with the depth approaching -30 metres in places he should be very low or out of gas by now!

All we could do, apart from running around panicking about how to get the tin fish back if he had croaked, was send Dave back in for one more look and Mike and Robin walked up to Jingle pot, just to make sure he was not stuck at the bottom for some reason.

Two very concerned divers half ran and half stumbled up the valley towards Jingle pot hoping that they would find Malc there, but actually believing that he was more likely to be unconscious in the sump somewhere after crashing his scooter or running out of gas due to a scooter breakdown.

But all was to be fine, as we neared the top of Jingle pot a small voice could be heard, it went something like "help, help I'm stuck, would someone please help me ? It's very dark down here, help and so on!

Mike and Robin looked over the top of Jingle and there was our glorious leader standing at the bottom, next to his tin fish, blubbing like a girl (well nearly). The concern from the two divers that had found Malc was noted, but as this is a family comic, it should not be repeated here.

After Mal had stopped blubbing and Mike and Robin stopped being so caring we found out what had happened. As Malc scooted along the Jingle line, he managed to put a break in the line somehow without noticing it (scooter pilots travel fast). When he returned along the same line from Jingle, Malc found the line break, but in the now bad visibility could not find the other end to get back to the Hurtle line, so was forced to go back to Jingle pot and await rescue.

Now we knew Malc was O.K. and where he was, all that remained was to go and find Dave and tell him the good news, then go back to the Bradford to get some rope and a ladder to get Malc, his tin fish and the rest of his equipment out of Jingle pot.

Dave was very relieved when we told him where Malc was, but he made no effort to rush back to

the Bradford to get some tackle, He thought it would do Mal some good to stay stuck for a while longer! While Dave and Robin went off to get some kit, Mike went back to the top of Jingle pot to feed our trapped leader and keep him company, the conversation though was all one way, with Malc saying that it was not his fault and it was bad northern line laying that caused the problem. Mike just made reassuring noises and promised that we would not tell anyone.

It was around 4 PM. when Dave and Robin returned with the required tackle and Carol, also from the Bradford, as she had a camera of which Malc appeared to be very shy! By this time the mosquito's had appeared on mass and life for the rescue team was very uncomfortable, especially for Dave who was still in shorts. We had the pitch rigged very quickly and started shouting at Malc to get his diving equipment ready for hauling, The cylinders and other bits and pieces were pulled up easily, but the tin fish gave us a few problems, due to its weight and the fact that it got stuck on the way up, this was solved by Robin doing a superman impression over the pitch head to release Malc's £1200 toy.

Eventually we decided that we had better release Malc from his prison as we could not stand being eaten alive by mosquito's any more. To say Malc was a little hot after his ladder climb in a drysuit is an understatement but he still managed to say repeatedly "Listen chaps it really wasn't my fault, its that northern line laying !" and "you won't tell any one will you?"

Of course we reassured our shocked friend, that we would not say a word to anyone, well maybe that was a bit optimistic !!!

NOTE: The above article may appear to have a small quantity of half truths in it, but the divers involved in the rescue of Malc Foyle and his tin fish, feel that this poetic licence is justified due to many years of hell at the hands of our glorious leader.

*Well I am sure we all look forward to Malc's side of the story. (Ed)*

# Things To Do Around The Hut

The following are a list of jobs that are required to be undertaken around Upper Pitts. Any help at all, be it volunteers to do the jobs or sources of the materials required, would be much appreciated. So, if you fancy having a go, speak to the Hut Admin Officer and see what you can do - this applies to:

## **You!!**

- The gully leak above the porch received a rain test and failed. This needs repairing
- Following the excavation to assess the 'sinking' floor in the entrance corridor (the floor does seem to be sound) the hole needs filling, as does the space under the wall
- All external doors need to be replaced, apart from the ladies dorm fire door. The upstairs dorm external fire door is the priority
- New glass and bars have been obtained for the front door. However, these still need fitting
- A closer is required on the porch door
- The radiators need cleaning out, which needs to be done ASAP. This will be done at the same time as the break in of the new radiators
- Although one end of the bunkroom has been completely refurbished, the rest needs to be finished. More slats should be arriving soon

- We need to look into grants for fireproofing the dorm, etc
- The fire extinguishers need mounting on the walls
- There is a damp patch round the kitchen gable end - this needs resealing
- The rescue radio needs to be mounted
- Gents systemiser needs replacing
- There is a leak in the library roof - to be investigated and dealt with ASAP
- The panel in the rear door panel is loose
- There is a broken window in the changing room
- Can anyone assist with the building of a foolproof charger for drill batteries? If so, speak to either Les or Nick Williams as a circuit board needs to be sorted out first
- The new 'star trek' rope washer needs to be fixed and plumbed in
- We need more red ladder rungs. Nick Williams will anodise them but would be grateful if any member wishes to help out

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## Thought for the Day

Received via an e-mail from Napoleon (P Steele), and well worth a moments thought:

During my caving trips, one thing has struck me on every occasion:

- The need for preserving the precious formations and environment beneath us
- What has taken millions of years to create can be destroyed in a second

*"WE DO NOT inherit the earth from our ancestors;  
We borrow it from our children"*

(An old Kenyan proverb)

### **WCC AGM & Dinner Weekend**

**October 17th and 18th**

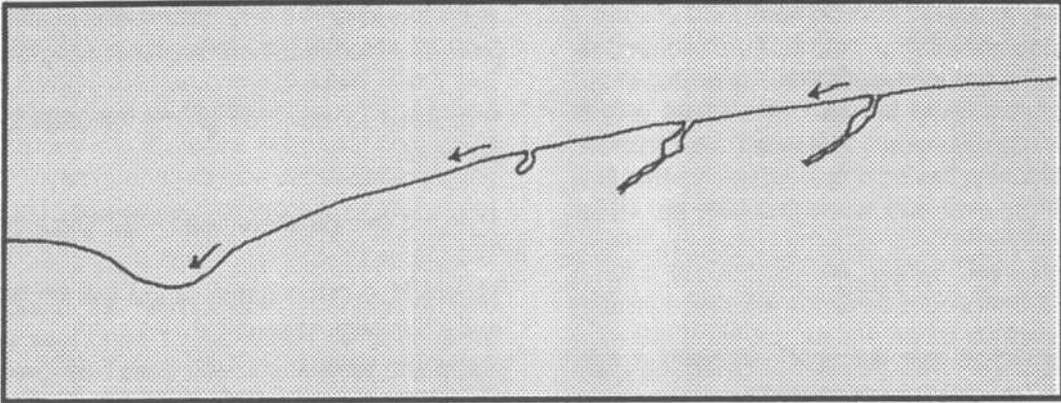
**10.30am:** AGM at the Hunters Lodge Inn

