



FOREWORD

Our President, Mr. H.E. Balch, is retiring from the Honorary Curatorship of Wells Museum, and we would like to take this opportunity of wishing him every happiness in his well-earned retirement.

The new Honorary Curator is Prof. L.S. Palmer, whose interest in caving in all its aspects (archaeological and scientific in particular) makes him the ideal person to carry on the work of the "Grand Old Man of Mendip". Prof. Palmer's interest in caving goes back to his student days at Bristol University when he was one of the earliest members of the U.B.S.S.

A box of carbide lamp spare parts has been provided by the Club at Hillgrove for the convenience of members. A price list of items is included and the money should be placed in the tin provided.

Members will remember that it was decided at the last A.G.M. to change the colour of the "Dragon" from red to gold and as our supply of red Dragon covers is almost exhausted we have taken the opportunity of changing the colour. To anticipate criticism we would hasten to say that we know the rope should also have been golden and the candle white with a red flame, but this would have meant purchasing new blocks, which are expensive items.

We are seeking the whereabouts of a 35' wooden rung ladder. This has been missing for five weeks or so and the committee are rather concerned about the loss. Only members have access to tackle, so it is requested that any member who can throw light on the subject should get in touch with the Hon. Sec. as soon as possible, or better still see that the ladder is returned to the tackle hut.

Congratulations to the Asst. Sec. Donald Thomson, who recently passed his finals in medicine, and to David Willis who has successfully completed his teaching course.

Our thanks are due to Prof. Tratman for the donation of curtains for H.Q. and also to Phil Davies' sister for very kindly consenting to alter same for the hut.

We welcome the following new members:-

R.G. Brain

G. Dawes

Miss P.M Jarman

J.C.L. Lyddieth

E.H. Swale

C.H. White

Affiliation: Bristol Grammar School Caving Club

New publications:-

CAVE MEN NEW & OLD. N. Casteret. Cheap Edition 7/6 (hitherto 16/-)

THE DARKNESS UNDER THE EARTH. N. Casteret. 15/-

(this book will be reviewed in the next Journal)

Both the above published by J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Aldine Hse.

Bedford St. W.C. 2. and are obtainable at all booksellers.

U.B.S.S. PROCEEDINGS NO.1 VOLUME 7.

Contents:

"The Cullaun Series of Caves" P. Acke.

Map, two surveys and plate.

"The Lost Cave of Burrington" D. Donovan & G. Boon.

"Burlidge Camp" K.M. Crook & E.K. Tratman.

"A polished flint axe" L.V. Grinsell.

"A polished flint axe from a probable late Bronze Age site" P. York.

"Hub Bands & Tankard Handles (Reeds Cavern)" X.W.P. Corcoram.

Obtainable from The Treasurer, U.B.S.S., The University, Bristol. Price 6/-

FUTURE EVENTS

G.B. Guest Days:-

* Sunday, August. 1st. 2.30 p.m. at cave.

Saturday, October 2nd. 3.0 p.m. at cave.

* This was given in error as Tues. Aug. 3rd in Journal No. 45.

N.B. Members are respectfully reminded that the names of visitors wishing to attend G.B. Guest Days must be sent to the Hon. Sec., and not to Prof. Tratman. Also that, as the field between the road and the cave entrance is now under cultivation, all visitors should approach the cave via the track to Piney Sleight farm and the footpath from the Long Barn.

EASTER IN YORKSHIRE

When it is wet, it is usual to say that the Yorkshire Fells are wonderful in all weathers. This year it was fine and we had no need for prevarication. The annual Easter meeting of the Wessex and Stoke-on-Trent caving clubs was held at Horton-in-Ribblesdale under these ideal conditions. Eleven members were present and three others stayed at Ingleton with members of the Bristol A.C.E.S. We arrived at various times on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and divided our time in the evening of the latter day by discussing expeditions to be undertaken and looking at Denis Warburton's colour photographs, mainly of spelaeological interest. For this he had brought with him a projector and several score of 2" x 2" slides, all taken during the last year. Many of them were very good and well reflect the pains he has bestowed on his technique. Of subject matter there was a nice mixture of the beautiful, the interesting and the vulgar. Of the first, many of his outdoor subjects were the best, but he has some very fine ones taken in Lancaster Hole and in the St. Paul's series in Swildon's Hole, including some of that beautiful curtain, now alas smashed! Of the second, we saw work in progress in Eastwater Swallet, St. Paul's and even Cow Hole. Of the third, the less said the better.

