



CLUB NEWS

Annual General Meeting and Dinner, Saturday 24th October

The A.G.M. will be held at Priddy Village Hall, this year at 3.00 p.m. Nominations for Officers and Committee and motions for discussion at the A.G.M. must reach the Secretary before 3rd October. These will be circulated to all members shortly afterwards with minutes of the previous meeting, reports, balance sheets and ballot papers if an election proves necessary. The Treasurer will be pleased to receive subscriptions for the coming year after the meeting.

The Dinner, as last year, will be at the Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar. 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. The Guest of Honour will be Mr. Kenneth Hudson. Tickets available from Jim Hanwell, "Chaumbey", Wookey Hole Lane, Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset, price 15/- each. Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to "Wessex Cave Club" please. Seating limited to 150 so apply early.

Committee Vacancy

Jim Giles has been appointed to fill the Committee Vacancy caused by the recent departure of Dave Causer. We hope he will seek nomination again next year.

Supplement to Volume 8

An expurgated version of the Hillgrove Log Books 1954-63 is in process of production it takes the form of a duplicated quarto book, with introduction, 95 pages of text, several pages of surveys and a comprehensive index. The price will probably be 5/-. It is hoped to have it ready for sale at the A.G.M. when Volume 1 will also be available (price 7/6).

New Member

The following member is welcomed to the club:-

Elected 30.8.64. A.J. Trickey, "Stanleaze", Brockley Way, Brockley, Backwell, Bristol.

Tackle

Dave Berry, the Tackle Warden, is in the process of constructing 300' of alloy ladder for the club, which when completed will bring our total to something like 700'.

Dave reports that a 20' length of ladder was recently lost following a crowded weekend in Swildons; all members are requested to keep their eyes open for it and contact Dave if they can help in its recovery.

Two lightweight pulley blocks for double lifelining have recently been added to the tackle store held by Dave Berry for loan to members for specific trips. They will not normally be available without making prior application to the Tackle Warden.

## CLUB MEETS

### 3rd/4th October Visit to the Devon Caves.

Details from the Leader: Donald Thomson, "Pinkacre", Leigh-on-Mendip, Nr. Bath.

Also Film Evening on 3rd October 7.30 p.m. in the Clubroom of "The White Hart", Mitcham (opposite Mitcham Cricket Green).

(for map & bus details see last Journal).

### 10th October Sandford Caves.

Leader: Tim Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks. Meet at the Quarry 3.0 p.m.

### 24th October A.G.M. Priddy Village Hall 3.0 p.m.

Annual Dinner Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar, 7.30 for 8.0 p.m.

### 7th November Eastwater.

Leader: Phil Davies, "Morley", Silver St., Nailsea, Bristol. Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

14th November Giant's Hole, Derbyshire. Names to: Nick Hart, 80 Ridgeway Road, Long Ashton, Bristol. Party to number eight only. First come, first served!

### 22nd November G.B. Cavern.

Leader: Roy Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol Meet at the Cave 11.0 a.m.

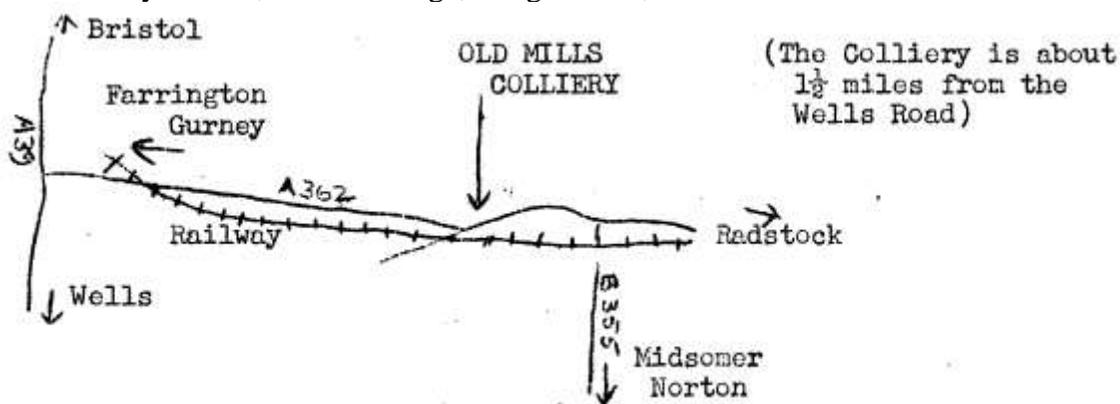
Tuesday 1st December Redcliffe Caves. Meet at the Redcliffe Wharf Depot 7.0 p.m.

Names to: Roy Staynings, address as above.

### Wednesday 9th December Visit to Old Mills Colliery, near Radstock.

Meet at the Colliery 1.0 p.m. Bring overalls and boots - helmets and lamps provided. Limited to 15 persons all of whom must sign Indemnity Forms before going down.

Names to: Rodney Hobbs, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol.



12th December St. Cuthberts. Leader: Nick Hart, 80 Ridgeway Road, Long Ashton, Bristol.

Meet 3.0 p.m. at the Belfry

6th January 1965 12th Night Party. Details to follow.

Easter 1965 Yorkshire. Mere Gill. Details in due course.

Whitsun 1965 South Wales. Details in due course.

Thrupe Swallet. Digging weekends are at present being held fortnightly.  
Details from: Alan Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.

\*\*\*\*\*

### GEORGE WILLIAMS

News has recently been received of the sudden death of George Williams. The President will write an appreciation for the next issue. Meanwhile the Editor would like to say how saddened he is at the news. We shall miss his forthright common sense.