**6.45pm:** Coach from Eastwater Lane for Dinner at the Mendip Centre, Combe Lodge

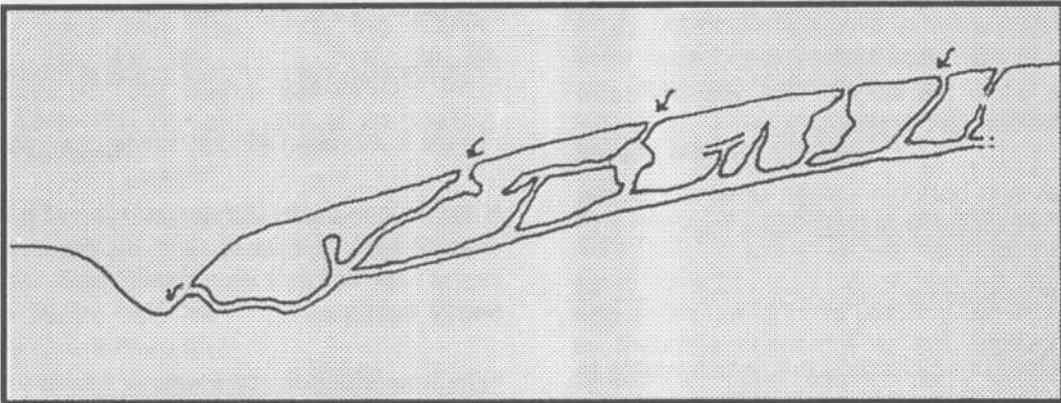
**12 midnight:** returning to Upper Pitts

**Sunday:** Mystery Tour

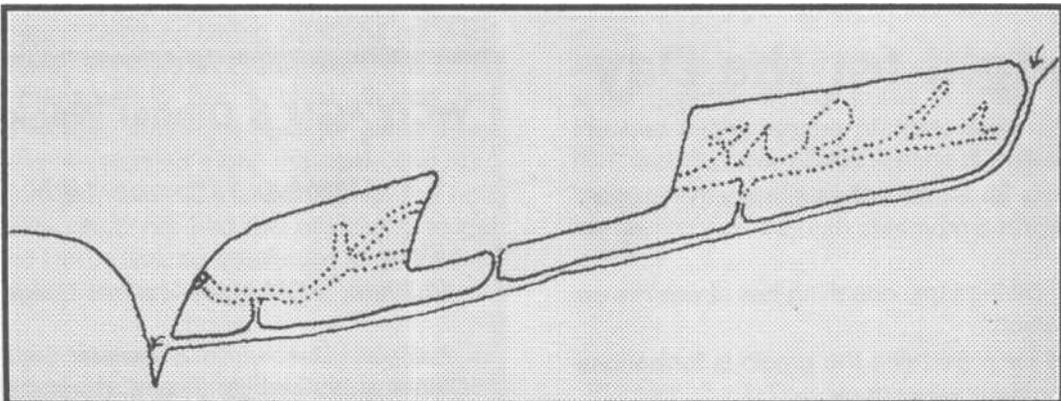
## Speleogenesis in the St Dunstons Well and Ashwick Grove Drainage Basins



Stage 1 - Streams draining the Beacon Hill Pericline flow South-North in shallow trenches to the Melts River Valley. Leakage into the limestone forms an ill-defined network of solution chambers.



Stage 2 - Gradual and prolonged downcutting of the base level encourages the coalescence of subterranean waters into a well-defined multi-level network of phreatic conduits. Lowering base levels and erosion from below cause extensive collapse in earlier solution chambers, forming the large high-level chambers seen today.



Stage 3 - Rapid downcutting of the River Melts leads to dramatic drop in base levels and superimposition of modern drainage pattern over long-standing one. Surface streams disappear permanently down immature vadose swallets feeding new lower level risings via conduits at a level well below the now high and dry fossil caves. Gradually all visible signs of the mature cave network disappear, only to be rediscovered by later quarrying operations.

# Observations in the St. Dunstons Well and Ashwick Drainage Basins

Rob Taviner

*'Let your mind go and your body will follow'*

The Signpost in LA Story

Talk to almost anyone about East Mendip and you'll hear the same phrases time after time ... 'immature ... no potential... give it a few thousand years ... etc', an attitude which appears to be derived from the immaturity of the present day drainage landscape. Yet, in the midst of this lies the St. Dunstons Well catchment and its' associated caves at Fairy Cave Quarry and Stoke Lane Slocker. Mature and impressive passage by any standards. This apparent discrepancy is linked to changes in the base level of the River Mells and the superimposition of a modern drainage pattern over the one which existed when these caves were formed.

