

WESSEX CAVE CLUB

Journal No, 105, Vol. 9.

March 1966

CLUB NEWS

New Headquarters Project

By way of a progress report members will be interested to hear that the Development Sub-Committee have drawn up provisional plans and specifications for the new H.Q. It is hoped to have these finally prepared in detail for submission to the Town & Country Authorities and the Department of Education & Science in the very near future.

Whilst it is hoped that part of the costs of building will be grant aided, we ourselves must shoulder a great deal of the ultimate financial commitment. Without wishing to anticipate future developments and appeals, it will be necessary of course for the Club to organise certain fund raising activities: the 21st Night Party Raffle was a worthwhile case in point, and the profit on the sales of Club stocks will eventually prove invaluable. We do ask you to support such activities and to keep a watchful eye on the programme of Club Meets in future Journals.

Subscriptions for the Current Year

Members are reminded that subscriptions should be forwarded without delay to the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Barbara Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.

Full Members £1.0.0.

Joint Members £1.2.6.

Affiliated members 5s.0d.

In accordance with Club Rule No. 8, any member who fails to pay his subscription following this notice will be named in the next issue of the Journal.

Journal Production

David Savage has taken over organising the printing and distribution of Journals from Bristol. In the main, Journal production depends upon having the right number of willing helpers at the right time, and so members living in the area who feel able to offer their assistance from time to time are asked to get in touch with Dave at:-

17 Bellevue Crescent,
Clifton,
Bristol 8.

Insurance

Members of Affiliated Clubs should note that the Wessex Cave Club Public Liability Insurance arrangements do not cover them when they are caving in their own independent club groups. Full benefits from the Wessex Policy are applicable to Affiliated Clubs in respect of their participation as guests in the activities of the Wessex, viz. trips organised and/or approved by the Wessex, also official Club digs. Details of the Regulations applying to Affiliated Clubs are published elsewhere in this Journal.

CLUB MEETS

Saturday March 12th Aggy Aggy More details from Phil Davies, "Morley", Silver Street, Nailsea, Bristol.

Saturday March 19th Hunters Hole Meet at the Cave, 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Rodney Hobbis, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol.

Easter Weekend April 8th/11th Yorkshire Further details from Carl Pickstone, Rush Common House, Abingdon, Berks.

Saturday April 23rd Pine Tree Pot Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

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

Sunday April 24th Longwood Meet at the Cave, 11.0 a.m.

Leader: Roy Staynings, address above.

Weekend April 30th/May 1st South Wales More details from Phil Davies.

Saturday May 7th G.B. Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m. Leader: Roy Staynings.

Saturday May 21st Stoke Lane Meet at the Cave 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Leslie Teasdale, 32 Tonfield Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Weekend June 11th/12th South Wales, O.F.D. & Dan-yr-Ogof and perhaps Pant Mawr.

Leader: Rodney Hobbis, address above.

Saturday June 11th Stone Mines Meet Bath Bus Station 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Will Edwards, 91 Rookery Rd., Knowle, Bristol 4.

Saturday June 18th St. Cuthberts Meet at the Belfry 3.0 p.m.

Leader: Nick Hart, 80 Ridgeway Road, Long Ashton, Bristol.

Saturday July 2nd Stone Mines Another chance for anyone who missed the first trip - details as above.

Weekend April 23rd & 24th. Prospective Club Dig at Fairman's Folley, Nr. Castle of Comfort.

Further details from Alan Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.

Hon. Secretary: J.D. Hanwell, "Chaumbey", 50 Wells Road, Wookey Hole, Wells, Somerset.

(General Club Policy)

Hon. Asst. Secretary: L.M. Teasdale, 32 Tonfield Road, Sutton, Surrey.

(Membership applications, cave keys, C.C.C. Permits)

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. B. Surrall, 216 Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcs.

(Subscriptions, Accounts)

Editor: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.

(Journal Material)

Librarian: Dr. D.M.M. Thomson, "Pinkacre", Leigh-on-Mendip, Nr. Bath, Som.

