

CLUB NEWS

Headquarters

Following the meeting at Wells on 25th April (a full report of which appears elsewhere in this Journal) to discuss the proposal to buy the Barn at Townsend, Priddy, as the new Club Headquarters, the Committee who met the next day were faced with a very difficult problem. The meeting had voted 20 to 14 in favour of the Committee continuing with the negotiations to purchase, but in view of the various doubts expressed by such a large proportion of those present, in particular about the siting of the property, they felt that perhaps the Barn was not really a wise choice.

The Committee summarised the pros and cons as follows:-

- FOR:
- 1) Relatively little work to be done to put into order by our own labour.
 - 2) Central for caving.
 - 3) Electricity, water and refuse collection easily available.
 - 4) No road works necessary.
 - 5) Within the Club's financial means.
 - 6) Potential room for Hillgrove Hut, thus tripling the present floor space.
 - 7) Its value as a permanent structure would not depreciate.

- AGAINST:
- 1) Remote from public transport.
 - 2) Proximity of cottages (lack of privacy) and road (remote possibility of road widening schemes).
 - 3) Possible drainage difficulties.
 - 4) Possible structural faults yet to be investigated.
 - 5) Requirements of Vendor for garage site.
 - 6) Possible defect in title to the land.

It is obvious that no one site could hope to fulfil all our ideal requirements, but it was resolved that in view of the relatively small majority who supported the proposal negotiations should be discontinued.

Donations towards the Hut Fund at the time of the meeting totalled £251 from only 30 members; it is hoped that in spite of the decision not to go ahead with the Townsend property members will continue to give just as generously towards the fund which, if the £750 target is reached, will put us in an immeasurably stronger position when another opportunity presents itself. If any member made a donation specifically for the Townsend property the Treasurer will return the appropriate sum, but the committee is resolved to continue to search for a suitable property, bearing mind all the points raised at the meetings and being within 2 miles of public transport.

Meanwhile a large heavy duty tent 14' x 14' has been purchased for the Hillgrove site to ease the overcrowding in the hut. It will be erected on a permanent site, and will have duck boards. Others facilities

are to be improved with a minimum of expenditure, as we hope it will not be too long before the Committee find a suitable site for the permanent Headquarters.

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Elected 26.4.64. Mrs. C. Baker (Joint), 132 Banstead Rd. Sth., Sutton, Surrey.
R. Lascelles, "B" Mess, A.E.R.E., Harwell, Didcot, Berks.
Mr. & Mrs. B.S. Roach (Joint), 3 Kenilworth, Sundridge Park, Yate, Glos.
A.J. Rosser, 133 St. Peter's Rise, Headley Park, Bristol 3.

Elected 17.5.64. R.H. Coppins, 125 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol 6.
W.J. Fussell, 67 Swiss Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol 3.

Wessex Cave Club Journal Vol. 1. Reprinted Spring 1964.

As mentioned in the last issue, this reprint consists of all known circulars issued by the Club from 1934-1951 (Old Series, New Series 1-25 and Index). The sale of this publication has been very brisk though mainly to members who did not order a copy. To avoid disappointment will members who previously ordered copies please forward a cheque/postal order for 7/6d. to Tony Oldham, 43 Ashley Hill, St. Andrews, Bristol 6, or to the Secretary at Nailsea.

Membership List

An up to date list of members and addresses will be issued with the next Journal. Any member who has not notified the Secretary or the Treasurer of recent or imminent changes of address, rank or title, is urged to do so without delay.

Booking of Hut & Tackle Facilities

During the summer months it is essential that booking of accommodation at the Club huts and of tackle is made both early enough and through the proper channels. It is some while since the booking arrangements were detailed In the Journal, so, for the benefit of new and old members alike this is how it should be done.

Hut Booking: Either by writing your name in the book provided at Hillgrove opposite the appropriate days;

Or by letter or phone to the Hut Booking Officer, Peter Riches, Priory Cottage, Chewton Mendip (Telephone Chewton Mendip 357).

Tackle: Either by asking the Tackle Warden, Dave Berry, or entering in the Hillgrove diary;

Or by contacting Peter Riches, giving dates and requirements.

The hut is normally opened for the weekend on the Friday evening, if anybody has booked. If, however, you plan to arrive early or during the week Peter Riches will send a key on request, or you may collect it from Chewton Mendip. Tackle keys are usually available at Hillgrove by Saturday afternoon, however if you require tackle for a morning trip these too may be collected from Chewton Mendip or will be posted on request if tackle has been booked postally.

N.B. Chewton Mendip is nearly 3 miles from Hillgrove (on the bus route). Priory Cottage is a little off the main road.

CLUB MEETS

13th/14th June South Wales Visits to Gwm Dwr and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

Names to: Oliver Lloyd, Withey House, Withey Close West, Bristol 9.

Also Club Dig at Thrupe Swallet.

Organiser: Alan Surrall, 25 Beverley Gourt Road, Quinton, Birmingham 32.

28th June G.B. Meet at the Cave 11 a.m.

Leader: Roy Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.

4th July Stoke Lane Meet at Cooks Farm 3.0 p.m. Leader: Tim Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.

Also MENDIP BARBECUE. This will be held, as usual, in the Mineries next to the Belfry on Saturday evening. Tickets, 6/- per head, may be obtained from; Bob White, 22 Bayham Road, Knowle, Bristol 4.

The ticket money is for the provision of refreshments. Please book in reasonable time to allow the organisers to provide for you.

18th/19th July Club Dig at Thrupe Swallet.

1st/2nd/3rd August Club Dig at Thrupe Swallet.

26th September Slide Show by John Hooper. Globe Inn, Priest Row, Wells, commencing at 7.0 p.m.

12th/13th September Steep Holm. An invitation to spend a weekend on a deserted island - bring your 8 gramophone records with you - we may be cut off!

Names of members and guests to: R.J. Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.

Hon. Secretary: P. Davies, "Morley", Silver St., Nailsea, Bristol. Phone: Nailsea 9.

Hon. Asst. Secretary: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. B.M. Willis, 3 Derwent Lodge, St. Philip's Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey.

Editor: C.J. Hawkes, 147 Evington Lane, Leicester.

Hut Bookings: P.N. Riches, Priory Cottage, Chewton Mendip, Bath, Som. Phone: Chewton Mendip 357.

Activities Secretary: G.R. Hobbis, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol. Phone: Long Ashton 2127.

SURVEY SCHEME

This time the printers have put up their prices, so here is a revised list of surveys and prices: -

Balch Cave - plan		3s.	9d,
Balch - section		3s.	9d,
Eastwater (2 sheets)		8s.	3d
Holwell Cave		2s.	6d,
Lamb Leer		3s.	9d,
Pate Hole, Nr.Appleby, Westmorland.		2s.	3d
Quaking House Cave, Milverton, Somerset.		2s.	6d
St. Cuthberts Swallet - plan		3s.	3d
St. Cuthberts Swallet - section		2s.	3d
Stoke Lane Slocker		4s.	3d
Swildons Hole - 1/1,500		4s.	3d
Swildons Hole - 1/2,000		3s.	3d,
Threaplands Cave		3s.	6d.
August/Longwood - sheet	1	5s.	6d,
August/Longwood - sheet	2	4s.	0d
August/Longwood - sheet	3	3s.	6d,
Goatchurch		2s.	6d,
Cooper's Hole		2s.	6d.
Ubley Hill Pot		2s.	0d
Pine Tree Pot		3s.	0d,
G.B, Cavern		3s.	6d:

Note: August/Longwood Survey

Sheet 1. Plan of the complete known system with a projected elevation. Scale 1cm to 10ft.

Also shows relationship of cave to the surface.

Sheet 2. Plan of upper series only. Scale 1 in. to 10 ft.

Sheet 3. True length elevation of complete cave with cross sections. Scale 1cm to 10ft.

G.B. Survey

This consists of the U.B.S.S. Proceedings No.2, Vol.6, complete with a pull out copy of the survey.

The prices given above do NOT include postage and packing. To cover this the following charges apply:-

1 survey	1s. 0d.	5-6 surveys	1s. 9d.
2 surveys	1s. 3d.	7-10 surveys	2s. 0d.
3-4 surveys	1s. 6d.	Over 10 surveys	2s. 3d.

The surveys are sent folded in an envelope. Members preferring to receive them rolled should send a tube plus an extra 9d. to cover additional postage, with their order.

Surveys are obtainable from:-

T.E. REYNOLDS, YEW COURT, PANGBOURNE, BERKS.

Cash with orders, please. Cheques and P.O.'s payable to 'T.E. REYNOLDS'.

A GENERIC CLASSIFICATION OF THE MENDIP CAVES

Derek Ford

In recent years, much that has to do with the genesis of the Mendip Caves has appeared in the pages of this Journal. But there has been no classification of the caves. Some sort of grouping will usually help any discussion along a bit. It is for this purpose that this article has been written.

At present too little is known of the modes of cave formation for an adequate generic classification to be devised. Some other system has to be used. That which is presented below is a "type" or generic one which leaves the questions of genesis open whilst giving, it is believed, some clues to the likely form of caves allotted to any particular group. It is based upon the position of caves in the general hydrological pattern of Mendip and their relationship, at the entrance, to the surface landforms. In part, it is a development of the descriptive system used by H.E. Balch in his well-known books.