Beacon Hill - the largest of the four Mendip periclinal ridges - contains the highest concentration of swallets of all Mendip catchments. From the summit ridge, a number of large streams drain northward to sink in a line of swallets at around 200m AOD, at or near the Limestone/Shale contact. Beyond, dry valleys meander across a gently undulating mile-wide limestone plateau before plunging into the deeply-incised Mells River valley. Two notable geological controls - the Oakhill and Withybrook faults - divide the sinking waters into well-defined catchments, which rise from three major springs - two in Ashwick Grove and a third at St. Dunstons Well, the regions dominant rising. *(In this instance the term Well is something of a misnomer as it is comprised of two discrete risings - St. Dunstons East and West. Situated directly on the Withybrook Fault, they are today separated by only some two metres and not surprisingly subject to a degree of interconnectivity. However, fossil drainage patterns suggest that they once lay further apart, functioning as totally separate entities - water to the east of the fault rising from one and water to the west from the other. Only in relatively recent times have they migrated towards one another. In time they will doubtless coalesce into one, only to be superseded by a capture as base levels fall, an example of which can be seen going on just a little downstream).*

Removal of the liassic cover across the Mendips from West to East suggests that in comparison with Central Mendip, the East Mendip karst has had

comparatively little time to develop. This is testimony to a landscape which is classically immature - where a high concentration of surface streams vanish into barely penetrable dip dominated swallets feeding aggressive poorly developed outlets. When one considers that the biggest caves form where large amounts of water enter or leave the limestone over a long period, conditions for extensive cave development appear distinctly unpromising. Despite this, something in the region of 7km of cave passages have been discovered - exhibiting a multi-level complex of large abandoned chambers, well-developed fossil streamways and narrow active conduits, all paradoxically implying cave development over a long period. Only a special set of circumstances could have enabled this to happen and as such it has been suggested that early exposure of the limestone by a chance meander of the Mells River at exactly the point where the Withybrook Fault surfaced encouraged early cave development, a situation readily exploited by the particularly large swallet streams.

A striking correlation between altitude and stages of cave evolution proves that speleogenesis has been almost entirely dominated by changes in the rate of down-cutting in the Mells River Valley. Initially leakage into the limestone from shallow surface valleys would have formed an ill-defined network of solution chambers. Subsequently modified by collapse, these are represented today by the large high-level strike-aligned chambers found in Stoke Lane Slocker and Fairy Cave Quarry. Gradual downcutting of the base-level encouraged coalescence of these subterranean waters into a well-developed network of phreatic conduits, one draining the fossil joint-aligned streamways in Fairy Cave Quarry to the Mells via the long strike-orientated Hilliers Cave (a fossil rising equivalent to St. Dunstons West), another probably draining from the East End Valley through Brownes Hole and Stoke Lane Slocker to St. Dunstons Well Cave (the fossil equivalent to St. Dunstons East). These ancient outlets - situated a few metres above the present base level - were finally abandoned only relatively recently - following a period of pronounced downcutting, conjectured as having been precipitated by the capture of E. Mendip

streams by the River Avon and subsequent accelerated erosion in the Claverton Gorge - an event responsible for nullifying the ancient phreatic flow lines, superimposing over them the gradient dominated vadose drainage landscape we see today.

To date, all the major explored systems - Stoke Lane Slocker (2200m), Brownes Hole (275m) and the caves at Fairy Cave Quarry (4500m) - converge on St. Dunstons Well, the only rising to which special circumstances encouraging early cave development applied. This would seem to preclude the possibility of similar systems associated with the Ashwick Risings. However, only the most poorly-developed passages in these caves relate to today's drainage pattern - that responsible for the mature network of passages having long since vanished. Less than a century ago, the St. Dunstons Well catchment would have looked much as the Ashwick catchment does today - a series of impenetrable swallets feeding poorly-developed risings - with only a few heavily choked rock arches and a handful of shallow depressions to betray the existence of developed cave systems below. (Agricultural and industrial landscaping throughout East Mendip appears to have been commonplace. That a number of passages, e.g. Great Shaft, the downstream extremity of Hilliers Cave and the recently discovered Parfitts Cave, were known to have come within a only few feet of the surface yet betrayed no indication of their existence may well be due in part to human intervention). Whilst Stoke Lane Slocker - the dominant sink - was always open, it was probably only so by chance, for the stream is known to have been re-routed (probably from a similar undeveloped swallet) to supply an 18th Century iron works, the water then being allowed to drain away and invade an old phreatic remnant, but for which this cave would probably long since have vanished without trace. Of the three other caves known - Brownes Hole, a fossil remnant exposed by incision of the Stoke Lane Valley through an old phreatic flow route, was at this time merely a choked fossil arch - whilst Fairy Cave and St. Dunstons Well Cave - located immediately above the modern risings - would have appeared to be nothing more than a localised fossil system. Only after nearby quarrying operations breached Balch Cave did the full extent of the system begin to become apparent.

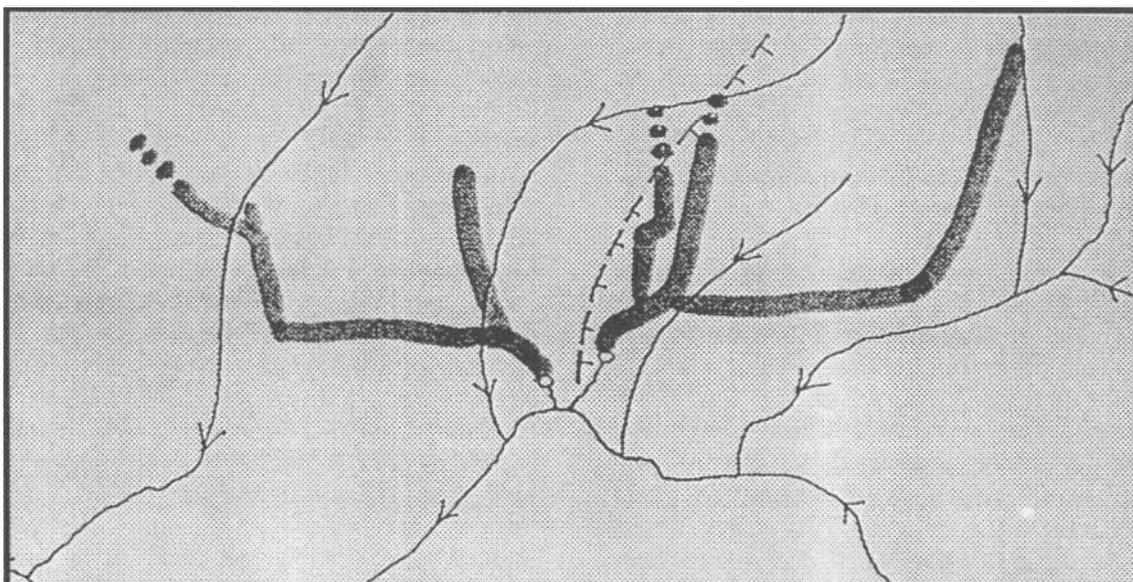
It is theoretically possible that the entire network could have been discovered via Fairy Cave and indeed as far back as 1907 the terminal choke was noted as being a promising place to dig. However, hindsight is a wonderful thing. In reality, had chance not intervened in the discovery of caves at

