



It was grand to see so many of the older members at the Annual Dinner, and it was indeed a pleasure to meet so many friends again. Some admitted that they were getting past very active caving, but to balance this we had with us a dozen or so of our very young members (a number of whom are still at school) who, during the last few months, have been very active on Mendip.

We are sorry about the absence of wines. We had asked that the "bar" arrangements should be the same as in previous years, but this was not made clear to the new catering manager.

During the last year we have had cause to be grateful to a small number of members, particularly Oliver Wells, Denis Warburton and Phil Davies, for sending us articles and other material for publication in the Journal. We do hope that others will follow their example. We know, of course, that some people dislike writing letters and articles, but if you have anything of interest send it to the Secretary, please. Items that come under the heading of "Mendip Notes" will be very useful, as members are particularly keen to learn about the work and discoveries of the "active" types.

We would like to extend our good wishes to Phil Davies, F. Davies, Brian Prewer, T. Austin and Don Thomson, all of whom have joined H.M. Services.

Sec. Frank Frost, 22 Wolseley Road, Bishopston, Bristol 7.
Phone Bristol 44221.

Treasurer. G. Williams, 1 Redhill Drive, Fishponds, Bristol.

We welcome the following new members.

P. Charles, 14 St. Augustine's Rd., Edgbaston, Birmingham 16.
Mrs. T. Bell, Pear Tree Farm, Yarley, Wells, Som.
C.J. Hawkes, 54 Hathaway Lane, Stratford-on-Avon.
M.R. Lynes, 15 Bibury Crescent, Henleaze, Bristol.
Miss M. Sealy, Hillgrove Farm, Nr. Wells, Somerset.

Change of address.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Willis, 23 Chamberlain St., Wells, Som.
J.M. Burnett, Mitford House, Hencotes, Hexham, Northumberland.

Forthcoming Events.

G.B. Guest Day.

Saturday, 3rd December. Meet at Cave 3.0 p.m.

Names to the Sec. at least a week before the event.

Lectures (U.B.S.S.)

Monday, 12th Dec. Dr. R.E. Davies, "Cave Diving at Home and Abroad".

Monday, 23rd Jan. Dr. H. Talor and Mr. A. Apsimon, "Brean Down".

Both lectures will be at 8.15 in the Geography Lecture Theatre, Bristol University. All Wessex members are cordially invited to attend.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

FULL MEMBERS 10/-, FAMILY 12/6, AFFILIATED 1/6.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR 1955/56 WERE DUE ON OCTOBER 1st. PLEASE FORWARD TO THE TREASURER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1954/55

Thirty-one new members were elected during the year, and the Wells Cathedral School joined us as an affiliated club. Our membership is now 187; this is an increase of 15 on the previous year's figure, and we have a total of 9 affiliated clubs. Most of the new members have been very active on Mendip and have taken advantage of the Club's facilities. A number of them are fairly young, being still at school, but it is very pleasing to note that several of our older members, including Derek Ford, Phil Davies and Oliver Lloyd, have on several occasions invited these young members to join their parties or taken them on special trips.

The arrangements for the Easter Club trip to Yorkshire fell through, and there was no official trip to South Wales. On the other hand members have been very active in the Mendip area. Under the leadership of Oliver Wells, Dennis Kemp and the late Keith Chambers, members and others discovered Paradise Regained in Swildon's Hole. Robert Lawder and Alan Fincham broke into a small cave system at Hillgrove that they have named Easter Hole. Derek Ford and boys of the B.C.S.S. continued their work at the bottom of Eastwater Cavern and Mike Grimmer, Robert Lawder, Brian Prewer and Fred Davies opened up a small new cave in a shakehole south of the road from Hillgrove to the Hunters Lodge Inn.

The work of re-opening Cuckoo Cleeves was begun under the leadership of Oliver Wells, but he found it impossible to spare the time to complete the work, and Oliver Lloyd took over from him. He with the help of Robert Woolley, Phil Davies and Derek Ford continued to dig out the shaft, and early in August broke into the cave. Unfortunately, the first heavy

rain after the drought caused a rock and mud slip which blocked the bottom of the shaft, and the cave was again closed.

David Penrose discovered some new passages in Hillier's Cave, and this discovery was further extended by Jim Swithenbank and the Hon. Secretary. Denis Warburton, Phil Davies and Derek Ford completed the survey of this and Fairy Cave.