On Saturday eight of us went to Marble Steps, while David Willis took the rest into Ease Gill. The entrance to the latter is now by County Pot, a little higher in the Gill than the former Rosy Sink. It is in hard rock and so less likely to collapse. The Ease Gill system is still very beautiful, but the Easter Grotto, which shows signs of a fair volume of traffic, is becoming very much spoilt; while "Poetic Justice" can scarcely be said to be still in existence, as all the formations have been broken. And must members of the Burnley Caving Club write the name of their club on the walls?

Marble Steps, above Mason Gill on Gragareth, is rather a "collector's piece". It is a cave of the Eastwater type with lots of laddering to do and no formations to admire. The entrance pitch of 100 feet can be climbed with a rope, but for

anyone visiting the cave for the first time a ladder is a great help, as although most of the "steps" are easy enough, two of them are verticals of about ten feet and require some agility. There are short passages between the verticals presenting no great difficulty (except the alternative "intestines" route), but the approaches to the 25 foot pitch ("Stink Pot") and the 90 foot pitch are both in narrow fissures and make the take-off awkward. The latter is a very fine free climb. A terminal pitch needs a 25 foot ladder for the first half, while for the second, which leads down into a drain, a rope or 20 foot ladder will do.

Last year we found ourselves short of tackle. This year we did not make that mistake. We had a hundred feet of lightweight alloy belonging to the Wessex, another 100 feet of rope ladder borrowed from the Cambridge University Caving club, and a further 100 feet of lightweight belonging to two members. Most of the life lines were also privately owned. To the owners of all these our thanks are due. Rope and wood is a particularly comfortable kind of ladder to climb on a long pitch, and as the distance to be carried was not great, we used this for the second 100 foot pitch. We had a little difficulty in getting the rolled ladders back through the squeeze at the head of "Stink Pot", and some bad language was used, but fortunately not heard. For the long vertical we used a double life line and pulley.

We felt that on previous occasions we had paid too little attention to the holes nearest Horton, with the exception of Alum Pot and Sell Gill; so on Easter Sunday we went up to Hull Pot and played around there all morning. The dark parts of this hole are uncomfortable. A climb upstream soon brings one to a waterfall in a narrow rift which looks rather forbidding, though the passage has been followed for a further 200 feet. Near the entrance one passes the waterfall in the floor which Gemmel and Myers dammed, when they were exploring (Gemmel & Myers 1952. pp 24-26) the lower cave, but none of us went far down that either. I could see no trace of the dam. The lower cave soon ends in a sump. Gemmel says in his book (p.23) that he could

not remember having seen any froth on the water here. "Most water traps have heads like glasses of stout". Well, that just describes this sump as we saw it. I think the explanation must be that the heavy flooding we had last September (reported in the December number of this Journal) has brought down enough boulders to convert this low duck into a true sump.

In the afternoon three of us descended Hunt Pot, leaving two on the surface for four hours to do the life lining. Of course the sun went in and they were rather cold. They were entertained by a wren, which hunted for food and scolded them by turns. The water turned green. This was not an optical illusion and did not reflect a jaundiced outlook on the part of the life-liners. It was the Northern Pennine Club trying to find out whether some of the water entering the lower part of Penyghent Pot came from Hunt Pot. The first pitch of this pot is in two parts, the first 90 feet and the second sixty. Only the first part can be seen from the surface. We laddered this pitch with 100 feet of rope and wood from the waterfall side, which gives a free climb, dry at first, wet at the bottom, which is soaked in spray. For the second pitch a 70 foot ladder was tied to the bottom of the first, and for both a 210 foot life line was used from the surface. The third pitch is approached by a tricky 50 foot climb up a rift. The three stalwarts were by now thoroughly soaked. They laid the ladders for the third pitch under a heavy drip, but Oliver Wells was the only one to go to the bottom. For this pothole a whistle is essential for signalling to the life-liners. We do not use whistles on Mendip, but it would be a good thing for each of our members always to take a whistle when visiting Yorkshire holes.