The caves are divided into five classes:-

1. Swallet or Engulfment Caves.

These caves are entered at, or very close to, the line of contact between the cave-bearing limestones and the underlying limestone-shales. Most have an active stream that is derived from surface flow on the shale rocks and descend for much or all of their known distance along a course that is sub-parallel to the sloping contact. Group 1 includes all the lengthiest and deepest Mendip caves, such as Swildon's, St. Cuthbert's, Eastwater and G.B. Cave. Rod's Pot, Drunkard's, Read's Cavern, Cuckoo Cleeves, Whitsun and Easter Holes are other examples. Stoke Lane Slocker is a problematic member of the group.

2. Doline Caves.

These are the caves on Mendip top that are entered through swallets, (or "dolines", "closed depressions", "shakeholes", etc.), that are at some distance from the shale contact. Thus they do not take streams from the shales; any water that sinks in the swallet today is locally derived, intermittent and tiny in amount. The caves are characterised by predominantly vertical development. None attain the depth of the bigger engulfment caves. Examples of doline caves are Hunter's Hole, Tankard Pot, Hollowfield Swallet, Pinetree Pot, Cow Hole, and Lamb Leer Cave.

3. Intercepted Caves.

Caves in this group are known to the caver only because processes of erosion operating at the surface have chanced to break into them or they have been discovered during quarrying. There is no index feature such as a shakehole or a sinking stream to suggest their existence. Most open into the sides of valleys or gorges that were cut down through them long after they had been formed. Phreatic forms predominate within caves of this group. Bone Hole and Whitespot Cave in the Cheddar Gorge are perhaps the best examples. Totty Pot, Hawk's Nest Cave, Toad's Hole, Whitcombe's Hole and Aveline's Hole are others. Goatchurch Cave and Rhino Rift belong somewhat uncertainly to the

group. Of the many caves intercepted by quarries, those at Fairy Cave Quarry are the outstanding instance.

4. Effluent Caves.

These are the caves entered where the water comes out or they lie close above an active spring, suggesting that they are abandoned levels of discharge. Wookey Hole is the type example. At Cheddar, the Gough's group of caves, (Gough's, the Old Cave, Long Hole, Great Oone's Hole, Saye's Hole, Cooper's Hole and, probably, Pride Evan's Hole), are technically "intercepted" i.e. they were seen and explored because they opened into the walls of a gorge cut through them. But all are probably parts of a single effluent system and close to the modern spring, so they are placed here. The tiny Caves at Rodney Stoke, Rickford and St. Dunstan's Well Springs are further examples.

5. Spill-Off Caves.

Caves of this group are of a very minor order and the group itself is only included for the sake of completeness. Also, the criteria for classification are primarily genetic, not generic. Spill-off caves are found in the floors or walls of gorges and valleys and formed when a little of the surface flow spilled into the rock. They are not properly "swallet" caves because they were unable to swallow more than a small part of the available water. They can be distinguished from "intercepted" caves only by the nature of cave form. The "spill-off" cave may have quite a large entrance chamber but this diminishes steadily to tiny cracks within a short distance. The writer is familiar with caves of this type from many examples in limestone gorges in Ontario, formed when great glacial melt-water streams passed by them during the Ice Age. On Mendip, Sow's Hole, Pig's Hole and Soldier's Hole look very much like the Ontario examples. H.E. Balch considered Cooper's Hole to have been formed in this fashion.

It will be apparent that this classification has some weaknesses. The "swallet" and "doline" groups can usually be distinguished; but Cuckoo Cleaves Cave is an instance of the swallet type that is entered through a dry, (or "doline") depression. As indicated, there is an overlap between the "intercepted" and "effluent" groups which can only be resolved by reference to genetic data. The eastern Mendip caves fit least readily into the classification, which was devised originally for the central area alone. Stoke Lane Slocker must be placed in the swallet group, as defined. But if any connection had remained open between its high chambers and the Stoke valley, it would be an intercepted type; if modern man entered it via the doline over Bone Chamber, (as ancient man did), it would be a doline cave.

However, it is hoped that the reader will agree that the classification makes some contribution to the discussion of genesis. It summarises the information available for one important factor, source of formative water. The swallet cave will have a comparatively steady source and is likely to be larger than the doline cave, which does not. "Intercepted" implies that there is no information at all in this context, whilst the effluent cave has

channelled confluent water from many sources and is potentially largest of all.

There are some points for the cave hunter. The spill-off type of cave offers no prospects. It is the product of sideways erosion by an eddy momentarily detached from the main surface current. The swallet caves are a better bet than the doline sites, as is well known. In central Mendip, the doline caves are all much of a muchness. There is vertical development downwards for about 200 feet and then the system closes to impenetrable size or chokes at what may be termed the water table, (it may no longer be the actual table, the form that can be paddled in in Swildon's Hole, but probably was when the doline cave last took a significant flow). With reservations, it can be said that the depth to which a Mendip swallet or doline cave can be pushed before it closes or becomes very difficult in this fashion, is proportional to the amount of power fed into the system, (i.e. the volume of flow). The doline caves are "under-powered". The fact that they cannot strike a sloping floor of impermeable shale is a part of the explanation of their lack of lateral extent and a disadvantage from which the whole group must suffer in the caver's eye.

The big effluent caves ought to offer the best chances because the "power" is greatest. But the active channels are inaccessible to the non-diver and the abandoned ones tend to be badly choked. Caves that have been intercepted by valley erosion are, in many respects, the most intriguing because so little is known about them. Their geographical position makes many of them of interest also. Mendip cave exploration has worked outwards and downwards from the sinks, inwards from the risings and has so far failed to penetrate the great intermediate sections, (60-90% of the total minimum course from inlet to outlet in the various systems), that must exist. Intercepted caves in the Cheddar Gorge and Burrington Combe are located about halfway along these sections. They appear to be parts of abandoned, high-level phreatic courses which will, potentially, interconnect with the active channels. They offer better prospects than the doline sites, which are also intermediate in location, for they may once have conveyed much greater streams. White Spot Cave is the most interesting.

REPORT OF MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED NEW GLUB HEADQUARTERS
HELD AT WELLS MUSEUM 25TH APRIL 1964.

The Meeting opened at 8.10 p.m. with 24 people present. A further 9 members arrived shortly afterwards. The President was in the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence were received from O.C. Lloyd, J.D. Hanwell, T.C. Bryant, P.M. Booth, A.D. Oldham and C.R. Hobbs.
2. The President opened by giving a brief history of the Club's Headquarters. First, in 1935, was The Grange from which we had to move during the war to make room for evacuees from Bristol. After the war we had an uncomfortable barn at Beechbarrow before moving to our present H.Q. at Hillgrove, which was now proving to be too small.
3. Howard Kenney then described the Barn at Priddy. He said it was owned by a Mr. Holder, who was also selling the cottage opposite for £2,400.

The sub-committee had agreed to purchase it for £750 subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Obtaining necessary planning consent.
- 2) Obtaining necessary bye-law consent.
- 3) Subject to no scheme for Road Widening being planned,
- 4) Agreement upon a suitable position for a garage for the cottage opposite.
- 5) Subject to contract.

The Plans (on view) had been submitted to Wells R.D.C. for consideration, then they would be put before the Area Planning Officer and finally would need the approval of the Somerset County Council. We had suggested a cesspit for drainage. With regard to road widening, upon enquiry from the Highway Authorities it had transpired that none was contemplated as the Priddy-Cheddar road was not considered to be a main one. We had suggested that the garage for the cottage be put on the eastern boundary. With regard to the Title of the property, one conveyance had been lost by the vendor, but might turn up. However, it was possible to obtain an Insurance Policy to cover such contingencies, and we could ask the vendor to pay the single premium necessary.

Maurice Hewins asked about erecting further buildings on the site and was told that Hillgrove was shown on the plans submitted to the Authorities.

Alan Surrall enquired about freehold and was assured that it was indeed a freehold property. He also asked about water and electricity. Water is in the road outside and electricity was supplied to the cottages opposite. It was estimated that it would probably cost about £30-£40 to have electricity installed as the cost was determined by the size of the building, not the distance the supply had to come. This capital sum would be payable as a quarterly charge.

Car Parking facilities were queried and Howard Kenney said the quarry was filled with loose soil which could be excavated and so make more room.

Luke Devenish was not happy about vehicular access. Would the council allow this? The road was not particularly wide at this point. Some doubt was expressed as to the adequacy of parking facilities, particularly when all cavers had their own transport.

There then followed a short discussion about cesspits and drainage problems, and the President called the meeting to order and said we should first decide whether we should buy the property and then deal with the separate problems.

Brenda Willis was worried about the lack of privacy and Harry Stanbury also worried about the nearness of the cottages opposite. He also said he didn't think it was a bargain at £750, but was probably the cheapest property available suitable for our purpose.

Christopher Hawkes asked if we would get our money back if the road was ever widened.

Harry Stanbury thought the roof looked shakey and stated that there were some cracks in one end wall. He suggested we have it surveyed by a qualified surveyor. He had also noticed that the tie-bar had been removed but this would be of little import as it had probably only been necessary when the barn was used for storing large quantities of hay or grain.

Christopher Hawkes then brought up the subject of transport. This provoked lengthy discussion regarding bus routes, etc., and Leslie Teasdale thought people were more concerned with getting to the hut than with getting from the hut to the caves! Several other members expressed concern as to the distance (4 miles) from the buses.

The President thought the only alternative would be to look for a plot of land near a bus route and this was followed by talk about planning permission and the prohibitive cost of building and members' time and the fact that it is necessary to have mains water before one can expect to receive planning permission.

Christopher Hawkes felt it was not worth continuing with the purchase of the barn.

The President said the meeting did not have the power to instruct the Committee. However Christopher Hawkes seconded a motion by Luke Devenish that; "This meeting advises the committee to reject the proposal to purchase the property under discussion at Priddy for £750. "

14 voted for this motion, and 20 voted in favour of continuing investigations into the purchase of the Barn.