Oliver Lloyd having obtained permission from the Marquis of Bath and the Bristol Waterworks Company, a party of members of the Cave Diving Group, including Dr. R.E. Davies, explored some of the Cheddar resurgences. The result of their work was published in Journal No. 51.

Five issues of the Journal were published during the year, surveys being included in four of them. Special mention must be made of the work of Oliver Wells in reducing the originals to a size suitable for inclusion in the Journal. The redrawing of Denis Warburton's Eastwater survey gave both Denis and Oliver quite a lot of headaches. A number of members have expressed their appreciation of the improvements in the Journal during the year, and this has encouraged us to try to maintain a high standard. Without any doubt this improvement is mainly due to the work of Oliver Lloyd.

In view of complaints from members it was decided to try to make the Hillgrove Hut more comfortable during the winter months by lining the ceiling with soft boards, and thanks to the help of Graham Candy's father we were able, to purchase the material to do the work at a reasonable cost. But even with this help from Mr. Candy we had to find a fairly large sum from the Club funds. However, a member who wishes to remain anonymous, came to our

rescue with a gift of £10, and later in the year gave us a further £6 to cover the cost of 24 extra blankets for use of members at the hut. We are indeed grateful to this very generous member. Our thanks are due to Jim Swithenbank, Phil Davies, Derek Ford and boys of the B.C.S.S., and my wife, all of whom gave me valuable assistance with the work on the ceiling. An extra table and some additional chairs were purchased, and new calor burners installed. Thanks to Phil Davies's sister and my wife it was found possible to provide two door curtains. Derek Ford combined a lot of active caving with his position as Hut Warden, and in this capacity was of great assistance to the Treasurer and myself. Not only did he send in the hut and other fees promptly together with very full details, but encouraged all members to book for accommodation and tackle.

It was most unfortunate that the system of providing carbide was not altogether a success. It will be seen from the financial statement that for every two pounds of carbide paid for by members about one pound was taken without payment. This is in striking contrast to Phil Davies' experience with carbide lamp spares. He has not lost a single penny during the two years he has been supplying these spares.

Tackle. This has been in constant use, and a couple of ladders have been rewired. Two new ladders have been constructed, but it is not easy to keep up-to-date with the maintenance.

With a club of the type of the Wessex Cave Club it is quite impossible for members to be aware of all that is being done on their behalf. This particularly applies to the work done by the members of the committee. It is my duty to inform members that the 1954/55 committee was in my view the best committee

I have known. The first essential of a good officer or committee member is that he has the interest of the Club and all its members at heart, and this was very true of most of this year's committee. We are indeed lucky that such a large proportion of the 1954/55 committee are willing to serve for the coming year. It was a very great pleasure to meet and talk over the Club's affairs, and it is perhaps not out of place to mention that some of them, and particularly Oliver Wells, travelled a long distance to attend meetings, and gave me their full co-operation at all times.

Members will see that the sum of £24 17s 5d was received in the form of donations. I have already mentioned the gift of £16 from one member and most of the remainder came from one of the best friends the Club ever had. For some years now he has met the cost of a number of purchases, and it gives him great pleasure to help the Club in this way. To these two members we express the very grateful thanks of all members. We hope that all members, particularly the new ones, will always appreciate that it was only by help from some of the older members that it has been possible to build up the Club to the present position.

It was with very deep regret that we learnt of the tragic death by drowning of Keith Chambers. The Club and the caving world has lost one of the most active and enthusiastic of cavers. He was only 23 years of age, and Mendip does not seem quite the same without him.

Members will have learnt of the improvement in the health of our Chairman and Treasurer with great pleasure, and we are very pleased to have him back with us. We know he will go on serving the Club for as long as possible, and we hope to have him with us

for many years to come.

I will close this report with my sincere thanks to all who have worked with me during the past year, but would like to pay a special tribute to my wife for all the work she has done, not only this year, but for years past, on the Club's behalf . Every issue of the Journal means hours of work for her, and in this and other ways she has rendered very valuable assistance to the Club and its members.