On Easter Monday the party began to break up. Some of us had time to do Alum Pot, while others could only explore Upper Long Churn. This is a fascinating little hole with beautifully shaped water passages and a graceful little water slide at the upper end falling into a pool known as "Dr. Bannister's Hand-Basin". The Lower Long Churn party laddered the 50 foot pitch into Alum Pot, as the shorter one by the Dolly Tubs was rather wet.

In this and other respects the route was the same as that taken last year, until the third pitch had been descended and darkness was once more entered. The small stream flowed over a broad flat rocky bed, occasionally dropping to form deep pools, which we took care to avoid.

Soon we reached the furthest point of last year's visit, a ten foot water chute, easy to get down but more difficult to get up; we followed instead the hidden dry ox-bow passage on the left of the stream, leading to a large chamber at the bottom of the water chute, where the water from Diccan Pot falls with a roar out of the roof, not, as last Easter, in a solid snout on to the stony floor, but because of the dry season on to a shelf high up on the right hand wall. We passed on down the chamber avoiding the waterfall but not its spray and draught, till we reached the clear sump, traditionally evil looking and reported to be a 20 foot underwater pitch, which has so far defeated the divers.

We remembered absent friends, who were there last year; Richard Kenney and Willie Stanton, both now in foreign parts. But more particularly we remembered Alex Malkin, now in hospital, and we sent him a round-robin of greetings and wished for his speedy recovery.

OLIVER C. LLOYD

Reference: Gemmell, A. and Myers, J.O. 1952. "Underground Adventure". Dalesman Publishing Company, Clapham, Yorks.

ADDENDA BY BOB LAWDER

The party assembled in fits and starts on Good Friday morning and plans were soon being laid for the day, which was far too fine to waste sleeping off the effects of 250 miles of practically nonstop motoring. The first item was a visit to Douks Gill and Brants Gill risings; the former was almost dry but none the less an inspiring sight. We were sufficiently inspired to investigate a number of

holes on the same level as the main entrance in the hope of finding some new way in, but found none big enough for entry even by the midgets. Brants Gill was disgorging a fair amount of water, and bitterly cold it was too. As we entered the cave a bird, whose nest was visible in the roof, flew off into the inner fastnesses. It would seem that the Yorkshire birds are sufficiently sophisticated to like running water in their bedrooms.

In the afternoon we walked first to Horton Scars, where Oliver Wells and others did some climbing; Oliver's progress could be followed a mile away by the clatter of falling stones removed from the holds. The last few feet were surmounted by the courtesy of the life-line party; it transpired that Oliver only started the climb under the impression that someone else had been up it before him. We then walked to Hull Pot, an imposing coffin-shaped hole some fifty feet deep; it can be entered by a chimney climb at one end or a fearsome step across a gulf at the other. Some more climbing was done in and around the Pot and we then moved on to Hunt Pot, where the first of a series of fluorescein tests was in progress. One tripper was heard to say to another "It can't have come from a drain, surely?". The first pitch from the surface runs into three figures and looks like it.

FURTHER NOTE ON EASTER IN YORKSHIRE:

According to the Club Circular No. 29 1954, of the Northern Pennine Club, published in May, the colour tests on Hunt Pot were successful. The green waters were seen to enter the "Inlet Passage" of Penyghent Pot and to emerge at Brants Ghyll Head. Another colour test showed that water from the next sink towards Stainforth after Penyghent Pot flowed into the First Pitch inlet.