There was then some discussion as to the size of the property needed by the Club as H.Q.

The President then queried whether the committee were empowered to act on behalf of the club in this matter, and impressed the fact that we must obey the spirit of the rules. He said that some members felt that all members should have a say in a matter of such importance, though the rule regarding the Hut Fund was so worded that the committee could act immediately if the need arose. An extraordinary general meeting would need to be followed by a postal ballot. This would mean a long time-lag, four weeks minimum, and Howard Kenney pointed out the rapid rate at which property on Mendip changed hands.

Blackwell-Jones asked if an E.G.M. could give the committee the power to act.

The Secretary said that the Committee had interpreted the result of the recent ballot as giving them such powers to purchase a freehold property. 60% of the total membership had been in favour of the club purchasing such a property.

4. The meeting then considered the financial aspects of the matter.

The Treasurer reported that the Hut Fund was £200. Donations amounted to £250.18.6. to date from 30 people (4 contributions totalled £190.) Total cash in hand was now £719.

The President asked if only the Hut Fund and the Donations could be considered but the Treasurer thought we should include part of the Deposit Account of £140. Several people disagreed but after a little discussion and much mental arithmetic it was decided to include £100 of the Deposit Account, giving us a total of £550.

The President said we must think in terms of needing a total of £1,000. Howard Kenney thought that another £300-£400 would be forthcoming as donations, and mentioned that he had been promised loans to enable the Club to purchase the property.

The Secretary said that to make the place habitable only £100-£150 need be spent urgently and other improvements could be done gradually. All agreed that the money could be found.

5. The President queried our plans if we did purchase the barn.

Would we leave Hillgrove where it was until the barn was fully operational? All agreed that this was the obvious thing to do. Mr. Sealy is aware of our search for new premises, and we had paid the rent until the end of the Club year (October).

The Secretary said there were byelaws concerning drainage and ventilation, etc., which had influenced the improvements suggested, and he drew the attention of the meeting to various points shown on the drawing. No major criticism of the plans was raised.

Luke Devenish wondered if it would be possible to buy a corner of the field adjacent to the eastern corner as this would be suitable for tipping the surplus soil from the levelling of the site and would be a better site for the cesspool.

Christopher Hawkes then suggested we try to buy a piece of land to the right of the entrance from the main road to Hillgrove Farm, and Luke Devenish thought Green Ore would be better.

The Secretary pointed out that the purchase and development of a piece of land would be expensive, not only in money but in people's time, the site under consideration was a reasonable price and would make reasonable demands on members' time to put it in order. There would be no difficulty in re-selling should that ever prove necessary.

The MEETING CLOSED at 10.00 p.m.

SCRAPING THE BARREL AT CHEDDAR

W.I. Stanton

There is a greater concentration of caves in Cheddar Gorge than in any other part of Mendip. No less than 20 have been described, in one publication or another, down gorge of Black Rock Gate. This article introduces seven more small caves that have not, I think, previously found their way into print, comments on the possible existence of others, and indulges in the armchair speculation so beloved of émigrés. The altitudes quoted are based on an incomplete Grade 6 survey.

Whitebeam Slitter Cave and Brock Hole

These two caves might be considered as one, as their entrances are only a few yards apart and they are known to be connected. They open in the cliffs high above White Spot Cave and must be approached with the GREATEST CARE since dislodged stones inevitably fall the whole way to the car park below. They can be reached by scrambling about 100ft. down the side of the Gorge from the northwest corner of Cliff Plantation, or by climbing 300ft. up Priddy Hole Slitter and then striking off to the left through the ash wood. The former is the best route as there are fewer loose stones.

Brock Hole has a large entrance facing north which after 25ft. degenerates into three small passages. The two leading south have been walled up, presumably to exclude badgers, but to no avail as Brock has been living there for many years, mainly in the third passage which trends west and is not man-sized. It is possible to see past the walling in the other two passages, neither of which appears to be negotiable without digging. The entrance vestibule is floored with red earth which might be of archaeological interest.

Whitebeam Slitter Cave is situated in one of the narrow slitters typical of Cheddar, overhung by whitebeam bushes, a few yards east of Brock Hole. The slitter is in fact an unroofed prolongation of the cave. A small entrance crawl enlarges into a high rift sloping gently down to the south, with moonmilk and tufa streaking the walls. Seventy feet in is a squeeze past a big tufa flow, and the rift closes down 20ft. beyond. By climbing 12 ft. to a small hole in the roof just before the squeeze one enters a mud-floored bedding plane up to 8ft. wide leading south over the rift below and apparently separated from it by a stal floor. At one point on the west side is a mouse hole through which a draught blows and the sound of the wind in the cliffs outside can be heard. The bedding plane goes about 10ft. further south than the rift below it, ending in a low creep with muddy gours and a pool. A possible way on in the roof is blocked by a stal flow, and the wall opposite bears a pencil signature of historical interest: "R.C. Gough, June 1885".

About 25ft. from the cave entrance is a second small hole in the roof above a stal floor, leading into another section of roof passage 50ft. long, with attractive moonmilk and tufa flows. It had apparently been entered by only one person before Tim Atkinson and I

explored it in September 1963. It probably connects with R.C. Gough's hideout. On this trip we managed to make aural contact between the draughty mouse hole mentioned above and the eastern walled-up passage in Brock Hole.

The form of the cave, with stal floors separating passage levels in a rift, is reminiscent of Axbridge Ochre Cave. The stal is crystalline, with a peculiarly ancient appearance, and indeed it may be extremely old as scalloping shows that the cave was once occupied by a stream flowing south. That can only have been early in the Pleistocene period, before the river that then occupied Cheddar Gorge had incised itself below the level of the cave entrance, perhaps as much as three-quarters of a million years ago. At first sight, therefore, Whitebeam and Brock would appear to have exceptional archaeological possibilities, but cliff retreat since that time will have destroyed a good deal of cave. Even so, few known Mendip caves can have been open longer.

The entrances of Whitebeam Slitter Cave and Brock Hole are respectively 703 and 700 ft. above Ordnance Datum.

Pittards Crawls

These are in the south cliff about 100 yards up gorge of Reservoir Hole, 55ft. above road level at the head of a steep grassy slope. They consist of two low tunnels about 5 yards apart that slope gently down to the south to choke after 15ft. The entrances are at 452ft. O.D.

Scalloped Hole

Also in the south cliff, this cave is about 80yds. downgorge of White Spot Cave and 10ft. above road level. A constricted entrance leads into a bedding plane choked with tufa and stones only 10ft. in, and the hole's only striking feature is the strong inward scalloping on the east wall of the entrance. Reasoning that the stream must have gone somewhere the Sidcot cavers attacked the choke in 1963, following an earlier assault by persons unknown, but found the tufa hard to chip out in the confined space. An interesting discovery was that the tufa was locally crowded with the bones of small rodents or birds. They also dug out a rift at the back of the rock shelter at road level 12ft. to the west, finding that it became too tight 6ft. in. The entrance to Scalloped Hole is at 368ft. O.D.

Yew Cleft Hole

This is situated in the Bake Hole valley behind Lion Rock on the north side of the Gorge. It is on the opposite side to the Bake Hole and about 75yds further down the valley in a little cliff with a yew tree growing in it. The cave is a tight earth-floored rift leading east, 20ft. long and full of spiders and gnats.

Bridged Rift Cave

The entrance to this cave is at 349ft. O.D. in another low cliff a short way above Yew Cleft Hole. A 5ft. drop brings one into a roomy rift 10ft. high trending east for 40ft., impeded half way along by a rock bridge. At the end the rift narrows and is blocked by a bank of tufaceous stalagmite.

Ivy Cliff Half-Cave

Between Sun Hole and Lion Rock, about 100ft. up on the north side of the Gorge opposite Gough's Cave, is a slightly overhanging cliff heavily draped in ivy. The foot of the cliff trends south-southwest for 150ft. following an important bedding plane, and is undercut and honeycombed with large and small solution cavities in such a way as to suggest that it is one half of a cave passage, the other half having fallen away into the Gorge. The north end of the half-cave is at 243ft. O.D., the south end at 213ft. O.D, Projected southwards it would pass close to Lion Rook, whose overhanging southeast face shows similar features. At its north end it passes below an overgrown bank of scree, and here the curious digger might hope to find convincing evidence of its mode of origin,

Mascalls Wood "Cave"

The existence of this legendary cavity, "as big as Great Oones", was repeatedly averred by the late Victor Painter when he was head guide to Gough's Cave. As a result many enthusiastic cavers have combed the wood (which is on the south flank of Mendip about 500yds. southeast of the entrance to Gough's) without finding anything other than an important badger holt. Rumour has it that these animals used to penetrate into the Mushroom Chamber in Gough's (beyond the show cave, 250yds north of Mascalls Wood) to steal the said fungi. It has been suggested that the cave legend grew from this story, which in turn might have been originated by certain two-legged badgers, but the latter proposition is no more than agreeable speculation.

Cox's Cave

This, the well known show cave, is basically a large river tunnel (although the guides insist it is a sea cave) leaving the Gorge at the main entrance and becoming choked at the Ring O'Bells. Tourists make their exit via a cross rift. The main tunnel reappears in Aquarium Cave on the other side of the choked down step, and then, apparently, returns to the Gorge. It shows strong westward scalloping in Cox's Cave, Presumably it is a relic of a past resurgence system now mostly destroyed by the down cutting of the surface river in the Gorge.