\*\*\*\*\*

Notes- Copy for the next Journal should be with the Editor by October 15th please.

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: C.R. Hobbs, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol. Phone: Long Ashton 2127.

## THE GROWTH OF THE CLUB

### Leslie Teasdale

The 1963 A.G.M. discussed the rapid increase in the size of the Club. The feeling of the Meeting was that the Committee should not take any action to prevent further growth, but should consider the resulting problems and make recommendations to the 1964 A.G.M. During the past year the Committee have been active in this investigation and these notes are intended to be a summary of its findings.

The Committee examined the organisation of the Club together with the facilities offered to members. It found that the most pressing difficulties concerned the Journal, the H.Q. at Hillgrove, and the work falling on the Officers, particularly the Hon. Sec.

#### The Journal

350 copies of the Journal are produced for each edition. This is done by a team of members centred on Bristol and takes about a full week of evenings to complete. It is a big task, and it was estimated that this method would become impractical for more than 400 copies. It is therefore necessary to consider other methods of production. The problem is to maintain the scope and standard of the Journal and yet be reasonably economic. The Committee will not be offering proposals to the 1964 A.G.M., but the Editor will put two for consideration.

#### Headquarters at Hillgrove

The H.Q. at Hillgrove was built originally to sleep nine people on bunks; an annexe added six further bunks and transportable beds bring the total accommodation now to about 20. During this time improvements to the kitchen increased its capacity but it is not really large enough for the use made of it. The problem, of course, is one of "peak demand": everyone wants breakfast at about the same time. Between 1961/62 and 1962/63 there was an increase of 49% in the number of occasions members stayed at Hillgrove, and the number of weekends when more than twelve members were staying went up from 12 to 21.

What is needed are more cooking facilities and the separation of sleeping and living space. Improvements which the Committee would like to see made are the addition of a drying room and a washing room, and a better latrine. The cost of making these improvements to Hillgrove is a doubtful investment and the Committee is convinced that a new H.Q. must be obtained. Two possible sites have been considered and a full statement of the position will be made at the 1964 A.G.M.

#### Club Administration

The administrative system of the Club was examined for ways to reduce the work falling on the Officers. The Hon. Sec. in particular needed some practical relief immediately. Various items of office equipment were considered and it is planned to introduce some of the smaller and more

obvious schemes. The possibility of paid assistance was also discussed but it was not felt to be necessary at present. The recognised tasks of each Officer were examined and it was found that the Hon. Asst. Sec. had no special tasks and was not being used to the full. This provided the means of relieving the Hon. Sec. of some routine matters. To increase the efficiency of the administration of the Club, the function of each Officer was detailed and it is hoped that members will co-operate in the future by contacting the Officer dealing with the matter being raised.

#### Hon. Sec.

Agendas etc.  
Journal Foreword  
Maintenance of records  
Co-ordination of Club activities  
Correspondence  
Extraneous matters of Club policy  
General correspondence

A.G.M. Arrangements  
Duplication and despatch of circulars  
Circulation of changes to addresses  
Sales of ties and badges

#### Hon. Asst. Sec.

Membership applications  
Issue of cave-keys, permits, etc.  
Contact with other Clubs on routine matters

Affiliated Club records  
Survey Scheme

#### Hon. Treasurer.

Receipt of subscriptions  
Book-keeping  
Preparation of accounts

Payments  
Membership cards

#### Tackle Officer

Issue and upkeep of Club tackle

#### Editor

Encouragement, selection, and editing of contents of the Journal.

#### Hut Warden

Arranging for the repair, maintenance, and cleanliness of the Club huts.

#### Librarian

Maintaining the Hillgrove library.

Issuing publications at members' request from the lending library.

Activities Sec.

Programme of Club activities

Arranging trip leaders

Obtaining permission for trips where necessary

Hut Bookings Officer

Booking accommodation for members

Opening H.Q.

Issue of tackle keys

It is hoped that by listing the functions of each Officer much overlapping will be prevented. This would put some slack back in the administration of the Club and allow it to cope with the increased membership.

The increase in membership means that the administration of the Club must be more efficient. The Committee have borne in mind that it wants to retain a "club" atmosphere and not develop an "organisation". However, further growth may well cause another review with more radical changes.

\*\*\*\*\*

This is the time of the year when members look forward to the Annual General Meeting and meeting old friends at the Dinner. Reading the Circulars of 15 years ago - 1949 - one can sense the change that is to come in caving and in the Club too. But first a look to the past. Our then President, Mr. H.E. Balch, pioneer of Mendip caving, was nearing his 80th birthday and the Club had asked Ruth Murrell to paint a picture of the Beehive in Lamb Leer for presentation at the A.G.M. As one of his friends (indeed, all cavers and visitors to Wells Museum were treated as friends by H.E.B.) I know how touched he was by this gift; it hung in a place of honour in his home and is still treasured by his children.

The keenness of members in Club affairs was demonstrated by there being 3 new rules and 10 rules amendments. Of importance was the new rule providing for affiliated clubs - a service to caving youth which is still unique among Mendip Clubs. The objects of the Club (which previously only mentioned sport) were extended to include science. This was recognition of the fact that sport was not incompatible with science, and that the division of the Clubs between scientific and sporting bodies, as existed on Mendip before the war, was not necessary. In fact at much the same time the Mendip Nature Research Committee (previously entirely scientific) was developing a social and sporting side to its activities.