F. Frost.

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.G.M. of the Club was held at the Cliff Hotel, Cheddar on Saturday the 15th October, 1955. About 60 members were present. The Chairman (George Williams) opened the proceedings at 4.5 p.m. The Secretary (Frank Frost) read the minutes of the last A.G.M. and these were approved, but the occasion was not allowed to pass without comment. Though the position of Affiliated Clubs and the admission of minors as full members had been regularized (see Journal No. 52, p.2) the Committee had formulated no Club rule to govern the election of the Club's President or Vice Presidents. Moreover, no start had been made to establish a depreciation fund, as had been resolved at last year's A.G.M. The Chairman said, however, that the sum of £46 5s 2d which the Club had in the Economic Building Society Deposit Account

could provide the nucleus of such a fund. Various suggestions were made which might help the Club to put by enough money to meet depreciation, and the Chairman promised that the Committee would consider them.

Honorary Members.

Hywel Murrell drew attention to the fact that the names of certain men, who had been elected Honorary Members before the war, had for a number of years been omitted from the membership list. The Meeting passed a resolution calling upon next year's Committee to consider this matter, instructing them to write to the individuals concerned to say that they were still on the list of Honorary Members and to ask them whether they wished to continue to receive the Club's literature.

The Secretary then read his report on the past year's activity. This is printed in full on Page 3. The report was not discussed, but Dr. Lloyd complimented the Secretary on his single-minded devotion to the Club's interests, and the Secretary was given a well merited round of applause by the Members.

Finance.

The Treasurer (George Williams) then presented the balance sheet (printed in this Journal). The Auditor (C. Howard Kenney) added his remarks, saying that the position was satisfactory. The Balance Sheet showed a surplus of £64 15s, but this did not include the value of the Club property at Headquarters, which was about £400, since a forced sale of this would probably realize considerably loss.

Paul Dolphin congratulated the Committee on the management of the finances but pointed out that the

balance of Income over Expenditure was only £8 17s 11d. This was too narrow a margin. The Club must put something by for Headquarters. He proposed that the committee should investigate the finances of the Club and make proposals for increasing the subscription at the next A.G.M.

There was then a digression on the subject of the powers that an extraordinary general meeting of the Club might have, the upshot of which was that such a meeting could not alter the Club rules, not even by arranging a postal ballot for this purpose. This was covered by Rule 13. (The Rules were published in Journal No. 48, December 1954). An E.G.M. would probably be unrepresentative of the Club as a whole, because it would be difficult for Members living at a distance to attend. The Secretary then brought us back to Dolphin's motion. He said that it was important to keep the annual subscription as low as possible and pointed out that no raising of the subscription could come into effect before 1957-8. The motion was then carried.

A.J.S. McMillan asked whether the minutes could not include a formal proposal of thanks to the donor of gifts. This was agreed. Luke Devenish proposed a vote of thanks to the Treasurer and Auditor for their labours and this was given.

Club Officers.

The President, Mr. H.E. Balch, and the Vice Presidents, M. Pierre Ageron, M. Norbert Casteret, Mrs. D. Dobson-Hinton, Prof. L.S. Palmer, Prof. E.K. Tratman and Dr. F.S. Wallis were reinstated with acclamation.

The Officers and Committee for 1955-56 were announced as follows:-

Chairman and Treasurer:	G.H. Williams
Secretary:	F. Frost
Gear Curator:	J. Swithenbank

Committee: L. Devenish, D. Ford, Cmdr. P.B. Lawder, Mrs. R. Murrel, D. Warburton, C. Watson, O.C. Wells, Mrs. B. Willis and D.A. Willis.

The post of Assistant Secretary had fallen into desuetude and therefore no nomination had been made. The Meeting agreed that it should be left vacant.

Honorary Members, again.

David Willis asked whether a proposal that H. Murrell should be a candidate for the Committee had been received. The Chairman replied that it had but that he had been obliged to rule that an Honorary Member was not eligible for the Committee.

During the discussion that followed it was pointed out that the rules were not definite on this subject, but that if a strict interpretation was made of Rule 5, then an Honorary Member was eligible for Committee membership. Precedents within the Club were in favour of this interpretation, whereas those taken by analogy from Learned Societies were not. The latter were not considered applicable to a Caving Club. The question also arose as to whether an Honorary Member could also be an Ordinary Member by paying a subscription. The division of opinion between Members on this issue was not resolved.