Cheddar Hole

H.E. Balch (Mendip Caves 11 p.8) thought that this master cave of song and legend might

be reached via Coopers Hole, but neither of the passages entered there by the M.C.G. are in the appropriate category and neither extended more than a few feet in historical times. Unless there is another passage still unentered, more to the northeast, Coopers may be written off, though it is still a promising conventional dig. Recently Derek Ford (Journal 89) suggested that the honour fell to Saye's Hole, but it is hard to believe that this tiny cavity should ever be considered one of the four wonders of England, to the exclusion of Wookey Hole.

On the available evidence, I am inclined to think that the real Cheddar Hole is entered by a million people every year, that it is in fact Cheddar Gorge. Even now the Gorge is the chief tourist attraction, as is illustrated by the complaint of the Gough's guides that only ten per cent of visitors to Cheddar go round the caves. Unrivalled in Britain, it deserves a high place in any list of this country's wonders. Neither the 12th or 16th century accounts quoted by Balch specifically states that Cheddar Hole is a cave, in fact the latter quotes a name "Career Aeoli" (Prison of the Wind) that is a good description of the Gorge, and even uses "Cheddar rocks" as a synonym. The "pretie riverets and streames" often crossed, might well refer to the river which until the last century occupied the whole floor of the Gorge below the risings, and one can sympathise with a weary traveller who found the way "endless", especially if it was as overgrown and scree-choked as Ebbor Gorge is today.

As in the case of the Lost Cave of Burrington, unmasked by Boon and Donovan (Proc. U.B.S.S. for 1953-54), a definite answer might be readied by study of the originals quoted by Balch, especially the brief earlier description which is presumably in Latin and susceptible of biased translation. As Balch remarks, both accounts are based on hearsay and the second appears to be little more than an elaboration of the first. Finally, there are first-hand accounts of Wookey Hole in the 15th and 17th centuries (Balch: Mendip Caves 1, Chapter 5), and these should be examined as the authors may make unambiguous references to Cheddar elsewhere in their works.

Concealed entrances at Cheddar

There can be no doubt that the known cave entrances in the Gorge are but a fraction of the total, the remainder being choked, concealed beneath soil or scree, or even in some cases hidden by undergrowth in inaccessible places. This is proved by the fact that, in several caves, passages approaching the surface are blocked by piles of angular small scree, a typical product of frost weathering, that have slipped in from above accompanied by percolating mud and tree roots. Such may be seen in Long Hole, Great Oones Hole, Coopers Hole and Pride Evans Hole (where the scree may have entered through a roof fissure and blocked a more important passage beneath). At Sun Hole and Bone Hole large passages rising towards ground level enter boulder chokes. In none of these examples does the choked passage have any surface expression, and it is hard to think of a way of prospecting for them. Cold updraughts through the scree, such as led to the locating of Lancaster Hole, may be the answer.

CAVERS DYING OF COLD *

by

Oliver C. Lloyd

Department of Pathology, University of Bristol

There have been two fatal accidents to cavers on Mendip due to cold. It is the purpose of this paper to describe them briefly, to say what is known about the effect of cold on the human body and to outline principles of prevention and treatment.

CASE REPORTS

Case 1.

J.W. was a young man of 23, who had been caving occasionally for two years, but was inexperienced. On Saturday 17th January 1959, he went down Swildon's Hole in company with a great many others to help as a porter on a diving expedition to Swildon's IV, descending the cave at about noon. At 3.30 p.m. the cave began to flood. Diving was abandoned and at 7.30 p.m. J.W., tired, cold and inadequately clad for such conditions, tried unsuccessfully to climb the flooded 40 ft. pot. He was with difficulty hauled upon a line, and became unconscious while the water was pouring onto him. At the head of the pitch he recovered consciousness and was able to stand up with support, and to eat some chocolate, but he was unable to converse. He was very cold. The temperature of the water was not measured but was likely to have been about 40°F (4.5°C). While he was being taken out of the cave he died suddenly at about 9 p.m., that is one-and-a-half hours after his condition had first given rise to alarm. J.W. did not have a robust constitution and was likely to faint, if he was hurt.

Post-mortem examination performed by Dr. R.L. Bishton the next day showed death to have been due to acute heart failure, with extreme dilation of the right auricle and ventricle and of the great veins which enter them. The lungs were dry. The chocolate had reached the stomach.

Case 2.

H.M. was a thin, healthy young woman of 17. On Sunday 17th March 1963, she went down Longwood Swallet with a party from her college. It was her first caving trip. They entered the cave at 1.45 p.m. when it was raining heavily, and by 2.45 p.m. they had all got soaked through and turned back. She was only lightly clad. There was considerable delay at the 10 ft. overhang, because a member of one of the parties in front had sprained his ankle and was slow to get out. Everyone got cold but not uncomfortably so, and when H.M. went through the S-bend at about 4.20 p.m. she had no difficulty. By now the water was pouring down the entrance shaft (which is a

*Reprinted from "The Bristol Medico-Chirurgical Journal" January 1964, Vol. 79(i). No. 291, by kind permission of Dr. A.B. Raper.

This paper was read to the Summer Meeting of the Cave Research Group of Great Britain at Brecon, on the 29th June 1963.

narrow 40 ft. high vertical) and she was getting drenched, as there was no shelter. The temperature of the water was not measured, but was probably about 43°F (6°C). At 4.30 p.m. she tried to climb the ladder in the entrance shaft but failed. She was by now frightened. At 4.45 p.m. the Mendip Rescue Organisation was called out. At 5.15 p.m. she was found by an advance party to be in a state of stupor, unconscious, curled up, groaning. At 5.30 p.m. she was offered some hot soup but was not only unable to drink it; she did not even feel it burn her lips. Some was poured into her mouth and entered her larynx. It is evident that she was already dead. Only one hour had elapsed since her condition first gave rise to alarm. Post-mortem examination performed by Dr. D.H. Johnson the next day showed that death was due to acute heart failure, with the great veins distended with blood, dilation of the right auricle and ventricle, and acute gastric erosions.

THE EFFECTS OF COLD ON THE HUMAN BODY

The effects of exposure to low temperature have been described in detail by Burton and Edholm (1955) and much of what follows is taken from their chapter on hypothermia and resuscitation.

The body has two temperatures, external and internal. The external temperature, which is that of the skin and subcutis, varies a good deal with the environment, but the internal temperature (best measured in the rectum) is fairly constant at 37°C (98.5°F). When the body is cooled, the blood vessels of the skin and subcutis shut down, so that the circulation there is greatly reduced and the skin cools rapidly, until it approaches the temperature of the surroundings. This is one of two simple defensive reactions against cold, since the subcutis is composed of fatty tissue, which is a non-conductor of heat. The other is shivering. Shivering begins as soon as the surface is thoroughly chilled, and provides warmth to maintain the internal temperature. Much energy may be used up, and the heat production is equal to that of considerable exercise. With moderate cooling, a balance may be effected which can last for a long time.

With rapid or severe cooling the condition is otherwise. Most of the experimental work was done at Dachau, of all places, by Dr. Rascher and other disciples of Himmler (Alexander, 1945). They dressed their subjects in aviation suits and plunged them into water of between 2° and 12°C (35°-54°F). The actual temperature between these limits made little difference. The subject would immediately suffer excruciating pain and cramp and begin to shiver violently. The pain was worse if the nape of the neck was submerged. At first the rectal temperature and pulse would rise on account of the shivering, but after 5-10 minutes would begin to fall. At the same time the pain became much less. The reason for this is that the nerve endings in the skin become insensitive, once the blood supply has been cut off.

At a rectal temperature of 36°C (97°F) shivering is accompanied by rigidity of the limbs and tends to occur in spasms, but in some experiments would continue for nearly an hour. At a rectal temperature of 34°C (93°F) the pulse began to get slow, there was foaming at the mouth, and the muscular rigidity made it difficult to expel air from the lungs. By the time the pulse had fallen to 50 a minute, the fall in rectal temperature accelerated. At 31°C (88°F) there was clouding of

consciousness. Only sleepy answers were given to questions. Between 30° and 29°C (86°-84°F), auricular fibrillation would set in. This is a reversible irregularity of the heart beat, and is directly due to the action of cold on the pacemaker of the heart. This usually occurred after 70-90 minutes of immersion.

Death from cardiac arrest (acute heart failure with ventricular fibrillation) occurs at rectal temperatures of between 27° and 24.2°C (80.5° and 75.5°F). It is very uncommon for people to survive at lower rectal temperatures than this, but cases have been recorded. When death occurs, the heart stops beating first, and irregular respirations may continue for another 20 minutes.