(Lending Library & Hillgrove Reference Library)

Hut Bookings: P.W. Duck, 13 Goodymoor Avenue, Wells, Somerset. Tel: Wells 2501

(Hillgrove & Eastwater Bookings, Mendip tackle bookings)

Activities Secretary: C.R. Hobbs, Warren Lodge, Long Ashton, Bristol. Tel: Long Ashton 2127

(Offers to lead trips, requests for trips)

Sales Officer: R.J. Staynings, 8 Fanshawe Road, Hengrove, Bristol 4.

(Club Publications, badges, ties, lamp sets)

Survey Scheme: T.E. Reynolds, Yew Court, Pangbourne, Berks.

(Enquiries and sales of cave surveys)

Prizes Unclaimed.

Prizes for the Raffle held at the 21st Night Party at Cheddar in January have not been claimed.

1st prize. 1 Nife Set. Ticket Green. No.47.

4th prize. Chocolates. Ticket Pink. No.53.

If anyone is in possession of either of these will they please write to Phil Davies, "Morley", Silver St. Nailsea, enclosing the ticket.

SURVEY SCHEME

The following surveys are available at the prices listed:-

Mendip Caves

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Balch Cave - plan | 3s. 9d. |
| Balch Cave - cross sections | 3s. 9d. |
| Brownes Hole | 2s. 0d. |
| Caves of Cheddar Gorge | 4s. 3d. |
| Coopers Hole | 3s. 3d. |
| Eastwater Swallet | 8s. 3d. |
| G.B. Cavern | 3s. 6d. |
| Goatchurch Cavern | 2s. 6d. |
| Holwell Cave | 2s. 6d. |
| Lamb Leer Cavern | 3s. 9d. |
| Longwood/August - sheet 1 | 5s. 6d. |
| Longwood/August - sheet 2 | 3s. 3d. |
| Longwood/August - sheet 3 | 3s. 6d. |
| Pine Tree Pot | 2s. 6d. |
| Quaking House Cave | 2s. 6d. |
| St. Cuthbert's Swallet - plan | 3s. 3d. |
| St. Cuthbert's Swallet - section | 2s. 6d. |
| St. Cuthbert's Swallet - addendum | 1s. 0d. |
| Stoke Lane Slocker | 4s. 3d. |
| Swildons Hole | 4s. 3d. |
| Ubley Hill Pot | 2s. 3d. |

Northern Caves

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Pate Hole, Nr. Appleby, Westmorland. | 2s. 3d. |
| Threaplands Cave, Cracoe, Yorks. | 3s. 6d. |
| Washfold Pot, Selside, Yorks. | 3s. 6d. |
| Yordas Cave, Kingsdale, Yorks. | 2s. 6d. |

Notes: Longwood/August Survey

Sheet 1: Plan of the complete known system with a projected elevation- Scale 1cm to 10 ft. Also shows relationship of cave to 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 1 cm to 10 ft.

Swildons Hole Survey

This is the 4th edition (Published May 1965) of the survey by W.I. Stanton, and shows the streamway as far as Sump 12 and includes Shatter Chamber.

G.B. Cavern Survey

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

In addition, the following publications are also available:-

U.B.S.S. Proc. Vol. 6, No. 1 (1946-48)

price 3s. 6d.

August Hole (with survey); fauna list of Mendip Caves: earth resistance measurements; Burrington Combe survey; indicator of water flow; geology of Rod's Pot.

U.B.S.S. Proc. Vol. 6, No. 2 (1949-50)

price 3s. 6d.

In addition to the G.B. survey (see survey price list), this publication contains: bat ringing scheme; earth electrical measurements; Rhino Rift.

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

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

The surveys are sent folded in an envelope. Persons preferring to receive them rolled should send a tube plus an extra 1/- to cover additional postage, with their order.

Surveys and publications are obtainable from:-

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

Cash with orders please. Cheques and P.O's payable to "T.E. Reynolds".