Fairy Cave Quarry and Stoke Lane Slocker, their extent would probably never have been suspected. As a result, no theories would have been developed to explain away their existence and Fairy Cave would probably have received little more than a cursory glance, lumping the St. Dunstons catchment into the same basket of immaturity in which the Ashwick drainage sits today.

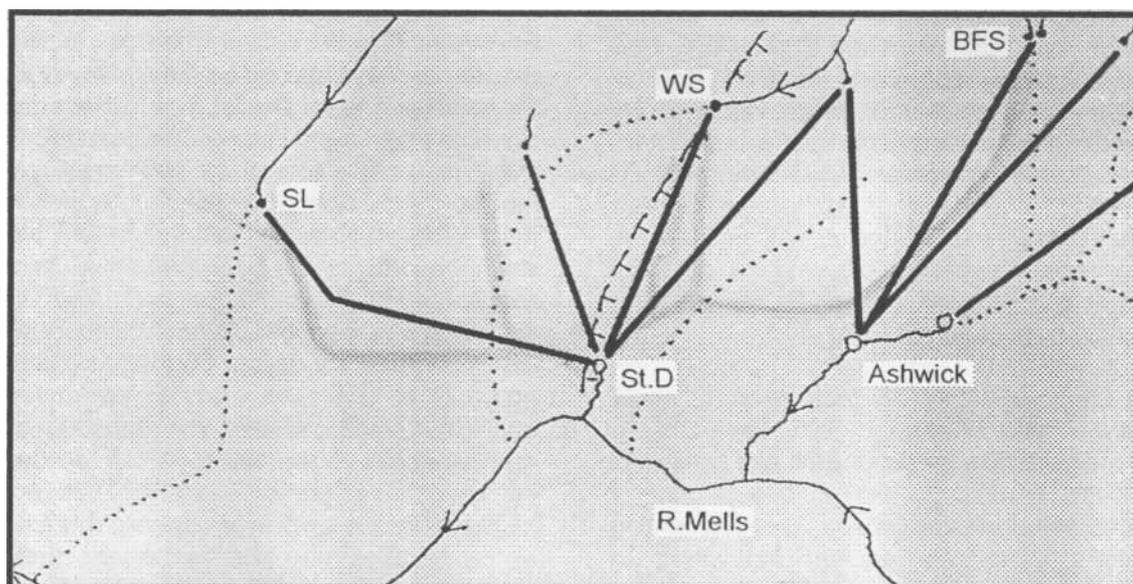
In all other respects the Ashwick catchment is near identical. Combined, the risings have a catchment of approximately 5km<sup>2</sup> feeding a mean daily discharge of around 3 million gallons, the equal of St. Dunstons Well, which is itself a multiple rising. Although displaced by the Oakhill and Withybrook Faults, the geological succession is continuous, with the Hotwells and Clifton Down groups of Limestone - which appear particularly suited to cave development - as prevalent to the West of the Withybrook Fault as they are to the East. General theory holds that with no special factors to encourage early cave development at Ashwick Grove, the catchment streams didn't disappear underground until the period of pronounced downcutting, when deep incision of Ashwick Grove created conditions conducive to the formation of the Ashwick Risings. However, only in relatively recent years have we come to understand that today's equally immature St. Dunstons drainage landscape - formed by the same event - is superimposed over a much earlier one, and given the remaining similarities we should least consider that this process may have extended into the Ashwick basin.

Although the eastward flow of the River Mells would tend to favour an eastward rate of development for cave systems, it seems untenable that solutional leakage should have been confined to only the eastern part of the pericline. particularly when one considers that the liassic cover was stripped from west to east. Gradual lowering of the base level would have rendered the resulting network of chambers susceptible and subject to further development, much along the lines of the chambers and phreatic streamways found in the St. Dunstons catchment. In general what goes in must come out, and as has been seen for St. Dunstons Well where it comes out can have a crucial influence on the potential for the development of mature cave systems. If one accepts the likely development of solutional and phreatic conduits in the Ashwick catchment, then in order to assess the potential for well-developed cave systems similar to those feeding St. Dunstons, identification of fossil outlets equivalent to St. Dunstons Well Cave/Hilliers Cave becomes all important.

**Possible capture of St. Dunstons Well drainage by Ashwick Risings following period of Pronounced downcutting.**



Early cave development is encouraged by the removal of overlying Coal Measures near the shattered zone surrounding the Withybrook Fault. Such conditions attract early cave waters towards two well-established risings lying on either side of the fault. Gradual lowering of base levels leads to the development of a mature multi-level phreatic network draining the whole of the Beacon Hill pericline via S-N joint-controlled tunnels feeding long strike-orientated master conduits.



River capture leads to rapid downcutting in the Mells River Valley and its feeders superimposing a new drainage pattern over a long-established one. Pronounced deepening of the feeder valleys truncates sections of the phreatic flow routes. New lower level risings appears at St. Dunstons Well which force the feeder streams into correspondingly modern swallets. Deepening of the Ashwick Grove feeder eventually favours formation of risings capturing the waters draining the western portion of the pericline from the old flow route feeding St. Dunstons Well. Gradually, almost all trace of the earlier drainage pattern is lost.

At first glance the presence of fossil outlets for the Ashwick Risings in Ashwick Grove itself would seem most likely. However, it was only following the deep incision of this valley through the limestone during the later period of downcutting that conditions favourable for such risings arose, prior to which Ashwick Grove would have been little more than a shallow trench. Although such features could well lie buried beneath its thickly wooded flanks, it is likely that the water would have sought a more favourable outlet.