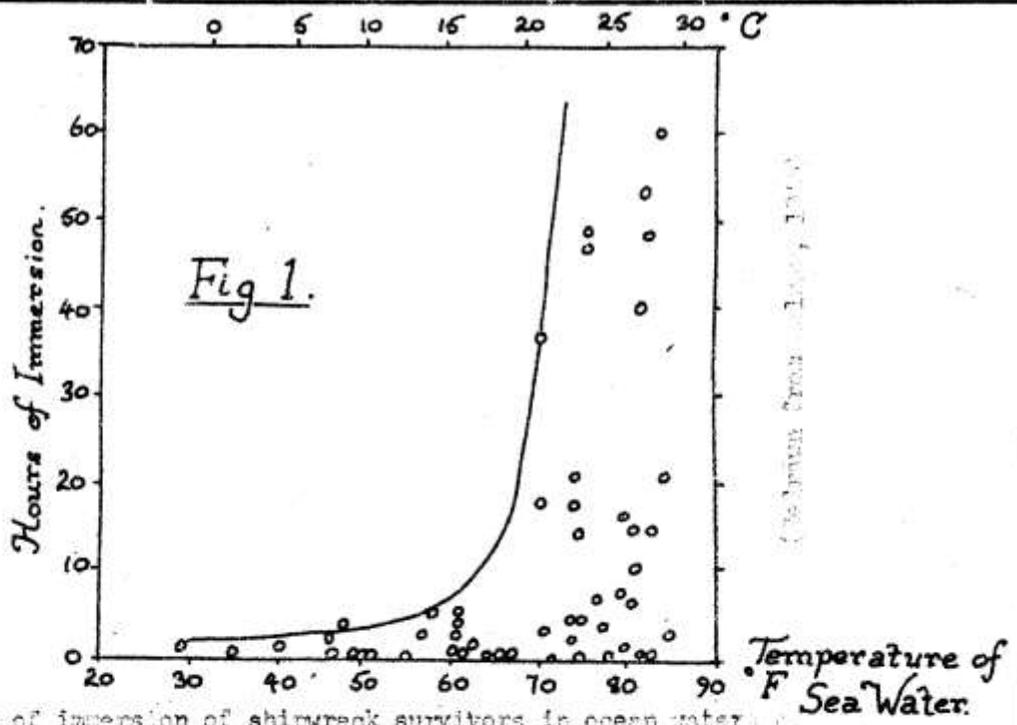
The time taken to reach the point of no return varies with the temperature of the water. Molnar (1946) in his study of shipwrecked mariners has shown that no-one survived more than two hours at a temperature of 43°F (6°C) or five hours at 55°F (13°C), but that survival for indefinite periods occurred at temperatures of over 70°F (21°C) (Fig. 1 at the back of the journal). Individual variation must however be great. Experienced swimmers (e.g. Channel swimmers) can maintain their internal temperatures at a constant level for six to fifteen hours at water temperatures of from 15°C-16.5°C (59°F-62°F). Long-distance swimmers such as these usually have a thick coating (1.5 to 3 cm.) of subcutaneous fat, which when cooled acts as an efficient insulator.

At post mortem the changes found are invariably those of acute heart failure with dry lungs and severe dilation of the right ventricle, exactly as was described in the two cases of cavers.

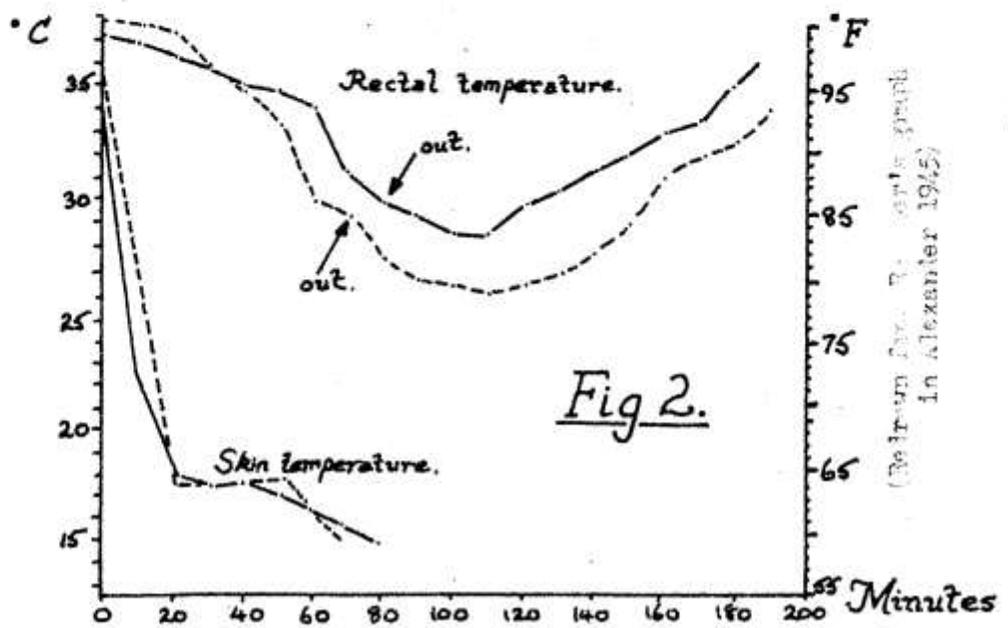
Re-warming

When a severely cold subject is rewarmed slowly, shivering starts again, with a return of the excruciating pains first experienced. But besides this an unexpected thing happens; the rectal temperature continues to drop at the same rate for another 10-15 minutes by another 4°C (= 7°F), and so may reach dangerous levels (Fig. 2). It is this which accounts for the cases of immersion which die after they have been rescued. This phenomenon is called "after-drop" and has been clearly demonstrated by all experimenters. It is due to the cooling of the central blood by the skin, when the superficial blood vessels open up.

It is found, however, that rapid re-warming, as by immersion in a hot bath of water at 45°C-55°C (113°-131°F) can prevent this after-drop completely, since the superficial tissues are re-warmed so fast that they cannot cool the blood when it begins once more to flow in them. Rascher has found that resuscitation by this method is possible even when respiration has ceased and the heart has stopped beating. He has answered the objection that hot baths may not be available, by throwing water heated to 55°-60°C (131°-140°F) over the severely cooled subject, and has shown that significant heat loss can be prevented in this way for some 10-15 minutes. Rapid re-warming shortens the painful period of shivering during recovery from ten minutes to two (Behnke & Yaglou, 1951).



Duration of immersion of shipwreck survivors in ocean water at different temperatures. Each circle represents the survival of at least one man. The curve represents the critical time-temperature relation for survival. Above the curve (one exception) survival is impossible, below possible.



Rectal and skin temperatures in two human subjects immersed in water at 4.5°C (40°F) for 70 and 80 minutes respectively (arrows indicate time of removal from water), and then warmed in electric light caissons. "out." indicates "out" of rectal temperature, following removal from water.

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILLING OF CAVERS

Chilling does not occur in a dry cave with moderate activity. It is only under wet conditions, when the clothes have become soaked, that the skin temperature is significantly reduced and shivering occurs. Individual tolerance to cold varies enormously. A thick layer of fat increases tolerance, and so does determination. Familiarity with one's surroundings makes them more tolerable, so that it is usually the inexperienced cavers who suffer most. Woollen clothing is better than cotton, even when wet, and retains the heat much better if it fits closely than if it is loose (Dachau, again). Once soaked, it is well to try not to change the water nearest one's skin, so that it can be warmed up, but it is often best to wring out one's underclothes, if one does not expect a second soaking soon.

Immersion suits have increased cavers' tolerance of cold and wet conditions very greatly. They are, however, difficult to get and perish easily. Wet suits (Little & Galpin, 1962) made of neoprene foam are the complete answer.

The taking of food in adequate quantities both before a wet caving trip and even after shivering has begun will delay the fall of inside temperature. If, however, the rectal temperature falls to dangerous levels, the blood sugar level rises, because the muscles are no longer able to utilize sugar. At this stage giving glucose is of no use. No drug is of any avail. Alcohol is worse than useless as it accelerates body cooling by causing the blood vessels in the skin to dilate.

Exercise is nearly always better than inaction. The heat produced by moderate exercise is equal to that produced by severe shivering. Heat loss need not be accelerated as long as the subject can keep out of the water. If exercise is not possible, close contact with the body of another person will prevent heat loss, but this is not an effective form of treatment for severe cold, as when the subject becomes torpid.

It is not generally realized how seriously ill the subject has become by the time this state of torpor is reached. Nor is it realized for what a short time some individuals are capable of tolerating a shower of cold water. In the first of the cases described death took place after one-and-a-half hours, in the second after one hour. This agrees quite well with Molnar's figures for shipwrecked mariners, and yet for the cavers the heat loss is not as great as it is with total immersion.

If after rescue the subject is still torpid, the rectal temperature below 32°C (89°F) and the pulse slow, treatment by immersion in a hot bath is called for as soon as possible. Its practical application would need to be considered afresh in each case, since the facilities which might be provided at the nearest farm house might be slender. Rubbing with towels is of no use, unless the skin has already been warmed. Blankets and hot water bottles and dry clothes will result in rather slow re-warming, with a return of painful shivering and danger of death due to the after drop of rectal temperature. There are no substitutes for a hot bath.

SUMMARY

Two cases of cavers dying of cold are described. One died one-and-a-half hours and the other one hour after getting drenched. They were both young and inexperienced and were not properly clad. They died of acute heart failure. The changes resulting from experimental cold immersion of human beings are described. They correspond with those experienced in these two cases. Slow re-warming of a dangerously cold subject may result in death due to the "after drop" of the inside temperature. Rapid re-warming in a bath of hot water (45°-55°C, 113°-131°F) is recommended.

The prevention and treatment of chilling of cavers is discussed in the light of this information.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, L. (1945). "Treatment of shock from prolonged exposure to cold, especially in water." Combined Intelligence Objectives Subcommittee Target No. 24, Medical, APO 413.
- Behnke, A.R. and Yaglou C.P. (1951). "Physiological responses of men to chilling in ice water and to slow and fast re-warming." Jour. Applied Physiol., 3, 591-602.
- Burton, A.C. and Edholm, O.G. (1955). "Man in a cold environment." Arnold, London. Ch. 11.
- Little, W.H. and Galpin, L.S. (1962). "Anti-exposure suits and a wet-suit for caving." C.R.G. Publication No. 11, Section IV, 61-85.
- Molnar, G.W, (1946). "Survival of hypothermia by men immersed in the ocean." J.A.M.A., 131, 1046-1050.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“Dear Sir,

Permanent Ladders?