CLUB TRIP TO THE PYRENEES 1965

Tim Atkinson
Bob Gannicott

The Wessex Cave Club Trip to the Pyrenees took place over the period from the 20th August to the 3rd September 1965. Our activities fell into two distinct periods of one week each. On the 20th August, Tim Phillips and Tim Atkinson left for France, arriving in the caving area the following evening. The following day two cars, containing Eric Hensler, Gordon and Elizabeth Peckham, Glenn Tomkinson, Alan Wicks, Carl Pickstone, Tim Reynolds and Ian Walker, set out in the early morning and arrived at Foix, Ariège, in the evening of the 22nd. This party had the intention of visiting the Grotte de la Cigalere. At the start of the second week, a second party of members arrived from England. On the 28th August, Phil and Pat Davies, Steve Causer, Nick Hart and Rod Hobbis arrived from England, while George Pointing, Dave Berry and Bob Gannicott, all bronzed by the sun, arrived from Spain. The next day saw the belated arrival of Denis Warburton, Alan and Barbara Surrall, Pam Davis, Alan Ash and Richard West. Our object in the second week was the Gouffre de la Henne Morte.

Before leaving this country we had been in correspondence with a French caver, Joseph Delteil, of Foix, who was of the greatest help to us, and to whom we are very grateful. He had arranged a camp site for us at the village of Lacourt, 6½ km from St. Girons. We established a base camp here, and by Monday 23rd August were fully settled in. We spent the day shopping and climbing a few small hills near the camp with a fine view from the top. During the next few days our activities were characterized by our failure to get permission for the Grotte de la Cigalere. This cave is gated, and to obtain the key one requires permission from the Prefecture of Ariège, the National Underground Laboratory at Moulis, and the Director of the Mines de Bocart. Delteil had obtained verbal permission from these three authorities, including permission for us to stay at Benthailou, a mining settlement near the cave. However, the people in charge at both Moulis and the the Mines de Bogart were in Paris during our visit, and had left no word with their subordinates who were unwilling to shoulder responsibility for us. This was in no way the fault of M. Delteil, it was merely bad luck.

On Tuesday, 24th August, we set out for the Cigalere in high hopes. From Lacourt we drove south west into the mountains, and up the narrow winding valley of the Lez. En route we shopped and visited the Mayor at Sentein, and watched a helicopter carrying bags of cement for dam construction quite near the Cigalere. A few miles of driving brought us to the end of the road at Bocart. Here we asked for the keys to Benthailou and

the Cigalere, only to find that the man in charge knew nothing about us. Frantic telephoning to Paris by this man and Tim Atkinson finally secured permission to stay at Benthailou. For the Cigalere, however, we required written permission from Moulis. Tim Atkinson and Tim Phillips drove off to get this, but returned with the news that the Head of Research was away and could not give us permission until Thursday 26th August, when he returned. For the other caves in the area no permission was needed, and we decided to climb up to Benthailou that night and reconnoitre the possibilities of the area.