Pulled by the strike-orientated flow of the River Mells, the special factors which encouraged cave development at St. Dunstons Well would have attracted early cave waters like a magnet, visible in the strike-dominated course of the East End-Brownes Hole-St. Dunstons Well Cave System and the abrupt swing eastward of the Hilliers Streamway. *(The unexplored regions of Stoke Lane Slocker must be subject to similar forces today, for the final reaches of the known cave abruptly veer due west, terminating very close to the limit of the limestone, a path along which it must continue in order to rise as it does at St. Dunstons Well).* For St. Dunstons to have exerted such influence over drainage to the east it seems at least plausible that it could once have held just as great a pull over waters sinking to the west. Thus, one ancient outlet for the Ashwick catchment may well have been St. Dunstons Well itself. Only when conditions suitable for the development of risings in Ashwick Grove arose was the drainage captured into its present course, via joints exploiting preferential hydraulic gradient. As a result, cave development in the Ashwick catchment may have started significantly earlier than previously realised, increasing the potential for well-developed fossil systems far beyond what might once have been expected.

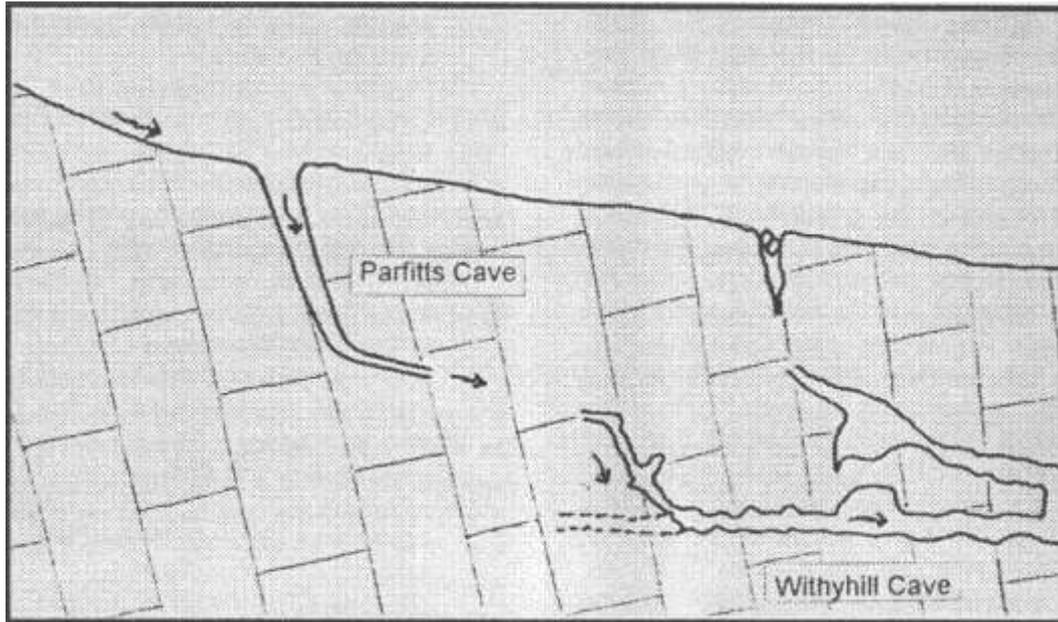
If any such development does exist, it would probably mimic that seen in Fairy Cave Quarry, taking the form of a series of S-N joint controlled streamways draining to the surface through a strike-orientated master conduit, probably exiting at Hilliers Cave, the ancient equivalent to St. Dunstons West. Such a feeder may well be represented by Fairy Cave itself, which enters Hilliers Cave from high level and demonstrates ancient phreatic flow from west to east. Like Brownes Hole further east, it is almost certainly a remnant of the ancient phreatic flow route, truncated in this case by the downcutting of Fairy Lane Valley.

Given the scarcity of fossil surface features, gaining access to such fossil systems is not going to be easy. With pursuit of the active water courses