THE 40' POT

On April 13th Malcolm Wilson, Tony Hovenden and myself went down as far as the forty foot pot in Swildons to investigate a passage that Wilson had noticed about half way down the pot. After climbing about ten feet down the ladder we found it possible to traverse across to the entrance of this passage (perhaps three feet high by two feet wide) and to climb up into it over a stalagmite slope. We had to break off some straw stalagmites to get in and there was no sign of previous visitors. After about five feet roughly level the passage dipped steeply into a clear pool with a stalagmite fringe. We could detect no draught and there does not seem to be much hope of a continuation. But it does seem curious that an open passage with its entrance so close to the ladder (and visible from it) should have been overlooked until now.

We also verified that the passage right at the top of the pot on the other side does not go anywhere. It would be possible to dig there but the total absence of draught is hardly encouraging.

OLIVER WELLS

HILLIER'S CAVE

As we have little or no technical knowledge of faults, dips, strikes, and such things as Vadose or Phreatic theories, anyone who expects to read a Geological lecture here is going to be very disappointed. We are confining ourselves to a purely factual report on the main aspects of Hillier's and the stages of its discovery to date.

In its present state Hillier's extends (according to Prof. Tratman) to a length of about 1,400 ft. It consists for the most part of a winding passage which at times gives way to a rift with a floor of loose mud-encrusted boulders. The waterway is now only active in time of flood and at all other times the main feature throughout the cave is pools of water enclosed by mud.

For the purpose of lucidity we shall divide this account into two sections, dealing with first the left-hand and then the right-hand parts of the cave. These terms are used in preference to 'upstream' etc. because there seems to be some doubt whether or not there is any upstream - both ends of the cave drop.

The left-hand passage is a singularly wet and muddy place; it runs back under the hill and road and at present extends for about 200ft. It terminates in a steep passage leading downwards with what we are told is a duck at the bottom. On the way to the duck, having waded and crawled through 50 ft. of low passage with 8 inches of water in it, a fine group of almost pure white stalactites could be seen - could until some vandal removed them. Behind and above these a passage leads off 'upstairs'. As far as we are concerned this will stay 'unknown' because the entrance is made over a slope littered with difficulties in the shape of very delicately poised loose rocks. Further along the main passage Dr. Lloyd discovered a few Ascellae which sent him into paroxysms of delight and he soon had us laughing at his expression and vocabulary as he stretched out across the pool (singeing my hair in doing it) to reach the insects which with quick darting movements

evaded his 'dropper'. Also near this place are a collection of gours built up to a height of 9 inches - plenty of room on which to bark shins and noses. The roof and floor meet in a watery expanse.

The entrance, a narrow shaft 3 ft. square, drops 15 ft. perpendicularly and then continues for nearly 30 ft. as a muddy, stony shaft at an angle of 45 degrees. It is highly foolish to attempt the first stretch without either a lifeline or a hanging rope. Below this and leading off in a Northerly direction the right-hand passage begins. This starts life as a lowly passage at the bottom of a gentle slope, the top of which is composed of a huge chaos of loose rock. After 100 ft, of this it broadens out into a sizeable passage heading westwards and showing signs of being near the surface. Curtains like sides of bacon hang from the walls and stalagmites of up to a foot across are not an unusual sight. In one place a large flake of rock has fallen from the wall and embedded itself in the mud floor with all its stalagmites still in position.

After a few hundred feet the passage takes an abrupt turn - the first of many such. Now the whole aspect of the cave begins to grow more lofty until at length a large boulder choke is reached - grim foretaste of things to come. There is a hole through the boulders which is almost big enough to walk through. An interesting point is that tar has dripped on the rock here in a fairly large quantity. It is possible that this comes from the quarry tar boilers which could be situated above. There are distinct signs that this fall was once a fairly large chamber and indeed further on there are two similar falls, one of which is still a chamber nearly 70 ft. high.