15 years ago was also a time when new techniques and equipment were being developed. In Circular No. 17 (August 1949), Peter Harvey described the Maypole - a device for negotiating vertical and overhanging pitches found necessary while studying the stream passage in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, South Wales. It was an improvement on the slippery steel pole which Casteret climbed on several occasions in the Pyrenees.

Luke Devenish was also busy developing lightweight alloy ladders, and some of the first used on Mendip were made by him. The fact that the lightness was overdone in some cases, and on these ladders the rungs tended to gravitate towards the end of the wires, did not deter him or others.

The Club Dig at Barrow Rake continued in 1949 without success. The whole depression is now filled in (1964) and lost to future excavators, a telling case for William Stanton's plea for the preservation of sites of speleological interest.

The August 1949 Circular reported two accidents in Stoke Lane caused by falling boulders.

## IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

P.M. Giles

The Easter meets of 1962 and 1963 saw the club struggling against a variety of misfortunes while trying to succeed in its ambition to complete the exchange trip of Simpson's Pot and Swinsto Cave. In 1962 three days and two days were spent with Simpson's and Swinsto respectively, laddering and deladdering, and it was mainly due to faulty information about tackle requirements that this trip failed. For some reason we thought Swinsto to be only seven pitches deep instead of eight and as a consequence waited two or three hours at the top of the wrong pitch for a ladder to appear from an almost impossible aven to announce the arrival of the Simpson's party. Meanwhile, the Slit Pot was laddered by the Simpson's party, but no-one descended. The tackle was removed the next day in considerably wetter conditions.

The main factor in our lack of success in 1963 was bad weather. The Simpson's party on arrival at Slit Pot considered it too wet and after an hour's wait for the Swinsto team departed without making contact. Perhaps one redeeming accomplishment was the fact that both pots were laddered and deladdered on the same trip, saving us from that awful business of finding enough blokes keen enough to go down twice.

In retrospect, the choice of Pen-y-Ghent Pot for this year's main target at Easter seems rather an optimistic one in view of our past record. However, as events turned out our efforts in Simpson's and Swinsto were not altogether wasted, and the lessons learned there in tackle organisation, manpower requirements and general enthusiasm paid great dividends with the result that Pen-y-Ghent went quite smoothly. Immediately the question was posed: could we, with a similar approach, get even in Kingsdale? No harm in trying was the general opinion, and the third attempt was born.

The third siege of Simpson's-Swinsto by the Wessex took place on July 25th when, at an unofficial meet, two teams of four set off from the camp at Braida Garth up the steep slope towards the Turbary Road. During the previous week heavy rain had made the ground on top saturated and a large area of east Lancashire a very damp place to live in. A few days of dry weather allowed Kingsdale Beck to empty but a heavy fall in the early hours of the 25th soon changed this with the result that both cave systems were in semi-flood when we came to descend.

The extra water caused a few anxious moments for both parties. In Swinsto the 5th Pitch was so wet as to appear impassable and it was only after some hesitation that the Swinsto party decided to press on. In Simpson's the large amount of water going through the Slit forced us to climb up to the by-pass window. This is a most unpleasant climb; hand-holds becoming harder and harder to find as one climbs up, until the Slit itself is the only means of purchase. However, despite the water, the trip was successful and a complete exchange was made in an average time of 8½ hours.

One member of the party, sheltering behind a beer mug several hours later, reckoned that

although we had exchanged parties from one cave to another, we hadn't done it properly because we missed the Slit and therefore ..... but he was behind a beer mug!

The parties consisted of P. Davies, B. Elkins, P.M. Giles, N. Hart, C. Pickstone, R. Pyke, I. Walker and A. Wicks.

Acknowledgement:

We should like to put on record our thanks to the Shepton Mallet Caving Club for the loan of 300 ft. of ladder and two pulley blocks without which the trip could not have taken place.

[NOTE: The following tackle list was an insert in the original Journal]

SIMPSON'S POT to SWINSTO HOLE

Tackle requirements, notes on belay points and remarks on features of special interest or difficulty.

Abbreviations: Lt=Left; Rt=Right (Referring to directions looking downstream.

T=50ft. lifeline travelling with the party

D=Doubled lifeline through pulley block

(use separate belay for pulley, preferably to different belay point).