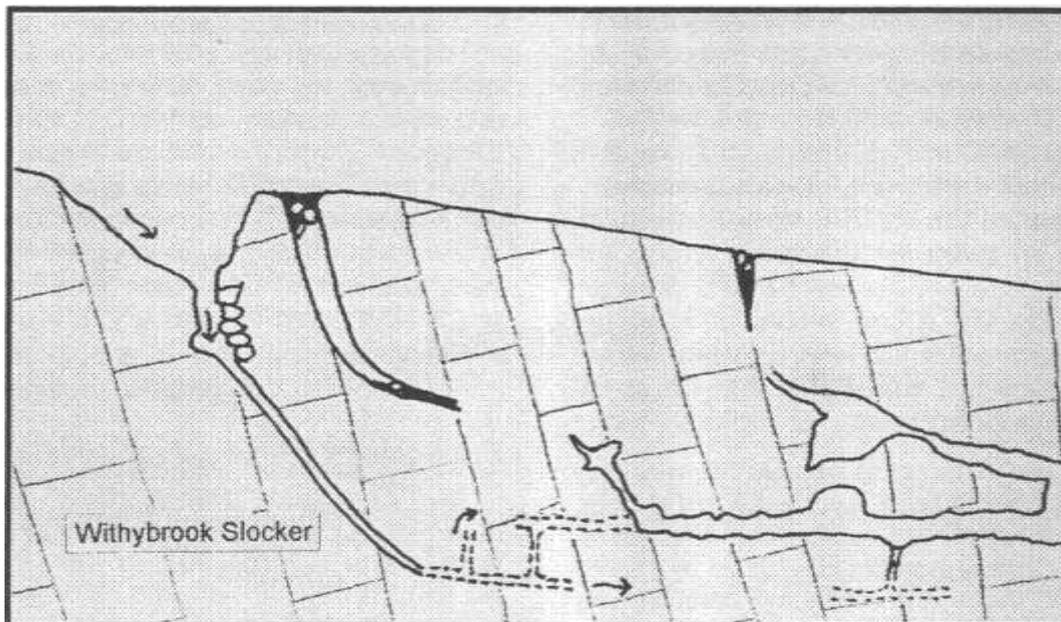
probably not being the best policy, barring someone putting a quarry in the way, chances are probably best enhanced by learning what we can from those systems which are known. Within the quarry, three distinct fossil developments can be recognised. Two, represented by the large, abandoned streamway complexes of Balch-Shatter-Fernhill and Withyhill-Hillwithy-Hilliers, probably originated from a gathering of disparate solutional sinks in the streambeds of the Coombe Wood and Fairy Lane valleys, with which they appear inextricably linked. Great Shaft and Parfitts Cave may be examples. The third feeds through Fairy Cave from an unknown source in the west. All unite in the lower regions of the Hilliers streamway, close to its ancient outlet. The fossil streamways - which suggest erosion by a substantial volume of water - were clearly not formed by today's misfit Withybrook stream, which apart from in flood conditions - when it rises up through the floor - is only briefly seen underground, taking the form of a low-level immature streamway, accessible only from Hilliers Cave and the remnants of Balch Cave. It may be that prior to its being driven underground, the nearby Midway Slocker stream continued north to join and resultantly swell the Withybrook to a much greater force than that seen today. It had been conjectured that because the modern Withybrook Slocker lies some distance beyond the limestone/shale boundary, it had, like Stoke Lane Slocker, been maintained on the surface artificially, the presumed fossil swallet lying buried upstream closer to the margin. The newly-discovered Parfitts Cave however belies this. This large, phreatic swallet - almost certainly the natural sink for the fossil Withyhill-Hillwithy-Hilliers System - also lies well beyond the limestone/shale contact, suggesting the stream has been kept on the surface not by man, but by the thick cover of head which blankets the region. Furthermore, the close proximity of this cave - which lies immediately above the present swallet, strongly suggests that the period of downcutting which evolved the current drainage pattern was a very sudden affair highly indicative of a river capture. It follows that similar features may exist in the vicinity of other modern swallets and it is from these that access to further developed fossil systems might be best achieved.

Although the swallets feeding the Ashwick Risings extend right from the far west of the pericline, because the eastward flow of the River Mells would tend to favour an eastward rate of development for cave systems, it is the swallets furthest east which are likely to be of the most interest, and it is the Blakes Farm/Hopeful Hole complex of depressions in particular that have long been recognised as the

## Relationship of Parfitts Cave and Withybrook Slocker to Withyhill Cave



Water from the combined Withybrook-Midway enters the mature phreatic network feeding St. Dunstons Well via a series of steeply descending phreatic ramps in the bed of the stream, of which Parfitts Cave and the now destroyed Great Shaft are examples.



Rapid downcutting in the Mells River Valley leads to the superimposition of a modern drainage pattern. Risings appear at a lower level forcing the Withybrook stream down into narrow vadose passages. The mature risings and swallets - eg. Parfitts Cave - are left high and dry, gradually becoming filled until only the modern drainage pattern remains visible. The new passages which cut beneath the old mature system are in places accessible. In times of flood the Withybrook stream forces its way back up between cracks and boulders to re-invade the ancient Parfitts Cave/Withyhill Cave flow route. Continued erosion of Withybrook Slocker will probably eventually collapse Parfitts Cave above, leaving a cavernous entrance. A similar process may have occurred at Blakes Farm Swallet.

catchments most promising site. These are depressions on a vast scale - huge, woody affairs resulting from collapses in the head filling larger fossil depressions exaggerated by the very large wet weather streams funnelled down deeply-incised valleys and locally weak nature of the limestone shales, although the more linear elongated nature of the Blakes Farm depression may also be influenced in part by the proximity of a localised fault. Sadly, despite their size, these swallets relate purely to the modern vadose landscape, with what little cave passage having been entered soon petering out in narrow, steeply-dipping rifts. However, both swallets trend north towards a feature which looks for all the world like a replica of the Parfitts/Withybrook relationship - a high level streambed leading down to an abandoned swallet. If this does indeed turn out to be a such a feature, at the very least it will prove the existence of cave development in the Ashwick catchment prior to the generation of the modern drainage landscape. Should it also prove to have once flowed to St. Dunstans Well then potential for further mature integrated fossil systems may be very good indeed.

*I am indebted to Tony Boycott for supplying me with extracts from the UBSS Proceedings and to Mike Dewdney-York for granting me free run of the excellent Wessex library facilities. This article is the result of study as much there as in the field.*

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## Editorial

As mentioned in my report last year, this year is to be my final year of being your friendly (!) Wessex Cave Club Editor. I thought I had secured an apprentice to take over for next year but by the end of the 1997 AGM he'd withdrawn - obviously this wasn't to be.

However over this past year, due to both my work and study commitments, my husband Vern has played an increasing part in the presentation and production of the Journal. For this reason (and the fact that I can't see anyone else in the near future volunteering for this wonderfully satisfying job) he has offered to become the Editor. I am sure that as has occurred previously, this job will still be shared but at least he gets to sit in (or fall asleep) at the Committee meetings.

As already mentioned elsewhere, a big thank you to both Andy Sparrow for supplying the Mendip news from his website, and to Jon Palfrey for his assistance in producing the Journals.

You will note from the contents of this Journal that the variety of articles covers many places: from Ireland to Ceram to our own Mendip area, as well as some news (at last) from the diving fraternity. It is also good to see that some new names are appearing as authors of the articles. Please keep this up as the quality is very high and it shows what a vast range of talent is out there in our caving club.

Keep up the good work and good luck to Vern!

*Rosie*

# St Patrick's Weekend

## Graham Prole

Another Friday, another vain attempt to clock off early to try and get out of Dublin before rush hour and being St Patrick's weekend all the more reason to try and beat the traffic. But as Murphy's Law often rules; I left the office at 5 pm. Collecting two other cavers on route I headed for the Cavan road. Within half an hour I knew it would be a good weekend.