William Stanton's suggestions in your last issue with regard to aids to the strenuous explorers of Swildons should be vigorously supported - and, furthermore, carried out in the near future.

And for the following reasons:-

- (a) To avoid the unwarranted calling-out of the M.R.O.
- (b) To facilitate an easier return of any tired or exhausted caver.
- (c) To speed working parties to and from Shatter Passage and other distant parts of Swildons.

(a) & (b) Twice in the past few months the M.R.O. has been alerted through a caving party removing their ladders from the 40 ft., not knowing that another party was below them - without ladders. No one wishes to call up unnecessarily that worthy body of men - the Mendip Rescue Organisation. A permanent iron ladder would undoubtedly have avoided the necessity for this action on several occasions in the past two or three years.

(c) "One can't do much work when one eventually reaches the chokes at the far end of Swildons, knowing that, after the dig, there remains still a strenuous effort to get above ground again. "
- this, or words to this effect, from one of our experienced cavers. Permanent ladders at the 40 ft. and 20 ft. would help both ways, with correspondingly less gear to carry.

Objection: It has been said in the past that no artificial aid should be used, or at least left in a cave by a party after an expedition. Idealism?

Reply: Although it is true we bring out most of our artificial aids with us they can amount to a formidable list and are still being added to:- Nailed or rubber soled boots; woollen clothing; miner's helmets; goon suits; wet suits; nylon ropes; duralumin ladders; belays; carabiners; pitons; acetylene lights; electric lights; gelignite; maypoles; diving equipment; surveying equipment; food packs; food caches; first-aid packs; windlasses and bosun's chairs; and even a canvas water-shute. Even H.E. Balch in his day used candles and rope ladders! No artificial aids would mean caving stark naked in absolute darkness! (That is not a "dare", Cheramodytes!).

So why not permanent ladders to aid both strenuous explorer and exhausted novice? As a donation (with the M.R.O. in mind) I will contribute 20 feet of iron laddering. Who will follow?

H.W.W. Ashworth"

"Dear Sir,

The Speleological Yearbook and Diary 1964

Having been foolish enough to buy one of these publications I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of those who haven't. This diary contains 174 pages of text, a few more of adverts and one photograph - of the back view of a caver admiring a boulder choke. The main contents are as follows:- a caving code, description of the caving areas in the country, cave conservation, show cave sites, series of articles on cave rescue, short glossary of caving terms, proposed expeditions in 1964, diary, list of clubs and societies.

There are a few points that I would like to make:-

1. Caving Areas of Great Britain. Included are descriptions of Derbyshire, Mendip, Gloucester, South and North Wales, Scotland and Yorkshire (but not Devon for some odd reason). These descriptions give general details of the areas in question. As a result they are not really of much use, for, unless you know the area in question, it is a job to follow the description. Probably a better plan would be to have a sort of 'poor man's Barrington' consisting of a general map of the area in question, with the positions of the major caves shown. And a description in the accompanying text. Certainly maps would be a good idea.
2. Cave Rescue. This is a long splurge about Cave Rescue Procedure. Personally I think that this might as well have been left out. It describes the sort of work that a rescue team should do on reaching a casualty; like hauling procedure up drops, use of compressed air tools, etc. This is the sort of information the rescue wardens should know. Certainly this section is of little use to anyone who comes across an accident in a cave. More useful would have been a section on how to adapt normal caving equipment to make splints, bandages, etc. (if possible!). There is, however, a short article on mouth to mouth artificial respiration, which everyone should know. What is very noticeable about this section is that it does not give any details about the 'treatment' of exposure, which has certainly, on Mendip anyway, been the greatest 'killer' in caves. There are also six pages of information about cave rescue facilities in Ireland. This was originally a report to the Northern C.R.O. from a subcommittee. As such it is very good, but it is not the sort of thing for a publication of this nature, too long for one thing. The rescue facilities in Ireland can be summed up in two words: B- all. Six pages are not needed to say this, especially since the majority of cavers don't go to Ireland. However, the tear-out page which follows the article, and which should be filled in and sent to the C.R.O. by parties who are visiting Ireland, is a good idea. Probably better for this section would have been a page emphasising the lack of rescue facilities in Ireland and the tear-out page. The C.R.O. could then send out more details to parties going there.
3. Short Glossary of Caving Terms. This has been copied word for word out of Barrington's "The Caves of Mendip" (without his permission). As a result it only really applies to Mendip. Since this Yearbook is supposed to be a national publication, it seems that if a list of caving terms was going to be included it would have been better to have national

caving terms instead of just Mendip ones.

4. The Diary. This is rather disappointing. Ample space is provided (a page a week and space for notes at the end), but the date of each day is not entered. Instead, at the top of each page the date of the Monday and Sunday of the appropriate week is given. This means that to find the date of any other day a calculation has to be done. For a diary of this price (11/6) it seems that you are being rooked. Far preferable, if price was a limiting factor, would have been to have left out some of the pages on cave rescue and had the diary done properly. A very useless item is the dates of 'events' in the caving world that are also given. This is basically a list of A.G.M's. Unless you happen to be a member of about 50 clubs and can't remember when the A.G.M's occur this will not be of much use to you. Even then you probably won't get to the A.G.M. of your choices a case in point being the Wessex A.G.M., which is apparently going to occur on a Friday!
5. List of Societies. This is about the only really useful section in the diary. It gives details of Chairman, Secretary, publications, accommodation, etc., of all the major clubs, and most of the smaller ones, in the country. It is a very great help in finding who controls what. There is also a list of foreign clubs; this only gives the main club in each country.

On the whole this is a rather poor publication which has relied too much on information from other sources, without considering whether it is the sort of thing required in a diary of this nature. The list of clubs and societies is a very good idea and, in fact, almost makes it worth buying, but I hope that this section will be fully and carefully revised annually since, owing to the high mortality rate among caving clubs, it will soon be out of date. However, I think that this publication falls far short of what it claims to be: an official handbook for cavers.

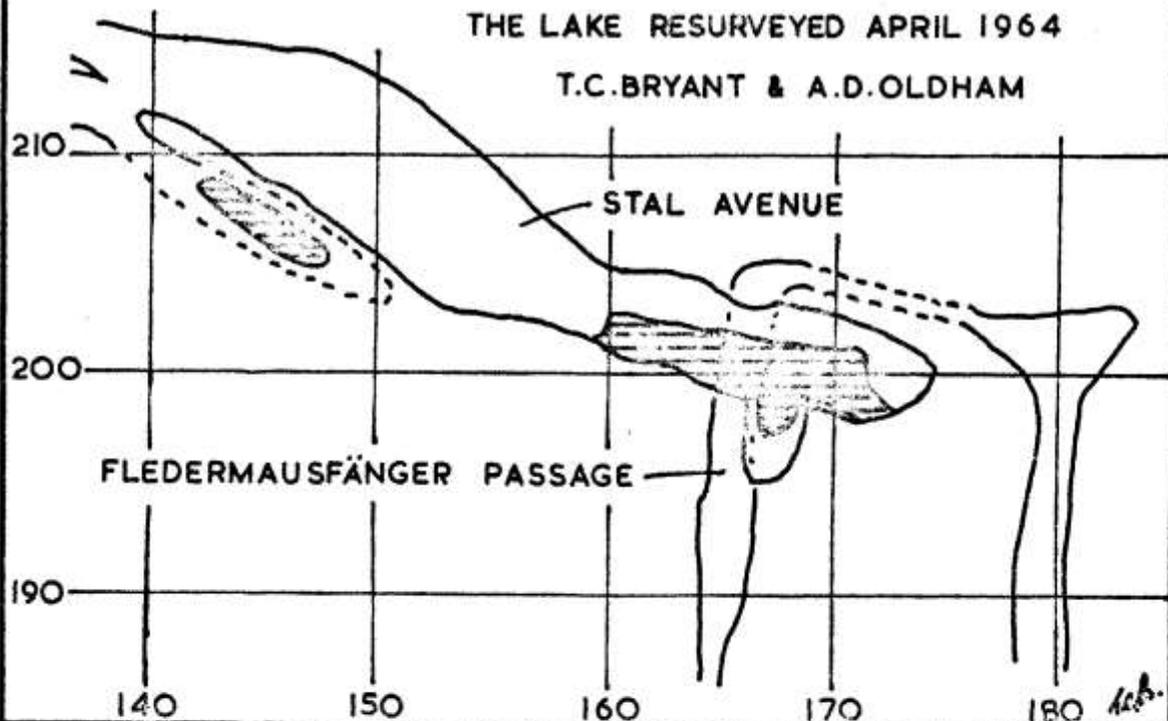
Yours sincerely,

Tim Reynolds"

QUAKING HOUSE CAVE, MILVERTON, SOM.