McMillan proposed that the Committee be instructed to look into this rule (Rule 5) and make proposals to clarify the matter at the next A.G.M. F.C. Bryant went even farther, proposing an amendment that the whole of the rules should be reviewed and that W. Harris' advice should if possible be sought in re-framing them. Murrell simplified the immediate issue by withdrawing his consent to being nominated. The general feeling of the Meeting was that Honorary Members should be allowed the same rights and privileges as Ordinary Members. They felt that Murrell's candidature ought to have been accepted, in which case a postal ballot would have had to be taken before the A.G.M.

Bryant was asked by the Secretary to withdraw his amendment, because it was impracticable and would make too much work for the Committee, but he asked for a vote and saw his amendment defeated by 21 votes to 16. McMillan's motion was then carried.

Club Tackle.

The Gear Curator said that the Club had been making more alloy tackle recently and not wooden, but that it was getting very heavy use and was not standing up to it. Two of the 25 ft. ladders were out of commission. The usual fault was a fracture where the wire enters the first rung, due to bending. He had got over this by drilling the holes larger in the first rung, bringing the splicing down through them, so that there was a double thickness of wire at the point of greatest wear. Now some of the middle wires were failing. If we continued to use alloy tackle, which he thought would be best, we should either use a stiffer wire, a hemp wire or a heavier gauge. The stiff wire should last 3 to 4 years, the hemp wire not much longer.

Two 12½ ft. ladders had been introduced. One of these with a 25 ft. ladder was ideal for the Swindon's 40 ft. pot or the Eastwater Dolphin vertical. One 20 ft. length of extra lightweight ladder had been made for special purposes, but would not be kept out on Mendip. He had some wooden ladders that were given to the Club, but they were too bulky for general use. Regarding life-lines, he considered those in use to be rather too heavy and had got two 60 ft. lengths of hemp which were rather lighter. The Club could not afford nylon.

During the discussion which followed Devenish suggested the use of floating rungs, but Phil Davies said they were very dangerous, because they were apt to jamb diagonally. There was some support for wood and rope for ordinary trips, particularly the narrow-rung type made by Peter Harvey, which lasted for 3 years. But rope ladders had to be dried after each trip and on the whole Members were in favour of metal ones.

The Journal.

Lloyd said that it entailed a lot of work to produce the Journal but that it was worth it. He had been acting as Sub-Editor with the Secretary as Editor for the past year. They had only been able to publish 5 instead of 6 numbers in that time, for which they apologized, but even so the Journal was now being produced rather more cheaply than before, as the Income and Expenditure account showed. They were aiming at a high standard and, with the Club's support, hoped to achieve this. He asked them to provide the Editors with more material.

Dear thanked the Editors for excellent Journals and the Chairman asked members to write to the Secretary if they had any ideas.

Tailpiece.

Hywell Murrell said that as this was the Club's 21st birthday they ought to mark the event by making the Secretary an Honorary Member. The Secretary declined the honour with thanks. The meeting ended at 6.27 p.m.

THE ANNUAL DINNER

The Club held their Annual Dinner at 8 p.m. following the A.G.M., at the Cave Man Restaurant, and it was attended by 124, including Members, guests and friends. This is the largest party we have ever had. Telegrams of congratulations were received from Bedford School and from the Craven Pothole Club. We were particularly pleased to welcome three Foundation Members, J. Duck, C.W. Harris and H. Murrell, as well as many senior members, including P.B. Dolphin, P.I.W. Harvey, A.J.S. McMillan, F.G. Balcombe, N.L. Paddock, E. Hensler, C. Vowles and K.W. Humphries. The Master of Ceremonies was Dr. O.C. Lloyd.

The toast of "The Queen" was honoured in silence, after which smoking was permitted. The Chairman asked the three Foundation Members to drink wine with him and then their health was proposed by the Secretary. This toast was replied to by Wyndham

Harris, who recounted some of the events of those far off days. Tough though the original members were, they were roused to unwonted activity by that "rogue monkey", Graham Balcombe. He tried their patience too far in Swildon's Hole, when attempting to blast a way through Sump 1. His companions mutinied and he was left to spend a night alone in the cave at work on his project.