The entire population of Dublin must have left work early and we cruised down the mile of motorway out of Dublin at 5.30 pm on a Bank Holiday Friday. One of the advantages of the Celtic tiger and the EU Structural fund is the vast improvement in the Irish roads; OK they are still some way behind the UK but they are improving. It wasn't till Cavan that the shock absorbers began screaming Pothole Country. We stopped in Blacklion on the border for a quick pint in Frank Eddies and then on to Aghnahoo - our destination.

Those Wessex members who cave in Ireland on a regular or periodical basis will have noticed the absence of Club Huts. Aghnahoo is the only one that sort of fits that description. I suppose, years of staying at the Wessex Country Club makes you soft and you take for granted the little luxuries in life such as electricity, running water, showers, toilets, bunks, stainless steel kitchen, etc. Aghnahoo has none of these frills. It was described by one of the student cavers as a step down from camping.

That description is a bit harsh. It possesses a fully fitted kitchen with gas cooker (If there is gas in the bottle), a sitting room with unburned sofas, two real turf fire places and is weather proof. It has an intimate atmosphere with the only lighting being by candle light and plenty of local wild life for the micro biologists. It is situated in the heart of the caving region with some caves within walking distance.

At SUICRO XIII (which incidentally was attended by familiar faces from Mendip such as Malcolm & Rita and numerous Shepton members), a new caving book had been launched called 'The Caves of Cavan And Fermanagh'. The caving culture the world over is the same and as with all new caving books it was no sooner printed than became officially out of date. The discovery of one completely new cave and extensions in another had seen to that. (SUICRO NL42).

We had gone to Fermanagh to check out the rigging guides in the book. Over a pint by candle light we selected Noons Hole for the morning. The pot was ECO Bolted and very quick to rig. Some of the Dublin Cavers had been extolling the virtues and versatility of the 'Bunny Knot', (Double fig 8 on a bight), so I quickly volunteered to rig and used more traditional knots.

Les may be right, only tarts wear wetsuits, as although the canals weren't warm they can almost be completely traversed and the crawling is probably more suited to a fleece. We eventually decided that the way on must be through a squeeze at the top of a climb but as it was tight and nasty and our call out time was badly timed, an executive decision (to wriggle backwards and exit) was made.

The entrance series to the cave, is in itself reasonable, even if not well decorated. The pot makes for a great SRT trip and the waterfall on the pitches meant that we exited the cave with superbly cleaned caving kit - just as well as the luxury of a shower and a jetwash is just a distant memory. After dinner we were forced to go to the pub to use their conveniences - as usual we stayed for a few pints as well.

I've since returned with some local cavers and the way on is through that passage aptly called Crucifixion crawl - although only 19 metres long reminds me of Priddy Green Sink except this leads to some wonderful passage and not Cowsh formations.

The book 'The caves of Fermanagh and Cavan' is the only proper caving book for the region and although not essential for caving is very handy. The only additional advice I will give to anyone using the book is:

- the surveys have been reduced as in most publications
- bring the descriptions with you to avoid taking the scenic routes.

# Letter Sent To The Membership of the WCC

COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS

9-7-98

Dear Mark,

The Cavers Fair held over the 3/4/5th July at Priddy was a great success. Everyone who attended seemed to have a good weekend with the right balance of caving, training and partying! The success of the event was very much due to the help and support of members of the Wessex Cave Club. Wessex members took over most of the registration and administration and did a very efficient job of ensuring that caving trips and sessions ran successfully. Other club members volunteered to lead caving trips or to supervise instructed sessions - which they did very ably.

It is to the credit of the Wessex Cave Club that its members were ready and willing to help out as we, here on Mendip, hosted this national event. It is also apparent that the club has a good number of very technically skilled cavers who have both the ability and the patience to pass on their knowledge to others. For a caving club today this is a great asset.

Yours sincerely,

*Andy Sparrow*

Training Officer  
Council of Southern Caving Clubs

## A Different Perspective

### CAVER'S FAIR 3 - 5 July 98

Fri PM

Treasure hunt (find the person who knows what's going on). Drank lots, went home, drank some more.

Sat AM

Identity parade. Venue Upper Green. Spot the person who knows what's going on.

Sat PM

Welly race won by the Axbridge team despite the Wessex finishing with the greatest number of heavy wellies. Then there was the stomp. And yes, it was the Wessex who seemed to make the biggest spectacle of themselves. Fez, I think, was keen to congratulate me on something or other, but that's the strangest pat on the back I've ever had (or was it "You scratch my back, I'll scratch her's").

Anyway, an excellent time had by all.

Sun AM

Oh no it's 9.25! That only gives me 5 minutes to find someone who knows what's going on. Another good day finished with a superb SRT bonanza at Split Rock. Well done Mr Sparrow Can I go home now?

4.7.98 - Eastwater

Cookie and 1 cavers fair delegate (Graham) Morton's Pot thence to top of Primrose. Never made it. I had worn him out.

5.7.98 - GB

Cookie and 1 cavers fair delegate (Paul) Bat Passage, Great Chamber, etc. This time he wore me out. I blame the energetic dancing at the stomp last night or was it the beer?

# Logbook Extracts

**29.4.98 - 28.5.98**

## **WCC/SUSS Expedition to Ceram**

*Morse, Sue, Martin, Cookie, Damian, 1 Swiss, 3 USA, 4 Aussies, 1 NZ*

Follow-up trip to the one 2 years ago. We bottomed Hatu Saka after a weeks rigging. Huge chamber at the bottom full of mud and flood debris. There is still a going lead at the bottom of the first pitch following the river. Awesome!

Also discovered a more horizontal system on another range of hills called Api Lima. A through trip, full of bats, surveyed with leads everywhere. We've struck the master cave first time given the size of the river in it. Our only problem is getting upstream into the system beyond - it's a tad sumped - roll on the dry season.

## **A long weekend on the Isle of Skye**

*Simon, & Martin (Grampian Speleo Club)*

... went to investigate the report of a new cave. Found it to be a short stream cave of about 100ft. We managed to get in only a short distance before it sumped. Still, it's all good fun and hopefully I've got some good photos.