THE LAKE RESURVEYED APRIL 1964

T.C. BRYANT & A.D. OLDHAM

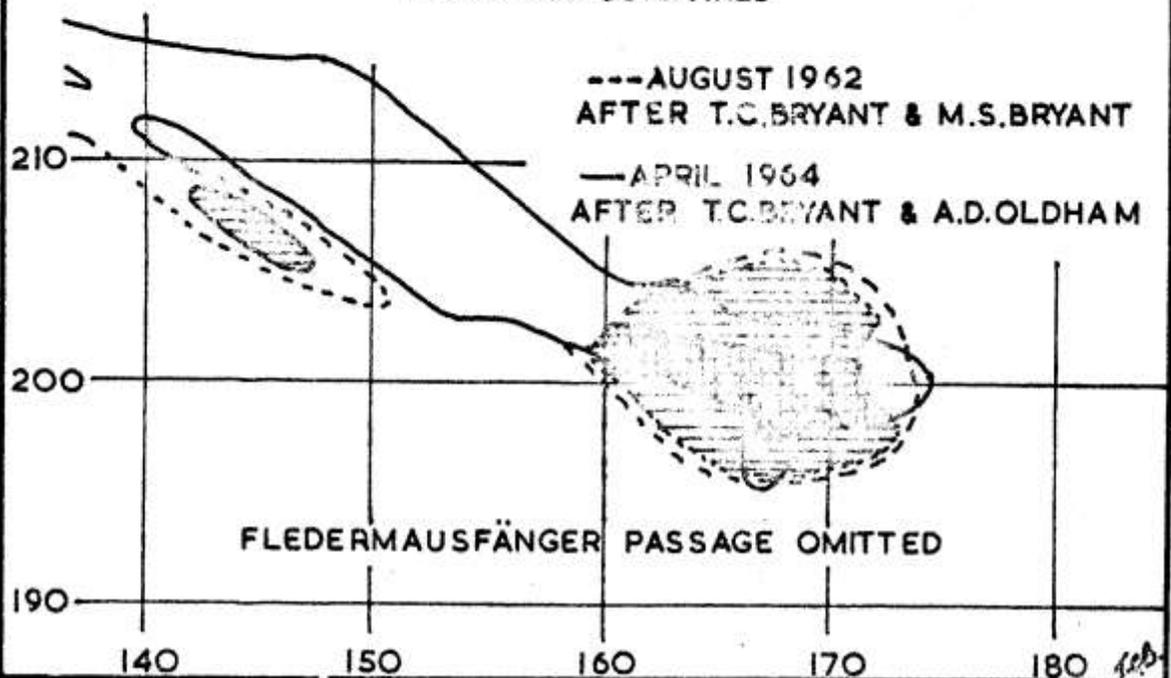


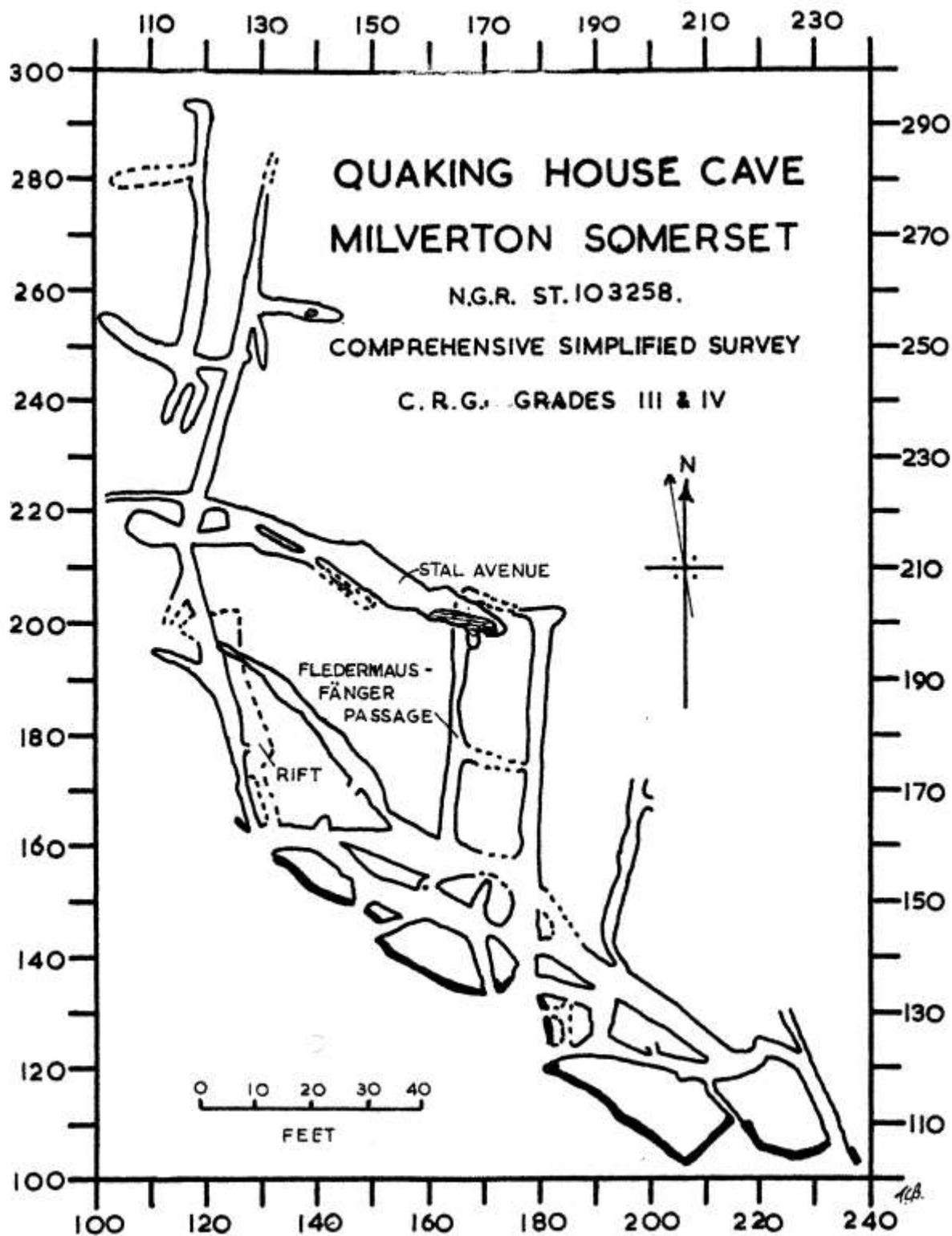
QUAKING HOUSE CAVE, MILVERTON, SOM.

THE LAKE COMPARED

--- AUGUST 1962
AFTER T.C. BRYANT & M.S. BRYANT

— APRIL 1964
AFTER T.C. BRYANT & A.D. OLDHAM





MENDIP NOTES

Cheramodytes

The Jolliest Party Ever

Our cavers had bottomed Pen-y-Ghent Pot and were busy on an exchange trip between Disappointment Pot and Bar Pot, when on Easter Sunday the rest of us settled down to an evening party at the Crown. Members of the U.B.S.S. came as guests, bringing with them a guitarist. They also brought with them an ugly rumour about a diving accident in Lancaster Hole. Such rumours have an unpleasant way of turning out to be true, so Mike Thompson went and phoned Bob Leakey. No sooner had we got our three guitars in tune than he returned to say that Alan Clegg had been drowned while diving in the Master Cave Sump in Lancaster Hole.

We heard the details later from Mike Boon. At the conclusion of the diving operation the float line got stuck when being drawn in, and Alan Clegg went in to free it. In the process of doing so he got tangled up in the line himself, lost his gag and drowned. Mike Boon immediately went in to free him, and although resuscitation was started within two minutes of the accident he never recovered. Clegg had been aqualung diving for some years and had done a number of cave dives with the C.D.G. He was regarded as one of their most steady and reliable members. The others are now asking themselves, if this can happen to him, who can't it happen to?

The party languished and not a song was heard. Some Kendal chaps showed us some good cave and scenic photographs on a projector, but we were thinking about other things. Our Bar Pot party failed to find the connection and returned the way they had come; our Disappointment Pot party was overdue. The U.B.S.S. guests didn't like to go while the issue was in doubt, but at 11.45 p.m. Phil Davies got a call from the Police to say that the C.R.O. had been called out in respect of our late party. Most of the C.R.O. were busy at Lancaster Hole, so would we provide a strong party to rendezvous at the New Inn, Clapham. In the meantime the Manchester lads were going up to the caves to recce. Our members promptly went off to change at Clapdale Farm, while the U.B.S.S. went back to the Marton Arms to rustle up another party.

We had barely changed when the first members of the missing party came and announced themselves. News was sent down to the New Inn and got there soon after the arrival of the U.B.S.S. team. Our party in Disappointment Pot had been made late by a combination of most of the things which do make cavers late: one or two weak members, trouble in finding the way, delays at ladder pitches. The cave system was full of Chelsea bods as well as our own.

After the stand-down some of us wandered up towards Bar Pot to meet the last of our members with hot soup and encouraging conversation. Trow Gill looks wonderful by moonlight.

Tackle Stealers in the North

I was shocked to read in a northern publication recently, that late last winter the Burnley Caving Club Hostel was broken into and their tackle was all stolen. I had always thought such a thing impossible, as there is honour amongst cavers, and no one else would want it. But worse was to follow, for on Easter Monday, five potholers from Barrow-in-Furness making their way to the surface in Bar Pot found their life line stolen from the big pitch and all tackle including their own gone from the entrance pitch. I rather fancy this may have been done by the potential thieves encountered by our party, that went to recover our own tackle on that day, after the adventures of the previous night.

New H.Q. on Mendip

So we are not, after all, to buy the bam in Priddy. Your Scribe was not at the meeting on April 25th, but he has had information from his fellow scribes, Cave Beetle, Clayfoot and Taperer. The arguments seem to have been fairly equally distributed, but the one which most strongly divided the meeting was the question of situation. Is it better for the H.Q. to be near the caves or near the bus stop? In either case there is walking to be done by the non-motorized caver. I had always imagined it was best to be near the caves, as this halved the amount of walking; unless one merely wanted a lazy weekend on Mendip, in which case the H.Q. should be near the bus stop.