Lloyd proposed the health of the Guests. There was our special friend Mr. Sealy of Hill Grove, whose kindness and consideration to us cavers knew no bounds. There was the M.N.R.C., a club which might be said to have been a parent of the Wessex, since our Club was formed by cavers, who wished to pursue the Sporting rather than the research side of caving, and who were therefore not eligible for membership of the M.N.R.C. There was Dr. E. Aslett of the South Wales Cave Club, a club which could be described as our legitimate child, since it was formed by Members who were devoting their attention to the Welsh caves in 1937. There was Bob Bagshaw of the B.E.C., which was perhaps the illegitimate child of the Club; for one day, many years ago, the man whom the Finger of Fate had already marked out to be the founder of the B.E.C., wishing to do some caving called on a Member of our Club. Our Member seeing a young man before him wearing dungarees said, "We don't have your sort in the Wessex", whereupon the young man went and fulfilled the decree of Fate and founded the B.E.C. Since then a state of cordial friendship as between independent equals had grown up between the two clubs.

Then there were two caving clubs which were also archaeological, the U.B.S.S., represented by their Secretary, D.A.S. Robertson, and the Axbridge Caving Group and Archaeological Society, represented by

their Chairman, Mr. H. Dene. The latter might also be said to have antiquarian interests, since it regularly published extracts from its parish register in its journal. A Wessex Member, Dennis Kemp, had also brought with him members of the National Speleological Society of America and of the New Zealand Speleological Society.

The Guest of the Evening was Dr. R.E. Davies. He was there in two other capacities besides this: as the representative of the C.R.G. and in his own right as a Member of the Club. It was he who replied to the toast. He gave us an amusing account of some of his caving adventures in France. On one of the big diving expeditions they did things in style, and had a Bishop to bless all the participants and all their apparatus. The trip, however did not pass off without incident, for it was found that the aqualung of one of the French divers was leaking. He had no proper tools with him to correct this, and as he was fiddling about with a tooth-pick and a nail-file the cylinder suddenly exploded with a loud report, putting the lights out. From the darkness a voice was heard to exclaim: "Kee-rist, the Bishop must have forgotten that one".

Dr. Aslett proposed the health of the Club and Oliver Wells replied on our behalf. A toast was drunk to the health and memory of Absent Friends, including Willie Stanton in Angola, Richard Kenney in the Falkland Island Dependencies, D.B. Tanner in Canada, Eva Waller on the Gold Coast, Valerie Boarland in Switzerland and Bill Edwards in Hong Kong. All these would return and we would see them again. But there was one whose memory we cherished who would not return and that was Keith Chambers.

In conclusion we have to record that the squeeze machine was in operation after dinner, and that it was Denis Warburton who negotiated the narrowest squeeze at a width of $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Taffy Austin was the runner up The Wessex have thus vindicated their defeat in 1952, when the palm went to two non-members.

THE BEECHEN SERIES, EASTWATER CAVERN

In the summer of 1954, Denis Warburton was clearing up some little known areas of Eastwater Cavern for his survey which was published in October 1954, and one week-end he and I examined a rift passage which runs E. above Jack Brownsey's Passage at the bottom of the cave. At the apparent end of this rift a descent through loose boulders in the floor led to a rift, about 65 ft. deep and 10 ft. wide by 18 inches, which went down steeply at an angle of about 60° deg. to end in a sand choke. As far as we knew only one party had been down it before, and they recommended a ladder, as there were no holds.

Denis went down first with his instruments and had a considerable struggle on his return, because the rift is so narrow that only one hand and foot can be used on the ladder at a time; moreover it is constricted in one place by an awkward squeeze. I went down next and after about 40 ft. noticed a passage entering obliquely from the E., which was reached by swinging on the life-line, revealing a very low crawl, 5 ft, wide, lenticular in cross-section, ascending at the same steep angle as the laddered rift. It was climbed with difficulty, for it was filmed

with water and there were no holds, so that progress could only be made by jamming one's feet in the sides of the passage. After 40 ft. it became too narrow and the only way on seemed to be by a further traverse E. into a similarly ascending passage.

For the next visit to this new discovery I was joined by two members of the Beechen Cliff Club, Graham Candy and Brian Prewer, in September 1954. This time we got into the passage beyond the second easterly traverse. We found it to be similar to the one below but narrower, while on the floor was a uniform layer of very wet mud. On trying to climb it, large slabs of the mud were detached and slid down over the unfortunate people below. Progress was very slow; all lamps were soon blocked and the party retired. It was decided to call this passage the Mud Escalator. We felt that it bids fair to be considered one of the most unpleasant places of caving in Mendip.

In December Candy and I made another attempt at the Escalator and were able to fix a hand line to a stumpy stalagmite about 25 ft. up it; from the second traverse it took us almost as many minutes to do this. This line was a great help when we made our fourth visit in February 1955. We were accompanied by David Walkinshaw, a beginner, and he remained at the top of the ladder pitch to await our return.