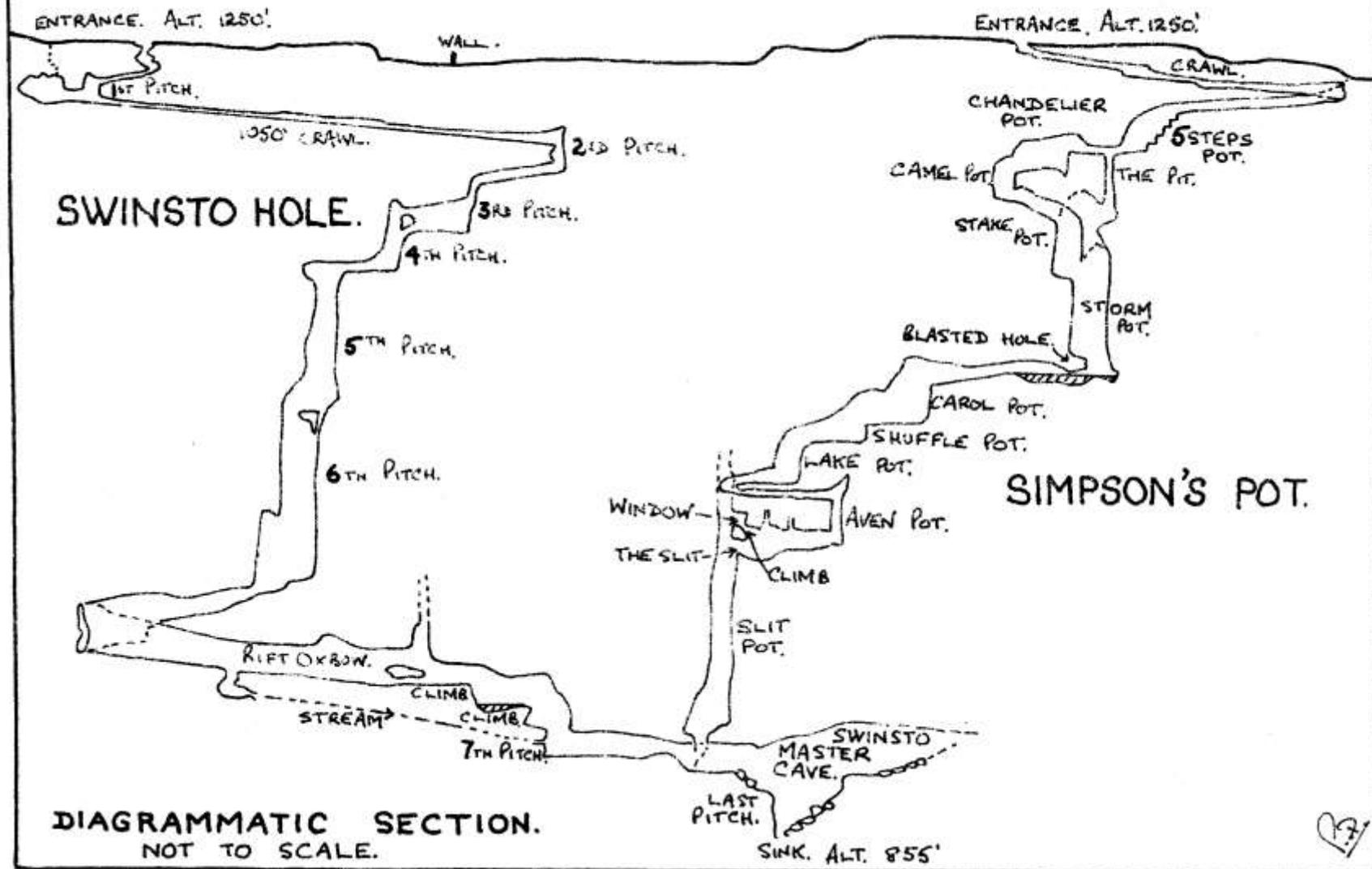
## SIMPSON'S POT

Feature	Depth ft.	Ladder ft.	Belay ft.	Line ft.	Remarks
Five Steps Pot	5-10 each	nil	nil	nil	15' handline on last two pots useful
The Pit	30	-	-	-	Traverse over 30' drop leading to Storm Pot, wooden stemples facilitate
Chandelier Pot	10	nil	nil	nil	15' handline useful
Camel Pot	10	nil	nil	nil	15' handline or ladder useful
Stake Pot	20	20	15	T	Belay to Stake (2'4" long)
Storm Pot	30	30	6	D70	Belay to obvious flake. Damp.
Blasted Hole	-	-	-	-	Short duck, somewhat restricted, 4-6" airspace
Carol Pot	35	35	6	T	
Shuffle Pot	15	20	1	T	Belay to projection, opposite wall.
Lake Pot	20	20	20	T	Belay to projection in roof.
Aven Pot	25	30	10	T	Belay to chock-stones above. Wet.
Slit Pot (a)	80	80	50	100	Difficult start through tight slit. Wet, particularly at top
(b)	110	110	20	120	Easier, though longer, free-hanging climb from window above slit. Climb to window is difficult for leader, 20' ladder 12' belay will assist rest of party to reach window. Wet for last 30'.
Advisable to leave man at top of slit. Both routes (a) and (b) lead to chamber at head of last pitch of Swinsto Hole.					

## SWINSTO HOLE

Feature	Depth ft.	Ladder ft.	Belay ft.	Line ft.	Remarks
1st Pitch	20	20	4	T	Belay to flake on Rt. wall. Damp.
2nd Pitch	20	20	15	T	Dry.
3rd Pitch	25	25	10	T	Very wet at bottom, made drier by angling ladder with runner to flake 4' down on Lt wall.
4th Pitch	12	20	4	T	Dry descent through eye hole above and to Rt. of stream. Belay to flake in roof.
5th Pitch	50	50	16	D100	Belay to knob on Lt. wall. Very wet, particularly at lip of fall.
6th Pitch	60	60	20	D120	Belay to projections at foot of 5th. Hang ladder over ledge on Rt. Dry.
7th Pitch	35	20	30	T	Belay to flake above first part of pitch which is a moderate climb.
Last Pitch	25	25	20	T	Belay to boulders in chamber at foot of Slit Pot.

# SIMPSON'S POT TO SWINSTO HOLE.



DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION.  
NOT TO SCALE.

SINK. ALT. 855'



## THE CLUB TRIP TO IRELAND

### Leslie Teasdale and others.

The Club Trip to Ireland was made by thirteen members who spent 14 days in Co. Clare. For most it was their first visit to the 'Emerald Isle' and they were all impressed with the easy way of life and the friendliness of the people. The party stayed in a cottage at Ballyconnoe near Lisdoonvarna. This is in an area with great expanses of limestone which were very impressive. Generally the weather was disappointing but several hot days were enjoyed and the wet ones soon forgotten.