Passing the first small cavern (25 ft. wide) the way leads on through a veritable maze of boulders which rock in a dangerous fashion under the walker. It is, however, unwise to attempt to

remove any of these boulders - the last time we did so we misjudged both its weight and its C.G. One of our members very nearly had a crushed foot and the crowbar was jerked away. From here to the second boulder choke a rift of about 40 ft. in height continues - very muddy with a floor of loose, mud-covered boulders.

The first Grotto is reached by a climb out of the rift on the right. It is part of what appears to have been a large chamber cut into several partitions by rock walls. One of its interesting features is that a large circular chamber which has a cemented rock scree as its floor is directly over the entrance to the Grotto which is roofed by these large blocks. Known as the "Hall of Nobs and Drinking Troughs" it is quite beautiful with its innumerable tiers of stalactites and stalagmites. The Grotto itself is made up of three parts, a lower, a middle and an upper chamber. The lower and middle give the best display of finery and the upper is entered by cautiously skirting two large blocks balanced on each other and with no visible means of support. In this upper section is pile upon pile of loose rubble. The roof, composed of blocks, has several avens leading up out of it, inaccessible without a maypole.

Two passages now run out from the second boulder choke, the extent of which can only be guessed at. The lower passage is a rift and the upper is part bedding plane and part rift. The lower contains much of the mud which we have begun to associate with this cave but the upper has walls roof and floor of either bare clean rock or stalactite formations. The lower series - not open to those of great girth - consists of a long stream passage ending at the moment in an impassable squeeze with a thin stalagmite floor over mud, or an equally impassable drop of ten feet leading to we know what. In the upper series, with its beautiful pillars of pure white stalactite the main passage is low and wide but there is one squeeze which must of necessity be taken on the right side of the body to avoid (a) falling down a shaft; (b) breaking your back in an effort to bend

it at right angles, or (c) losing half of your clothing which a miniature coat hanger on the wall will keep from you until you return to get it. From here on however the passage takes on a larger aspect and in most places there is standing room for all.

In the largest chamber the floor is covered with loose boulders and one member of our party had a narrow escape from a piece of rock like a loaf which bounced past him. Here again we meet a boulder choke and the way past lies through an extremely uncomfortable passage beyond which we can see but not yet reach a passage about 4 or 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide with a crystal floor. We are at present stopped by part of the roof and we are loth to move it without expert advice on the subject.

After this description we can now proceed to a short account of the exploration of Hilliers. The first stage in this involved the descent of the entrance shaft and the exploration of the biggest hole visible. We went towards the duck and discovered the unsafe portion of roof leading to 'upstairs'. Some minutes were spent circumnavigating this and deciding on whether or not to move the loosest of the boulders. Three were at length moved and the trip rendered that much safer. Several sharp edged flakes of rock were removed also as they impeded progress through the low bedding plane near the end.

Our second visit was occupied with progress in the other direction - to the right. We reached the first boulder fall after some anxious moments in the crawl at the entrance and under the wedge-shaped rock hanging in the roof. When we finally reached it our fears were first swept away and then redoubled. The place over which the clambering has to be done is a mass of rotten rock, parts of which move underfoot if you are so unwise as to tread on them. One of our party suggested a climb to examine the place from whence the tar comes but we decided that although this could be done it was folly to proceed without advice.

On our next visit we pushed on over rocks like table tops which rocked as you walked over them. One of these was pushed down into the rift, nearly taking us with it. We spent some time exploring the surrounding features including a stalactite covered bridge about 30 ft. high in the rift which was discovered to consist of mud while one of our members was standing on it!

When it was opened up, the narrow rocky corridor visible from the outside proved to lead into the first grotto. Having got jammed in one small hole, two ways from this place were discovered. The way through the boulder choke to the upper series had to be cleared out by hand until a way, large enough for the stoutest, has now been made. The lower series, discovered later, has yielded about 250 ft. (at a guess) of passage ending in a mud tunnel impassable for lack of tools at the time. The upper series, having been rendered safer by the tumbling of loose rock in Brenda's Chamber also stops in a boulder choke. This, by the look of it, will have to be ripped out piece by piece before further progress can be made.

D.G.P.
J.A.Q.

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