We cleared a squeeze beyond the line belay and got into a small and pleasant chamber, which had been formed by a confluence of passages. There were brown stalagmite boles on its floor, which was bedding-determined and therefore inclined to about 30 deg., like the Canyon. A rather pretty passage, "Burnished Passage", continued the Mud Escalator line out of the chamber and had some good formations in it,

whilst an aven soared above. We climbed this for 20 ft. and found that we could hear Walkinshaw's voice. We descended the aven and followed a cork-screw passage for 25 ft. till a narrow slit appeared in one wall, while Walkinshaw was able to reach the other side of the same slit by climbing an easy chimney a few feet beyond the ladder tether.

We shook hands through the slit. Candy stripped and tried to wriggle through, but it was too narrow, and he and I had to return by way of the Escalator.

Two months later a party loosened a mud bridge built across the link slit, but the approach was too steep on the ladder side for the debris to be cleared. We did this in July, and the three original explorers were joined by two others of the Beechen Cliff Club, Roger Rebbeck and Brian French. We entered the new series by way of the Mud Escalator and after a little work were able to leave quite easily by the Walkinshaw link.

The new discoveries amount in all to perhaps 250 ft. of passage. They are so remote from the main system and so unlike any part of it that we consider them to be a separate series. We have named them the "Beechen Series", after the club whose members were largely responsible for their exploration. With the opening of the Walkinshaw link the Series can be explored in about an hour from the bottom of the cave.

Derek C. Ford.

WITH THE C.R.G. IN HILLIER'S CAVE

On Sunday, October 29th we took a party OF the Cave Research Group down Hillier's. We went in at 11 a.m. and made slow progress, owing to the size of the party and their natural desire to take notes and look around them. We were all disgusted by evidence, in the shape of spent carbide and flash-bulbs, of ignorant and discourteous cavers, who delighted to pollute the most lovely pools.

At lengthy Suicide Passage was reached and, thanks to the previous labours of Warburton and Co., was passed without incident by five of the party: the authors, Mr. and Mrs. Hooper and a silent, bespectacled youth, whom nobody was able to identify. Beyond Suicide Passage, thought at one time to be too dangerous to pass, although quite large enough, the way broadened out into a tunnel with a floor of irregularly shaped blocks and a roof of the same material. After roughly 30 ft. the tunnel runs beneath the floor of a large grotto with a fine display of stalactite and some beautiful red colouring. One passage in the roof of this chamber ascends to a height of some 70 ft.

At the far end of the grotto the way can be picked up by a descent into a lower chamber with a large anvil-shaped stone as its main feature. From Anvil Chamber the way on is a large water-worn tunnel leading through a twisted passage to yet another boulder choke. Here there are a few tree roots showing, of about 2 ft. in length. At this point, owing to lack of time, we were forced to retrace our steps, and returned to the surface at 3 p.m.

G. Hanman and D. Penrose.

MENDIP NOTES

Cuckoo Cleaves

At the end of August, Mark Lane and Oliver Lloyd did some further exploration and some successful photography. They also found the *Asellus cavaticus* and sent specimens to the Biological Recorder of the C.R.G. No *Niphargus* was found, although 8 years ago it was common.

Lloyd could not convince the Secretary how difficult it was to prevent subsidence of the mud at the foot of the entrance shaft, and wanted his advice. But when they visited the cave together on 13.9.55 they found that the rain had already caused enough subsidence to block the entrance. It will be quite a job getting it straight, for it will mean digging outside the W. wall of the shaft from above. This is not a wet weather occupation, and so they have reluctantly said goodnight to Cuckoo Cleaves until next summer.

New digs or old?

A spirit of active curiosity has stimulated some of our younger members to look for new holes to dig. It is hard, however, to find one which has not been dug by Devenish or Murrell in the old days. One such hole is in a small dry valley about 100 yard NW. of "300", or "Double-Back Swallet", which is near the Easter-Whitsun Group of holes (about 31/580497). After 15 ft, a boulder ruckle is reached with little or no mud infill. The way on is said to look promising. This is nearly as far as Frost and others got in the past, and as far as Alan Ash went recently.