The party seemed to be overloaded with near invalids which a couple of minor accidents did not help. Nevertheless everyone got down Pollnagollum. This has a complex entrance system, Gunman's Cave, which leads to two large stream passages meeting lower down. One passage is almost horizontal, meandering, and deeply scalloped. Some way along a stream enters from a height of about 30 ft. and this was luckily seen in flood. The other streamway is more varied with faster running water. The Sewer Passage was first tried for a connection, but an unexpected pitch (and no ladder) ended this attempt. This passage is arduous and wet, and is only recommended for masochists. Bob White left his waistline round a boulder at the top of the main streamway pitch as a belay for an abseil rope. A second trip for its recovery did not materialise so any member finding it in the future, please return.

Other members of the party set out to take some film underground, but this was interrupted by a minor injury.

The party did not stay together for the whole time and some visited Killarney whilst others visited Connemara. Both were found to be very commercialised but this could not destroy the undoubted beauty of the places.

A good deal of walking was done by the party, mainly in the Ballyconnoe/Fanore area but Phil Davies and Nick Hart walked over the Twelve Pins of Connemara and found some mistakes in the Ordnance Survey. During these walks several promising holes were found and three investigated. The first was entered by a 15 ft. pitch, and 150 ft. of passage followed to its termination where an inscription "UBSS 1959" showed that it was not unknown. The second was on the Ballyconnoe/Fanore road at a point where a small stream surfaced at the base of a 30 ft. cliff. After some hard work shifting boulders Bob White entered a low crawl in a stream which opened up to a 3 ft. high stream passage, closing down after some 50 ft. to an impassable fissure.

In between these activities much time was spent on a beach at Fanore where the party made use of the fine days to get browned off in the pleasantest way possible. The proximity of a bar (open from 12.30 to 11.30) added to the attraction.

The last hole investigated is worth a mention. This was a boulder-choked pot close to the cottage. Some three days were spent trying to clear the choke. The boulders were of a very

manageable size and about twenty feet of a roughly six feet diameter pot was cleared. The walls were in solid waterworn rock and the choke was very loose; several times during the digging boulders could be heard moving below. When time beat the diggers the way on could be seen for a further 15 ft. but the looseness of the boulders made it dangerous for anyone to try and get through. The dig was named Pollyconnoe North and it was with some disappointment that it was left when time ran out.

The evenings were spent building up caver/native relations by frequent visits to local 'bars'. The rite of drawing a Guinness is mystifying and the impossibility of slipping in for a quick drink no doubt explains the placidity of Irish life. It can take up to ten minutes to draw a pint and there is no hurrying the process. Every bar is a store and shopping can be a real pleasure. Fresh vegetables are not easy to get, but with rump steak at 3/9d. a pound only the vegetarians need worry. Indeed, in the land of the potato the party was reduced to eating the powdered form!

Costs were kept well within the estimated £25.0.0. It may help for future trips to give a rough breakdown of costs per head:-

	£.	s.	d.
Hire of vehicle and return ferry fare	13.	14.	0.
Petrol (in Ireland)		14.	0.
Food	4.	12.	0.
Cottage fees		19.	6.
Sundries		3.	0.
Total:-	£20.	2.	6.

As a matter of interest the Utilibrake averaged 23½ miles per gallon even on the Irish roads.

This was not a caving holiday as it might have been, but as "Atty" said, "You can't be energetic in Ireland!"

## BRITISH SPELEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 5-7th September 1964

### A.D. Oldham

The Conference was officially opened on the Saturday morning by Dr. J.A. Farrer, a local landowner, on whose property Gaping Gill and many other caves are situated. This was followed by the showing of the competition Colour Transparencies. The many papers that followed, on a diversity of subjects, were both interesting and entertaining. These papers have been fully written up in the Proceedings of the B.S.A. No.2 and as this publication will be reviewed in the Book Review Section they have not been enumerated in this report.

Apart from the papers there were also two very interesting talks, the first on the Gouffre Berger Expedition led by Ken Pearce, by M. Hollingworth, and the second on the B.S.A. 1964 Expedition to Edelweiss-schachtenhöhle, in the Tennen Mountains of Austria, which contains a 300 ft. ladder pitch!

The Conference also included an exhibition which was open to members of the public (gratis). The largest display was by the Craven Pothole Club consisting of caving equipment, ladders etc., surveys and photographs. The B.S.A. came a close second with ladders (including some bamboo ones!) surveys and photographs. The Chelsea Speleological Society's display showed a plan of their excavation of a 100 ft. deep well shaft, together with pottery and animal bones found in it. Peak District Mines Historical Society displayed photographs and miners' safety lamps. The Australian Speleological Federation showed publications, surveys and photographs of caves "down under". The Grampian Speleological Group displayed surveys, photographs and minerals. This group concentrates mainly on caves and mines in Scotland, but they also visit caves in other parts of the country. The combined Dalesman Publishing Company and Speleo Bookshop stand contained an impressive array of publications for sale on both caving and local topics.

Various excursions were arranged for the Monday. These included a lecture demonstration at Victoria Cave, Settle, or visits to either Clapham Cave, Ireby Fell Cavern or Sir Francis Mine, Swaledale. The author chose the latter excursion.