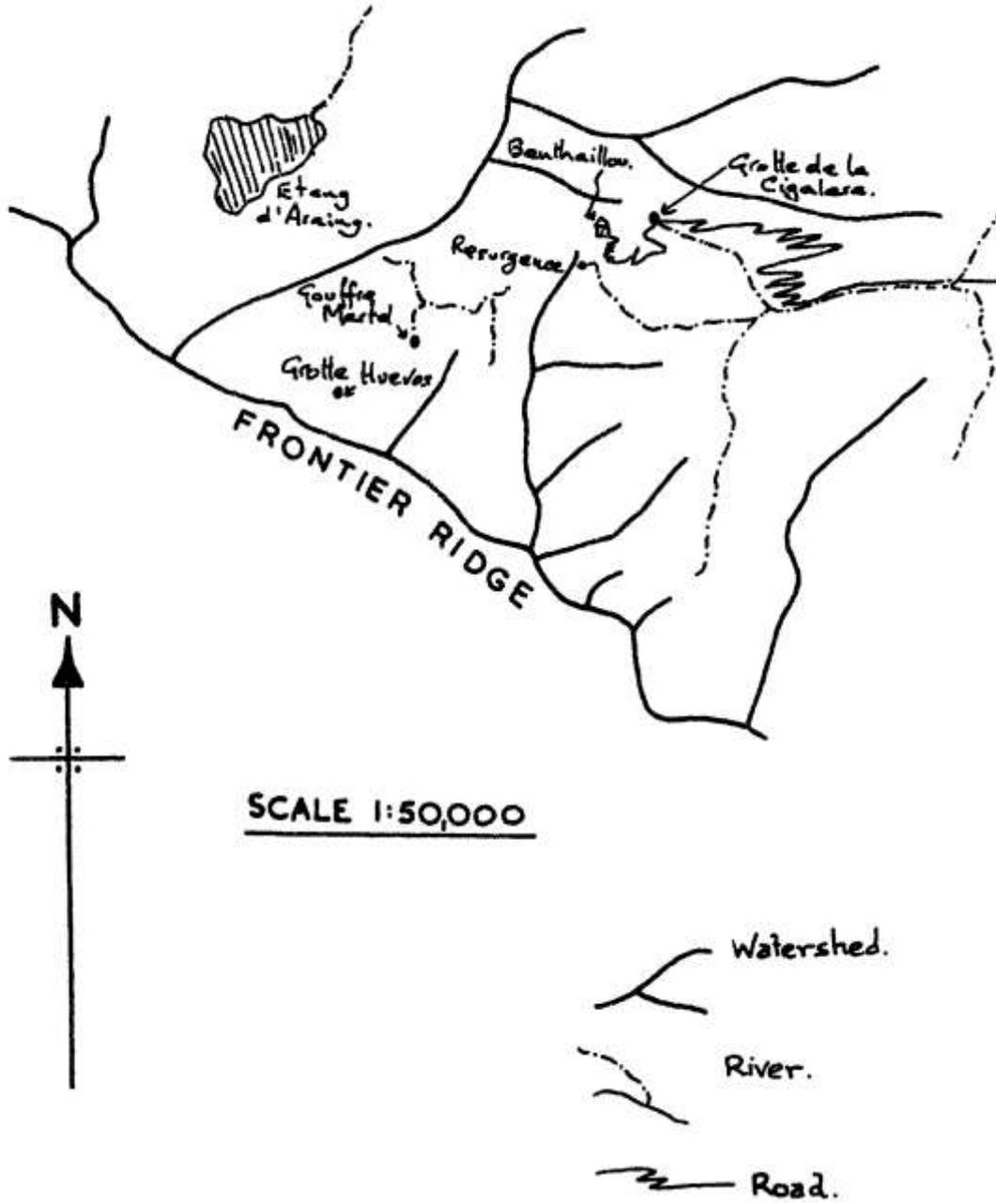
From Bocart, where the metalled road ends, a track leads up to a large cirque, in which several streams unite to form the torrent of the Lez. With a struggle on steep slopes and a frighteningly rickety plank bridge, we drove three vehicles to the base of the cirque. At our stopping place mountains towered up to 8,000 ft. on three sides, forming a huge bowl whose only exit was down the narrow valley by which we had entered. The sides of the bowl are wooded up to an altitude of 4,500ft, but above this the slopes are of rock and short, wiry grass. The entrance to the resurgence cave of the Grotte de la Cigalere is at 5,500 ft. in the walls of the bowl, while one of its feeders, the Gouffre Martel, is entered 1,000 ft. higher. The remainder of the Cigalere water is derived from unknown sources higher up the mountainside.

The mining settlement of Benthailou is a collection of disused buildings at 6,000 ft. It is close to a disused iron mine, which we explored, and surrounded by machinery of various sorts. While not exactly the last word in luxury, the room in which we lived was large, and contained furniture and mattresses, though there was no lighting and running water was some distance away. The camp is reached by a zig-zag track through the woods. This extends as far as the Cigalere entrance, from which point all tackle must be carried. Normally a vehicle can be taken to the cave entrance, but during our visit the track was being widened by the use of gelignite, and large lengths were blocked by rock falls. As a result, we had to carry all tackle and food 4 miles and 2,500 ft. up to Benthailou, causing a considerable wastage of time.

In the evening of the 25th, Glenn, Alan, Carl, Tim Phillips, Tim Reynolds, Tim Atkinson and Ian carried heavy loads up to Benthailou and bedded down for the night. Eric, Gordon and Elizabeth elected to remain in the valley. The next day the Benthailou party returned to complete a second carry. Eric, Gordon and Elizabeth visited St. Girons and a show cave, and walked up to Benthailou with extra food in the evening. They returned to sleep at their camp in the valley.