Another is "Midway Slocker", Oakhill (31/652469) which was dry in September, when Alan Fincham and Fred Davies visited it for digging, but which normally takes a considerable stream. Also some mine-shafts were examined, particularly in the Grove Farm - Eaker hill area (31/563530). They make good sporting climbs but are not promising digs.

Tankard Hole has been put to bed for the winter.

C.R.G. visit.

On the Sunday following the A.G.M. of the Cave Research Group, 30th October 1955, the Wessex became their hosts and organized expeditions to Eastwater, Lamb Leer and Hillier's. The latter was by far the most popular and was led by David Penrose, who writes about it on page 19 of this journal. Three-quarters of the Eastwater party deserted, when they found the cave already crowded by two other clubs, and went to Lamb Leer. The remaining quarter led by Denis Warburton made a rapid and very pleasant double trip without having to do any laddering. The Lamb Leer party led by Lloyd numbered twelve, and were entertained by seeing Aubrey Glennie and his party of M.N.R.C. diggers handling some of the most glutinous and highly coloured mud on Mendip. They were tackling the hole at the foot of the fixed ladder which leads to Beaumont's Passage.

We have since received a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the C.R.G., Dr. Gordon Warwick, thanking the Club and those responsible for organizing the expeditions; they really seem to have enjoyed themselves. There were about 20 in

Hillier's Cave, which Warwick visited, and Mary Hazelton, the Biological Recorder, had a good haul of bugs of various kind.

The Greeks had a word for it.

The compiler of Mendip Notes has found a signature for himself. Browsing one day, as is his custom, through the pages of a Greek Lexicon, he came across the word "cheramodytes", which means "one who creeps into holes".

Cheramodytes.

AN APPEAL FOR HELPERS

Dennis Kemp writes:-

I am very keen on forcing Blue Pencil Passage, and intend to make one or more supply, trips into Paradise Regained and build up a base camp (dare this be called Camp I?) with food, fuel, water and dry clothes. This will have to be accomplished at long range from London, and any help that can be offered will be most welcome. This need not be help in the cave, but could perhaps be (1) sealing clothes and food in polythene bags, and (2) preparing a meal for exhausted parties back in the hut. Porters on the supply trips, even only as far as Tratman's Temple, would be absolutely invaluable.

CAVES OF IONIA.

During the summer of 1954 I had occasion to spend some months in the Ionian Islands of Greece. In many parts of these islands there are quite considerable thicknesses of mountain limestone, very much disturbed by earth movements. On a number of occasions I made tentative enquiries of the local people as to whether there were any caves in the area: "speaea" being the operative word, but without exception they concluded I was mad, and on the whole this line of investigation did not prove fruitful.

In Ithaca, however, I did visit one quite genuine and interesting cave. This is reputed to be the original cave where Odysseus hid his treasure, and so is of some local fame. It is near Bathe (pronounced Varchy), where we were then staying. Our party consisted of three Greek Red Cross sisters, four of my confederates (non-cavers), myself and, most essential, the son of a local fisherman, who apparently knew the whereabouts of the hole. For lights we had two big "Primus" pressure lamps and numerous candles. I hopefully took along two short lengths of rope and a karabiner, but it was fairly clear from the outset that the expedition was not going to be a desperate one.

We hired an ancient Ford taxi and all climbed in, or rather onto it: ten, including the driver, was not uncommon for these taxis. Eventually, when everyone was in the least uncomfortable position we bumped off along the stony, dusty road, the driver swerving violently every now and then to avoid extra large rocks. After a journey of about a mile and a half by the sea we were relieved to climb up a dry valley which runs down to the sea from the rocky ridge which dominates the town. We climbed up a

rocky valley of olive trees for about 300 ft. and ascended the left hand side of the valley, when we soon came unexpectedly to the cave entrance.

This was quite large enough to enter without stooping much. We found ourselves on a ledge of boulders overlooking quite a large chamber (about 40 ft. high) with a hole in the roof, through which one could see daylight. We then climbed down over rocks some feet to the floor, which was a great choke of boulders and smashed formations. Our two pressure lamps gave excellent light. The chamber was roughly circular, about 30 ft. across. Opposite the entrance was a rising rift heavily encrusted with "curtains". I climbed up this for a short distance but it soon narrowed down to become impassable.