On thinking it over the following facts present themselves. Where do the unmotorized and unattached cavers actually camp on Mendip? You meet them in Maine's Barn, Cook's Farm, by Priddy Stores, over Eastwater Cavern, in Burrington Coombe. All these are near the caves and only the last is also near a bus stop.

Looking again at the Townsend Barn, it does rather overlap the road, which is terribly narrow at that point, I don't think it will be allowed to stay there long. Those who had taken such trouble over the negotiations with the owner must have been disappointed at the division of opinion, but the Committee was undoubtedly right in deciding not to proceed with a matter for which support was so tentative. "Democracy does work", as the President was heard to say - or something like it.

Life-lining

It must be singularly unpleasant to have the life-line running through your hands and to know that you've got to get them burnt, if you are to save the chap at the other end. That is what happened to Steve Wynne-Roberts on the 13th May, while climbing in the Avon Gorge, when he saved Barry Lane from something worse than the cuts and broken wrist he actually got. I suppose everyone has his unguarded moments, but one shouldn't have them when doing something particularly dangerous. Poor Steve had a most boring Whitsun week-end in hospital. His fingers don't look too bad now and should not give a lot of trouble.

He tells me that he was surprised how easy it was to stop Barry's fall, using only two hands. Barry had about 10 feet start of him and he stopped him in 40 to 50 feet. This is encouraging. It means that you needn't think you're going to get your fingers burnt for nothing. But you will get them burnt.

I find it essential to be able to concentrate when life-lining. It worries me if people are singing and making a row. The technique is not something you can learn from a book, you've got to get the feel of it. An important thing to learn is what it feels like when the subject drops off. You can ask him to do this unexpectedly. He won't always oblige.

C.R.G. Meeting.

The Wells Meeting of the Cave Research Group on Saturday, 2nd May was unexpectedly pleasant. Of course they are always worth attending, if only for the pleasure of seeing old friends from other parts and making new ones. Of the two papers, one was a White Rock and the other a Dark Horse. Bob Picknett surprised me by turning out to have one of the most attractive lecturing styles I have met. He was talking about the solution of calcite at 10 C. but at varying hydrogen ion concentrations, and easily persuaded us that we understood what he was talking about. I wish I could remember it well enough to set it down here, but never mind, it will be published.

The Dark Horse was David St. Pierre of the S.W. Essex Technical College C.C. He told us of the expedition made by his club last year to Arctic Norway and illustrated it by numbers of first rate photographs. These were so good, that one felt oneself participating in the expedition he was describing, and savoured fully the sheer joy of caving.

Apart from the official trips on the Sunday your Scribe took a party of Welsh Dragons on the Round Trip of Swildon's Hole. Some had only been as far as the 20 ft. pot, others had not been down at all. Their enjoyment was immense, and they paid the cave the greatest compliment of which they are capable, "This", they said, "should be called Ogof Swildons".

BOOK REVIEWS

EASIER CLIMBS IN THE AVON GORGE BRISTOL Up to and including VS standard.

By G. Mason, April, 1964. 49 pp., duplicated 6" x 4½"

(Obtainable from: G. Mason, 6 Radnor Road, Henleaze, Bristol, at 3/- p.f.)

This little book is meant to fulfil the need for a guide to the easier routes in the Avon Gorge, as the "Climbing Guide to the Avon Gorge" by J. Nixon, 1959, has been long out of print. As it is rumoured that a new up-to-date guide is planned this book is only a temporary measure and therefore does not contain chapters on the History and Geology of the Gorge. Also climbs graded above VS are likewise omitted. A few new routes have been added and some of the older routes have been revised making this book a useful climber's compendium to the Avon Gorge.

A.D.O.

HORST ANDREAE, NEUE HYDROMETRISCHE VERFAHREN

187 pp. 59 illus., biblio., & index. (Pub. VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1963. 34 DM.)

This is the third edition of two books previously published under the titles of "Grundwassermessungen" (Berlin 1959), and "Hydro-metrische Verfahren" (Berlin 1961). It is a most authoritative and comprehensive handbook by the Director of the Hydrological Institute of the Humbolt University of Berlin.

Prof. Andreae introduces his book on Hydrology with a section on the importance of water to industry and to a country's economy. He continues with descriptions and illustrations of the latest electronic instruments used in the field to measure and record temperatures, moisture content, water level, etc. Other tools, such as the auger for the collection of soil samples, are also described.

The book is concluded by short papers by Prof. Andreae and his colleagues on field-work using these instruments.

Much work has been done on hydrological investigations in German Caves, and the author includes a chapter on his own researches in Hermann's Cave (Rubeland) which involved recording the subterranean temperatures of water, rock and air by remote control.

An indispensable book to the Hydrologist.

A.D.O.

DEEP DOWN Great achievements in Cave Exploration by Garry Hogg. (Criterion Books, New York. 3.50 dollars).

This book was first published in England and reviewed in the Wessex Cave Club Journal Vol. 6 No. 81, September 1961, pp. 299-300. It has now been reprinted in the United States of America and translated into American with the nauseating result that everyone from Cowboy Jim White to Dr. Hubert Trimmel are called "Spelunkers".

A.D.O.

DIE HÖHLE Vol. 15, Pt. 1. March, 1964. (From the Verband Österreichischer Höhlenforscher, Wien, II, Obere Donaustrasse, 99/7/1/3 at 25 A.S. per year).

This issue of "Die Höhle", the quarterly magazine of the Austrian Caving Association, is mainly taken up with a new type of compass for cave surveying, the Xavermeter. It is based on optical principles and is graduated into quadrants, each containing one hundred divisions, which are called newgrads (g). These are instead of conventional degrees. An accuracy of 0.2 g is claimed.

The Plantworld of the Alderloch (Schafberg) describes the plant life in a small cave at an altitude of 5,500 ft. above sea level. The plants are enumerated, together with light intensities and the distances at which they were found from the entrance.

The "Latest Explorations in Frauenmauer-Langstein Cave System (Steiermark)" and "The Results of Exploration into the Further Reaches of Hölloch (Switzerland)" are related. In Hölloch, on a 200 hour underground marathon, 1¼ miles of new passages were discovered, bringing the total length of passage to 48¾ miles.

The "Activities Report for 1963" of the V Ö H and Affiliated Clubs sounds very impressive, the members of one Club having made 540 caving trips to 409 different caves in 1963!

A.D.O.

THE AJANTA CAVES by Benjamin Rowland UNESCO Art Book.
24 pp., 28 coloured plates. (Pub. Collins: Fontana, at 6/-)

The cave paintings at Ajanta in North West India are among the great art treasures of the East. Painted between the 2nd and 7th centuries A.D., during the classic period of Buddhist art in India, the paintings illustrate many legends of the Buddha's re-incarnations. The artistic principles from Kama Sutra are outlined, with special reference to these paintings. The favourable price and the many coloured plates make this book an attractive proposition.

A.D.O.

CAVE SCIENCE Vol.5 No. 35, April 1964 53 pp., 2 pl., 3 surveys.
(Obtainable from: The British Speleological Association, Duke Street, Settle, Yorks. at 10/- post free).

The first article, entitled "The Cavern of San Canziano" by Eugenio Boegan (trans. A. Harrison) describes a three mile long Yugoslavian Show Cave. The cave contains both large chambers and a profusion of archaeological deposits. Unfortunately no reference is given to the original report from which this account is taken.

J.H.D. Hooper continues with his description of "The Pridhamsleigh Cavern, Devon". His concise account of this most complex cave system makes both easy and enlightening reading.

W.G.R. Maxwell records the exploration, history and latest developments in Ogof Daren Cilau, Llangattock (South Wales). This cave is really a collector's piece, with tight entrance passages full of muddy water to deter all but the thin and hardy cavers, although further on it opens out into a passage of "Agen Allwedd" dimensions. A survey is included showing that the cave is now over 3,000 ft. long.

The longest article (20 pp) is devoted to "Roger Kirk's Cave", by M.H. Long. This is a 2,200 ft. long swallet cave at Ribbleshead, Yorkshire. A detailed account of this cave is given together with a large folded survey.

This edition is concluded with a paper by a Wessex Member, T.R. Shaw, on "An Annotated Bibliography of the Lebanon Caves". This is a comprehensive list of references dating back to 430 B.C.!

A.D.O.

THE CAVES OF DERBYSHIRE Compiled by Trevor D. Ford with the assistance of D. Allsop and R.J.A. Travis. 105 pp and 9 maps. (Published 1964 by Dalesman Publishing Co. Available from The Speleo Bookshop, 1 Beaufort East, London Road, Bath at 8/3d. post free) (or 7/6d. from your local bookshop - Ed.)

This is the most comprehensive book on Derbyshire Caves. Over 250 caves are recorded, together with their national grid reference, altitude, length, depth and a brief description of the main features. Many of these descriptions contain a brief bibliography, an essential aid to any exploration or research.

Dr. Ford and his compilers, in writing this book on behalf of the Derbyshire Caving Association, have tackled a colossal undertaking with excellent results. Inevitably, as one would expect in any book of this type, errors have crept in. To mention two of these, the entrance chamber of Peak Cavern is at least 90 ft. and not 6 ft. high, and on the map the entrances of both Bagshaw Cavern and Speedwell Mine are drawn on the wrong side of the road. The map of the Castleton Area would benefit by being drawn on a larger scale as many caves are difficult to distinguish.

This book also contains a Caving Code and Cave Rescue hints, together with a list of local Caving Clubs with the names and addresses of their Secretaries. A glossary of both caving and mining terms is also included.

For anyone contemplating a caving holiday in Derbyshire this summer I can recommend this book as a worthwhile investment.

A.D.O.