## **16.5.98 - Wigmore and Attborough Swallets**

*Max & Butch*

In a spell of Mendip madness, we decided to go for an afternoon twosome OH ER! Two caves that is! First off it was Wigmore Swallet, down to the main stream way, quite a sporting little trip. Got very hot on the way down ... but cooled off in the stream way. Then a little walk over to Attborough Swallet. Should have done this one first and then washed off in Wigmores. It's muddy! ...

## **23.5.98 - Brownes Folly**

*Tina, Steve, Peter & Mel*

Tina leading found everything excluding crane. Excellent trip. Better without Dad!!!

## **31.5.98 - GB**

*Christine & Colin*

1½ hrs only ... perhaps a little cautious with the rope was Colin and it took longer to attach than to navigate the way through the entire cave. No problems encountered - except we couldn't get out as the lock was a bit dodgy! Very enjoyable - worth the journey from Birmingham for my annual caving trip!

## **3.6.98 - St Lukes: "A lesson in self-preservation?"**

Bob had obtained a new piece of iron ladder:

Aubrey: "Bob please will you move that ladder so I can get onto it and come down"

Bob: "It's alright - I put it there"

Aubrey: "Are you sure - it doesn't look OK to me!"

Bob: "Of course it is. I am a H&S Officer - I should know - it is perfectly safe"

Aubrey: steps only ladder - it tips and drops 2 ft

Aubrey: "!!!! It's a bit safer now Bob!"

A few minutes later Bob steps on ladder and it sinks another foot

Bob: "Oh!"

## **13.6.98 - Solo trip to Burlington**

*Phil Hendy*

**Read's Cavern:** the entrance is very steep and slippery, especially with brown adrenaline flowing out of one's wellies. Trundle around main chamber, lots of water, out via the wet way. Slave guns on strike

**Rod's Pot:** Who put that nasty damp bit in the entrance? Bottled out just beyond this - I'd used up all my adrenaline.

**Bath Swallet:** cave totally blocked just beyond the entrance drop but my old dig on the entrance right of the depression still looks good - only one slab in the floor needs blasting, then there is a possible way on under the back wall.

## **14.6.98**

*Simon, Cookie & Mel*

Long dry round trip to Dragon. Expensive!!!

## **13.6.98 - GB: Buggery Bend**

*Helmores, Mak, Jo, Simon, Badvoc, Stop-Go, Cookie*

The Helmores birthday trip. Nice, steady trip so that the pensioner could keep up.

## **20.6.98 - Banwell**

*Club trip including: Mr and Mrs Hewins, Prewer, Pitman, Pickstone and Hansford, Mak, Max, Christine, Jo, Debs, Dom, Phil, Dan, Colin, Simon, Mark*

Dom made the earth move for Brian H by the Bishop's Chair. Boulders bouncing all over the place. A small group including Dan got to Lake Chamber. In the Bone Cave, all parts were explored and the main chamber admired by Mrs Pitman. A hot day, but no chance to cool off underground thanks to the exertion required, and also to John our guide.

## **20.6.98 - Village Hall**

*49ers 49th Birthday Stomp*

Loud music, free beer, 2 barbequed lambs. About

8 49ers turned up and hundreds of others. A good time had by all. Pitman led Phil Hendy astray - into an electric fence. Difficult dealing with these when pissed. Thanks to Tuska's Taxis for safe return to Upper Pitts.

#### **27.6.98 - solo photographic to Read's Cavern**

*Phil Hendy*

Stream entrance pleasantly wet. Cave lit by strobe thanks to contact bounce in the NiFe cell. About 1 ½ rolls film exposed. Results expected.

#### **27.6.98 - Aggie**

*Kier, Ginny, Cookie + 3 scouts*

Typical scouts. Managed to loose them in the entrance series. Unfortunately I found them again.

#### **11.7.98**

Just to confirm the rumours. Yes, *Nigel Graham* has been in 'Bat Products' to buy caving-gear spares, and here to renew his Charterhouse permit today!!

#### **18.7.98 - Swildon's Black Hole**

*Mark, Mak, Simon and Cookie*

It's a hole, and it's black - what more can I say other than "We were right up there"... where were the old women (*Rosie, Jo, Vern*) - exploring Upper Swildons - it had to be done!

#### **19.7.98 - St Cuthberts**

*Vern, Shag, Danny and Naomi*

Danny and Naomi got lost in cat gut rift "twice" after being showed the way out.

#### **19.7.98 - Reads' Cavern**

*Dan & Phil Hendy*

To RC, pausing on the way to assist the BEC who are revising the Burrington Cave Atlas, but didn't know the location of Drunkards or Bos Swallet. Pleasant trundle in Reads in and out via the stream entrance, lots of wriggling through holes in the floor to too-tight continuations. Elderly BEC member professed puzzlement at the cave - it had changed a lot since he was a boy - maybe the routes under the floor are blocked.

#### **20.6.98 Quote of the weekend!**

*Simon to one of the Kent University girls putting their trip details on the board: "Now you need your name, number in party, car number plate, ETO and number of young girls"*

*Clare: "Why the number of young girls?"*

*Simon: "So that the MRO know how many pretty young things they would have to cuddle close to, to warm them up"*

*Clare: "Do they come quicker that way?"*

*Everyone falls around in fits of laughter!!!*

# Caving Events

## September

6th WCC Committee Meeting  
18th/20th BCRA Conference, Southport  
30th/14th Nov ISSA cave art Exhibition,  
St Davids Centre, Cardiff

## October

17th/18th Wessex AGM and Dinner weekend

## November

21st BCRA Regional one day meeting,  
Mendip, Priddy village hall  
15th/28th A Brush with Darkness'  
ISSA cave art Exhibition,  
Wells Museum

## December

25th Christmas Day  
31st New Year's Eve

## 1999

### June

12th/13th BCRA Regional meeting,  
Swaledale, Yorkshire

### July

12th/16th NSS Convention, Twin Falls, Idaho.