Sir Francis Mine is a horizontal level on the west side of Gunnerside Gill, Swaledale. The original entrance is choked a few feet in and the present day entrance is via a 20 ft. ladder pitch down a ventilation shaft. Because of the blockage there are two to three feet of water in the level, persisting for most of the way, although it does get a little more shallow towards the end. The level was driven in at about the middle of the last century in order to drain a large area of workings. It also intersects four east-west mineral veins. Proceeding up the level, the first vein, Dougill String, is reached; several hundred yards

further on is a wooden horse trough supported on stacked deads and fed by drips from the roof. Nearby are many iron ore stalactites (brilliant red). The mile long level ends at the Engine Sump, a 130 ft. deep shaft filled to within a foot of the top with crystal clear blue water. One cage is visible at the shaft head, the other is presumably at the bottom.

Nearby is the Engine Room which still contains an old hydraulic engine and many tools, anvils, blacksmiths' vice, etc. We spent an interesting hour looking over these engineering marvels of yesteryear before beginning our watery struggles to the surface again.

To sum up, the Conference was both interesting and enlightening, and proved an excellent opportunity for renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. The High School, Settle, is an excellent centre for a conference and we were very well catered for. The only criticism is that it was a pity more cavers did not attend and participate.

## MENDIP NOTES

### Cheramodytes

#### Ian Dear

Your scribe would like to add his little tribute. Ian was not the sort that pleased everybody but he had a very kind and generous side to him. I saw him at his best one day down Eastwater, when I was with a party from another club. He had on his party a fat clergyman called "Hippo", and going back up the Dolphin ladder pitch Hippo was making very heavy weather. Ian was combining just the right degree of helpful encouragement with firmness. If I had been feeling as bad as Hippo did, then Ian was just the kind of person I would like to have had around. I think this is the only occasion upon which a clergyman has stood on my shoulders. "The spirit," he said, "was willing, but the flesh was weak". It was also ponderous.

But Ian could be very angry if he chose. When I first saw him wearing a beard, I said in my careless manner, "What do you mean by covering half your face with that awful fungus?" He was furious. I last saw him at Penwyllt at Whitsun last year. We spent an evening sharing personal troubles. I thought he was coming to terms with his, but I was wrong.

#### Irish Holidays

County Clare is proving a great tourist attraction this year. The South Wales club was there at Easter, the Wessex in June, the U.B.S.S. in July and another party from Mendip at the end of August.

Our party in June didn't have it all its own way. For one thing the weather was too fine, the beach too attractive. Then Vic cut his hand in Pollnagollum and had to have 3 or 4 stitches put in. Tony Dingle cracked his wrist, so he had to go and be X-rayed. When we were getting Vic out, Les Teasdale's cartilage gave way again; moreover Ron Harding's ankle wasn't working too well and he had to be helped out of Pollnagollum too. However, a good time was had by all - on the surface. Little Atty's comment was, "I enjoyed my trip to Ireland with the Club, but would have liked to have done a little more caving than we did".

The U.B.S.S. finds that the Irish caves are getting longer. They have still not found out what happens at the bottom of Cullaun V. Poll Cahircloggaun West One, which used to be nothing but a dirty word, now has its fans. Steady work has pushed the end to well past the pump on the other side of the Ballyvaghan - Lisdoonvarna road; and still it goes. The Fans reckon that a working trip is not worth contemplating, if it is to last under 12 hours. Cullaun III was surveyed in 1959, but the end was never reached. This year Chris Ineson pushed the end well past the two mile mark and only turned back through time trouble.

The thing which makes this possible is the use of wet suits. In 1959 we were using goon suits, but a caver's endurance is considerably increased by using a wet suit. I find the same thing now in any cave. One's pleasure is increased and one can do things that couldn't be contemplated two years ago. The only trouble is protecting the suit with an intact boiler suit. I ran through 14 last year and cannot usually make one last for more than two trips. If it gets any worse we shall have to take down a spare boiler suit, so as to be able to get out of the cave.

#### Cave Rescue Equipment in Co. Clare.

Visiting parties might like to note that the Mendip Rescue Organization has established a depot of rescue and first aid kit under the care of Mr. D. O'Callaghan, of Ballynalacken Castle, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare. It consists of a St. John's carrying sheet, with the ropes necessary for doing it up, all in one pack, a 50 ft. and a 100 ft. hauling rope, splints, bandages, knife, scissors, dexedrine etc. In other words the same as the stuff we use here, only they will have to provide their own ladders and life-lines - and man-power. The equipment is primarily for use by parties caving in Co. Clare, and can only be obtained in a case where the Garda has been called out.

#### Access to Caves.

It is all very well for us. We have no serious difficulty in getting down any of the Mendip caves, but it is different for the club coming from another region. I glean this from the Newsletter of the S.W. Essex Technical College Caving Club. "It is appreciated that many local associations are formed in order to carefully negotiate the continued 'freedom of access' to caves that are 'closed' or in danger of being closed. However, as a non-regional club instead of the situation becoming easier we are finding the question of access to caves becoming increasingly more difficult, because of agreements made by local organizations which are only really beneficial to their own members." On another page occurs this pathetic little jingle:

"I thought I saw a cave entrance  
As plain as plain could be;  
I looked again and saw it was  
A gate without a key."

It is just a little bit too easy to blame the Bristol Waterworks Co, and to say nothing can be done. True, it is much more difficult now, than it was a few years ago, for cavers to get access to caves in the Charterhouse area. For the small club, that cannot afford insurance, there is no alternative but to become the guest of a club that can. For the married minor there is no access, because of legal difficulties. This leads me to make two suggestions. One is that the information should be made readily available to all clubs, which tells them simply what they have to do in order to obtain access; it is not impossible, and Charterhouse is not

the only area. This is one of the things the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (if we ever get one) might very well do, as long as it doesn't try its hand at controlling access. The other is that clubs who have the insurance, and who can issue permits in exchange for indemnity chits and take guests with them, should consider it a duty, and not just an act of grace, to provide guides for these guests. I hope Jack doesn't feel all right.