The next day was Thursday, 26th August, and the party again split up. Carl and Tim Atkinson went to Moulis and were successful in obtaining permission to visit the Cigalere.

AREA MAP – CIRQUE DE LEZ





Grotte de la Cigalère : Salle Blanche near the Trou Souffleur



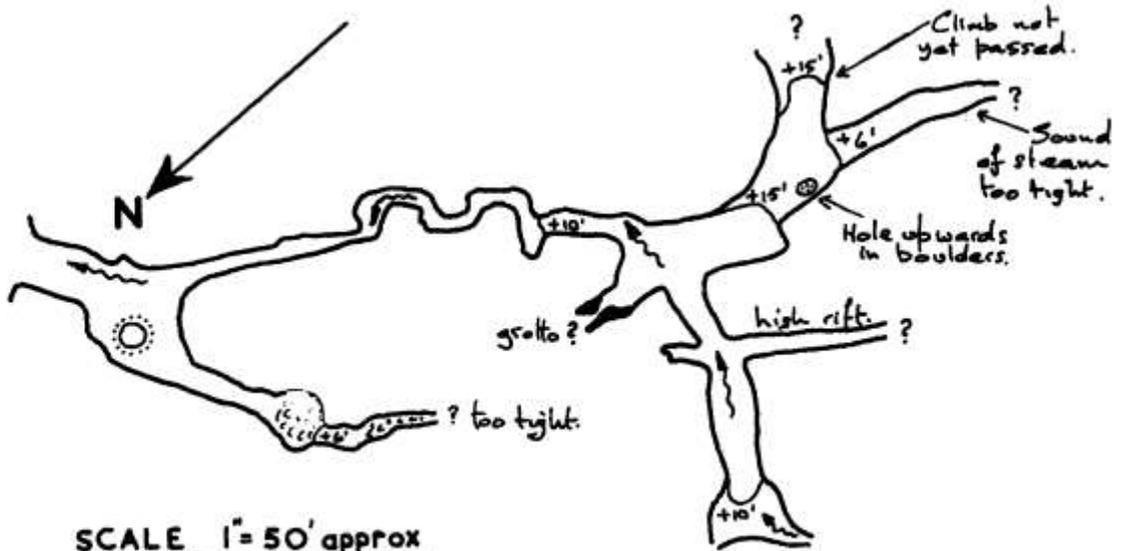
Grotte de la Cigalère : Chamber with 'crystal' floor mentioned by Casteret

The others visited the cave of La Resurgence de Benthailou. We had been told of this cave by a French caver also camping in the cirque. He reported it virtually unexplored. A half-hour walk led to the large, circular entrance, from which a stream similar in size to that in Swildons poured. A quick reconnaissance showed the stream passage to end in a tight squeeze, but a dry passage led on to a maypole. At the top of the pole was a tiny chamber with no exit. But from its foot, 50 ft. of passage led to a tight squeeze. No success was met with here, so Alan and Ian attacked a boulder blocking the stream passage. After a short struggle access was gained to 100 ft. of sharp, jagged stream passage, Stoke Lane I style, leading to a largish chamber. The stream flowed across this and was followed up another passage to its source, an impossibly tight crack. Returning downstream, various short side passages were explored, including a rift 70 ft. high. In the large chamber mentioned above, a grotto led back in the direction of the entrance (see survey), while a high passage continued in the other direction. It ended after 50 ft. or so in a difficult climb, with a huge space above. This climb was attempted, but not accomplished. Also from this chamber 60 ft. of side passage led off, ending in a mud choke from which a stream could be heard ahead. After this exploration in the morning, the party climbed towards the Spanish Frontier in the afternoon, and noted a large cave entrance at a height of 7,000 ft.