The roof of the chamber must at one time have been heavily decorated with huge ochreous formations. Even now there are many stumps of what must have been large stalactites. The choke in the floor contained the remains of some of these mixed with big boulders. There were a few communicating holes between the boulders, but it would be very difficult to find a way deeper. On the right hand wall from the entrance was a remarkable bed of cemented breccia, about two feet thick and much worn by water, though not within recent times. Over the top of this was an earthy crawl which gave one a view into a narrow rift, which was at that time inhabited by two bats keeping well out of reach. However, one's incentive to go crawling in such constricted places is reduced when one knows that the earth may decide to jump about at any minute. We can be grateful for our solid English earth.

Near the town of Argostoli on Cephalonia (completely smashed by the earthquake of August 1953) is a remarkable phenomenon mentioned in the

1953 Journal of the Craven Pot-Hole Club. If one walks some two miles out of the town westwards one comes to a small low headland, where there are the remains of a house. This is the site of the "Sea Mill". Some ten to fifteen yards in from the shore are a number of craters connected to the sea by a channel, in which the water takes the rather original course of running from the sea into the craters. At one time the flow was great enough to drive a 12 ft. diameter water-wheel, for which the mountings are still present: hence the name "Sea Mill". But since the earthquake it has been much reduced in volume, so that when I saw it there was a mere trickle. During the last war some naval vessels were said to have discharged large quantities of waste oil into this stream, which did not reappear anywhere in the vicinity. As there is no appreciable tide in the Mediterranean, one is left to wonder.

Alan Fincham.

FOR FUTURE NUMBERS.

We have articles on the following subjects:

HILLIER'S CAVE, by Denis Warburton,
 and by Phil Davies.

A MUD STALAGMITE IN SWILDON'S HOLE,
 by Oliver C. Lloyd.

PARADISE REGAINED: PART III,
 by Oliver C. Wells.

ON HAVING GONE THROUGH SUMPS AN UNEQUAL
NUMBER OF TIMES, by Don Thomson.

Income & Expenditure Account

	<u>1954</u>			
To Subscriptions	£69	£76	12	6
Affiliation Fees	5	6	3	0
Entrance Fees	6	6	0	0
Donations*	4	24	17	5
Headquarters Fees	36	42	14	3
Eastwater Hut Fees	7	4	14	0
Gear Fees	5	4	16	0
Lamb Leer fees	1	-	-	-
Sundry Sales	1	2	12	7
Deposit Account Interest	1	1	2	6
Annual Dinner Surplus	3		7	0

* This is a non-recurring item and, but for the generosity of various members, there would have been a deficiency for the year.

Total Receipts	<u>138</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>3</u>
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	<u>1954</u>					
By Headquarters - Equipment	£-	£34	3	1		
Rent	5	5	0	0		
Lighting & Heating	18	13	10	0		
Repairs & Renewals	7	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	67	1 3
Eastwater Hut Rent	3				2	10 0
Tackle Expenditure	1				5	4 8
Club Digs	4				-	- -
Insurances - Third Party Huts	6	6	10	0		
	3	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	9	10 0
Cost of Circulars	64				52	14 6
Postage & Telephone - Secretary	3	7	8	8		
Treasurer	1	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	8	11 2
Stationery	3				1	11 6
Library Additions	3				1	15 3
Cave Research Group	1				1	15 6
Bank Charges & Cheque Book	1					10 0
Lamb Leer Rents	-					15 0
Carbide, etc.	-				3	1 6
Balch Testimonial Fund -					5	0 0
Sundry Expenses	<u>2</u>				<u>1</u>	<u>1 0</u>
	125				161	1 4
Balance – being surplus for year	<u>13</u>				<u>8</u>	<u>17 11</u>
	<u>138</u>				<u>169</u>	<u>19 3</u>

Balance Sheet – As At 30th September 1955

Accumulated Funds – as at 1st October 1954	55	17	1		
Add Surplus for the year	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>11</u>	64	15 0
Subscriptions paid in advance				<u>1</u>	<u>10 0</u>
				<u>66</u>	<u>5 0</u>

Economic Building Society Deposit Account	46	5	2
Midland Bank Ltd. Current Account	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>10</u>
	<u>66</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>

Note. The Club's huts and other equipment have not been valued and are not included.

I have examined the above balance sheet and income and expenditure account together with the records and vouchers, and to the best of my belief the same represents a true and fair view of the Club's affairs.

(Signed) C.H. Kenney
Incorporated Accountant – Wells, 9th October 1955