### The Sheep Ton.

When I heard the Shepton Hut being called the "Sheep Ton", I asked the hut warden whether the word has the same meaning in Somerset as in Sussex. "What is that?" asked he. "A pit where you dip sheep to get rid of ticks, fleas, etc." "Exactly", said he. "That's why we call it the Sheep Ton."

### More Ironmongery in Swildon's.

I'm afraid some of the Sheep got very cross with Willie Stanton, for putting in a couple of iron hoops to the alcove on the 20 ft. pot in Swildon's and a chain along the traverse to the head of the pitch. It made a ladder unnecessary but spoilt a very sporting little free climb. The Sheep were indignant. "That man Willie Stanton gets on my tits," said one. Another removed the ladder up the Greasy Chimney "as a warning." it has now been repainted and is propping up one of the walls of the Sheep Ton. "Of course," said Willie, "they needed it to get up into that bedroom of theirs." However, the time came when Roger Biddle decided on action. At midnight on the 23rd August he went down with a hacksaw and removed the iron hoops and the chain over the traverse, made them into a parcel and sent them with a letter of explanation to Willie Stanton, who "took it very well", so Roger tells me. An Axbridge party which was down there at the time was quite mystified by the goings on. I think some of the Sheep felt that Roger was going a bit too far; but clearly now that it has been done it must be accepted. Anyway, we have a new verse to the Swildon's song:

Willie Stanton had an itch, down below,  
To improve the 20 pitch, down below,  
But his efforts were in vain  
With his iron hoops and chain;  
Roger sent them back again, down below.

I hope nobody removes Willie's other piece of iron. It is a spike at the head of the Maypole Pitch out of Keith's Chamber. He, the Sidcot Boys, and anyone else Willie can press gang into it, are getting on with that dig of theirs under the 40 ft. rift.

Your Scribe has at last managed to climb that rift and get into Swynne - Puke Passage. The dig beyond the Terminus Chamber has recently been abandoned as too tight to work in. There is a nice little mud dig just short of the 35 ft. pitch, and distinct possibilities in a stalagmited passage just off the top of the 40ft. rift. But generally the series seems to end in

a lot of little holes, which is disappointing, since the current markings show that at one time there was a lot of water coming down that passage; but that was before the mud got laid down.

The dig at the foot of the overhang in Shatter Passage is proceeding much as usual. Bat Hole dig is looking very promising. There is a layer of 19 inches of mud under the stalagmite choke at the end. The probability is that when this has been dug we shall be able to push up into an extension of the passage beyond, as in the G.B. Ladder Dig. The only trouble is bad air. Hard work uses up all the available air in about an hour. After that we all get headaches.

### Rats

It is reported that as from the 15th July 1964 there is still no sign of rats returning to Stoke St. Michael. On the other hand rats are reported at the piggery behind the Belfry and the local health authority is being informed.

### Caving Abroad.

This really has been a good season. There were no less than three parties down Gouffre Berger in August. One from the Pegasus Caving Club found a high level passage, which was of great interest, but got them back into the roof of a known part of the cave. Then there was Kenneth Pearce's party, bent on beating the world's depth record again, who were prevented from getting to the bottom by flood waters. Pearce is alleged to have said that his "men can always swim through flooded passages in emergencies." I've no doubt this will be remembered against him, but its authenticity is doubtful. It appears that his party had sold their exclusive press rights to the Daily Express, and that all the other newspapers got such gleanings as they could from Reuter's little man. This man proved rather a nuisance to them, but being threatened by Pearce with physical violence, he made off. Anyone who has seen Pearce will know why.

Then there was David Allsop's party which was making a film on 35 mm. for B.B.C. television. On this party were two of our club members, Nick Hart and Bob Gannicott. The Bristol Evening Post sent them off with a very flattering photograph. I'm now going to organize a competition for the most handsome caver. After all, there is What's his name, and Thingumbob, and likewise - You know who.

The filming party did most of their work between the entrance and Camp 1, but went as far as Camp 2. The cave is dry that far, dull as far as Camp 1, wonderful through the Hall of the Thirteen. After Camp 2 come the difficult bits. I asked Nick if he was thinking of going again next year. He spurned the idea. The place is filthy. Camp 1 is uninhabitable, from the smell of diarrhoea, stale urine and rotting food. They had to camp some way to windward.

The South Wales C.C. sent a party to Yugoslavia to try to get down Balinka (1600 ft.) by

means of a home made winch. The winch worked very well, but the shaft wasn't straight. The cage had to be diverted from projections by means of scaffolding poles and booms. Two were dealt with in this way but the third was too difficult.

### Eavesdropping's

Overheard on a cave rescue practice with the Border Caving Group: E.C. "Andy! It's taken me four years to grow this beard, so kindly keep your carbide lamp away."

\*\*\*\*\*

The Editor apologises for the omission of this feature in the last issue, but owing to a misunderstanding Cheramodytes was not asked until rather late in the day and there was not time to contact all the Rumourmongers to get a full picture. However, he has excelled himself this time to make up for it.

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOOK REVIEWS

#### DIE HÖHLE Vol. 15, nos 1-2, 1964.

(Vienna)

8vo., 56p., map, illus.

(Obtainable from Verband Österreichischer Höhlenforscher, Wien II,

Obere Donaustrasse 99/7/1/3. Austria at A.S. 25.00 per annum (4 issues)).

It is now over 14 years since this internationally known periodical first appeared. It has built up a reputation for articles of a very high standard and punctual publication has made it valuable for book reviews and items of recent news. French summaries of the principal articles are helpful. Subjects of more than local interest covered in the two latest issues include a new list of the world's deep caves, contamination of water supplies, a new optical surveying instrument and the 1963/4 expedition to the Holloch (of which the surveyed length is now 48 miles). The 13 book reviews include 3 of British works, one of them reviewed by a Wessex member.

T.R.S.

CLIMBERS' CLUB GUIDE: SOUTH EAST ENGLAND By E.C. Pyatt

112 pp. 12 figs. biblio. (First published 1956, revised edn. 1963, by the Climbers' Club 12/6d.)

The convenient size (4½" x 6") flexible plastic cover, rounded corners and good quality paper make this an outstanding example of what a guide book should be like. The publishers (and editors) of caving guide books could well afford to learn from this method of presentation. The climbs are well written up, graded and located by grid references, but of particular interest are the references to "caves". Pages 18, 19 and 102 list over 26 "caves" which occur in the chalk and sandstone of the South East. Many of the "caves" are artificial, including Chislehurst Caves, some dene holes and an old Wealden iron mine.

A.D.O.

EXPLORING AMERICA UNDERGROUND By Charles E. Mohr

"(National Geographic Magazine Vol. 125, No. 6, June 1964, pp 803-37)

A superb series of cave colour photographs, possibly the finest ever published. Every aspect of this field is covered, from cave diving to a full page photograph of a caver on a 140 ft. ladder pitch, all in the most spectacular colouring. However, such a fine series of photographs is rather let down by a mediocre text. The height of vandalism has apparently occurred in an American Show Cave, where a row of Stalactites has been converted into an "organ" which is operated by little hammers. But worse to follow, these stalactites were first tuned by filing the tips. This issue can be purchased now for about twelve and sixpence, or in two years' time for half a crown in any second hand bookshop.

A.D.O.

SPELEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS Vol. 1 No. 1 (1962)

(published July 1964 by the British Speleological Association, Settle, Yorks.)

54 pp 4to. 4/- post free.

The object of the Speleological Abstracts is to keep speleologists informed of current British Caving Literature. In general the B.S.A. Abstracts Service fulfils this criterion apart from a few omissions, the main ones being the lack of cross references and subject headings. The 349 Abstracts are listed under the various areas in which the literature is published (e.g. Cornwall, Devon, Mendip, London, Wales, Peak District, North Yorkshire, Ireland, etc.). This means that for all references on one particular cave, e.g. Lamb Leer, Mendip, it is not only necessary to check through all the Mendip Abstracts, but through all the rest of the list, as a note on Lamb Leer appears in a London publication! This could be avoided if the cave references were listed under their respective areas in alphabetical order. It would also alleviate such discrepancies as reprints of the same article appearing under different headings (e.g. No. 10 and No. 248 both relate to a party lost in Kents Cavern 200 years ago). Despite these slight anomalies it is a very useful "Key" to British Speleological Literature and should therefore find a place in every Club Library.

A.D.O.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO CAVING AND POTHOLING FOR NOVICES

By T.C. Bryant & C.H. Kenney (Bristol, Spelaeo Service Ltd., 1964) 4to., (iii) 18 (ii)p., index. (Obtainable from Spelaeo Service Ltd, 15 Filton Ave, Bristol 7. 3/6 p.f.)

The authors write, "It has been produced at the lowest possible price because ... the novice, who is most in need of guidance, is often unable to afford the high price of a printed book." This explains the whole purpose of the booklet, which covers clothing and equipment, sound practice and technique, with salutary references to cave accidents.

The text is excellent. It is clear, comprehensive and above all sensible; and it does not give the impression of fussing, as many beginners' books do. The vexed problem of lifelines is dealt with well and very wisely the young reader is told, "It is not unusual for an experienced caver to climb a ladder without any protection, but ... this is dangerous and should not be practised"; how many beginners in the past must have come to distrust their manuals on suddenly realising that it was all different in real life?

It is unfortunate that the price could not be lower; it may still form just the barrier that the authors have tried to avoid. If clubs and individuals can afford to be philanthropic enough to accept the risk of loss, copies of the booklet bound in hard cardboard could be lent to new and prospective members and to the almost-weegies found in Goatchurch.

The authors have wisely made their deliberate mistake one of spelling and not of fact.

T.R.S.

## THE MENDIP CAVER (No. 1, May 1964, continuing)

(Obtainable from A.D. Oldham, 43 Ashley Hill, St .Andrews, Bristol 6, at 2s.6d. p.f. for six issues)

The Mendip Caver is a news sheet for Mendip and the Bristol limestone areas. By design, therefore, it consists largely of interim reports on digs, new discoveries, regulations for access, etc. The editor intends to include also reviews of cave publications. All reports are short and no issue has so far exceeded two sides of foolscap. A news sheet must appear frequently to fulfil its function and the Mendip Caver is issued monthly. It is not associated with any particular club, but it is too early yet to say whether it will successfully cover the activities of all groups.

Although yet another periodical must initially be viewed with suspicion, the Mendip Caver can serve a useful purpose provided it keeps close to the original conception of a concise and frequent news vehicle.

T.R.S.