The next day we went into the Cigalere. In view of the limited time we now had available for this trip we agreed on a new plan of attack. Four of us: Tim Phillips, Carl, Ian and Alan would try to get to the end, and the rest of us: Tim Atkinson, Tim Reynolds, Glenn and Gordon (who came up from the valley in the morning to do the trip and went down again that evening), would help to carry the tackle in. All the cascades as far as the 9th were climbable, but for the 9th itself we would need a maypole. In view of this, we had the Club maypole with us. Alan Wicks was also going to take photographic gear in. We entered the Cigalere about midday and made fast progress to the sump. The first section (from the entrance to the sump) is about 1 Km long, and is very impressive. The stream runs for the most part between 10 ft. high mud banks, with the roof vanishing into the gloom far above. At the sump, the stream is left, and the way on is through a series of dry chambers which have given the Cigalere its reputation for formations. These are really superb; basically they consist of largish stalagmites and stalactites and pillars in profusion, but all covered in a mass of gypsum flowers. The general colour is white, but there are patches of brown and other colours in places. At one point the route passes through a chamber about 50 ft. high, 50 ft. wide and 150 ft. long whose walls are covered in gypsum flowers. Unfortunately the 'Kilroy was here' bug has caught on in France, and the lower walls are spoiled by carbide smoke inscriptions. Even so, there is still ample left to realise the poverty of formations in most English caves. The dry passages finally finish in a crawl, which drops into the streamway via a small hole - the Trou Souffleur. This certainly lives up to its name; a very strong draught blows here, so strong that carbide lamps were put

out, and it was necessary to close ones eyes because of the loose dust which was being blown about. Quite soon after rejoining the stream we reached a small chamber, into which falls the 1st Cascade. This cascade is 33 ft. high, and was originally passed by Casteret by climbing a length of iron tubing. In actual fact it is a fairly easy free climb, and Carl and Tim Atkinson climbed it with very little trouble. A ladder was then put down, and the rest of the party got up with no difficulty. We then pushed upstream to the 8th Cascade, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Cascades all being easily climbed or bypassed. The 8th Cascade is 50 ft. high, but free climbable. Carl and Tim Atkinson climbed this, and a ladder was put down for the rest of the party. The equipment was then hauled up and we pushed on to the 9th Cascade - a short distance upstream. The passage enters a large, inhospitable and draughty chamber, into which the stream falls via a 50 ft. pitch. Slightly downstream of the cascade a boulder slope on the left hand side (facing upstream) leads up into a dry part of the chamber. At the top of the slope a maypole placed against the wall gives access to a ledge about 30 ft. up. This ledge runs round up to a boulder wedged above the cascade. From here a further climb leads up, via a balcony, to the Salle Bernard Magos. This leads to the Salle Casteret, which rejoins the stream, after the 11th Cascade. The stream from here continues for about another 1½ Km to the final sump above the 26th Cascade. To return to the 9th Cascade: with all the kit there we found what looked like the correct position for the maypole. This was later confirmed by finding a maypole joint, and also by comparison with photographs in 'Pyrenees Souterain' after the trip.. We assembled the full length of the pole and tried to pull it upright into position against the wall. This proved fruitless and so, after an hour of frustrating work during which time it was a miracle no one was hit by the pole as it tottered about the chamber, we stopped for some food and a rethink. We then tried again, only this time we dismantled the pole to start with and tried to put it up assembling as we went. This method proved successful, and we got the pole up with the end well above the ledge. But owing to the slope of the floor it had not been possible to get the foot of the pole close enough to the wall, so the pole made an angle of about 25 degrees with the vertical. The result of this was disastrous, since when Carl started to put his weight on the ladder the pole did an S bend and the top nearly fell off the ledge. In view of this the pole was very dangerous to climb and so we decided to call it a day. We dismantled the pole and returned downstream towards the surface, which we reached with no trouble. Our attempt to maypole the 9th Cascade took two hours out of the total trip of eight and a half hours. The reason for the failure was basically the flexibility of the pole. The sections are connected by expanding joints and these are fairly stiff if the pole is used nearly vertical, but flex far too much if the pole is at an angle. Also the pole was designed for Mendip caves with the result that the sections are only 4 ft. long. But, in French caves it is possible to carry far longer sections; in fact on the way out we left the sections bolted together in twos, and had no trouble in carrying these eight foot lengths.

LA RESURGENCE DE BENTHAILLOU

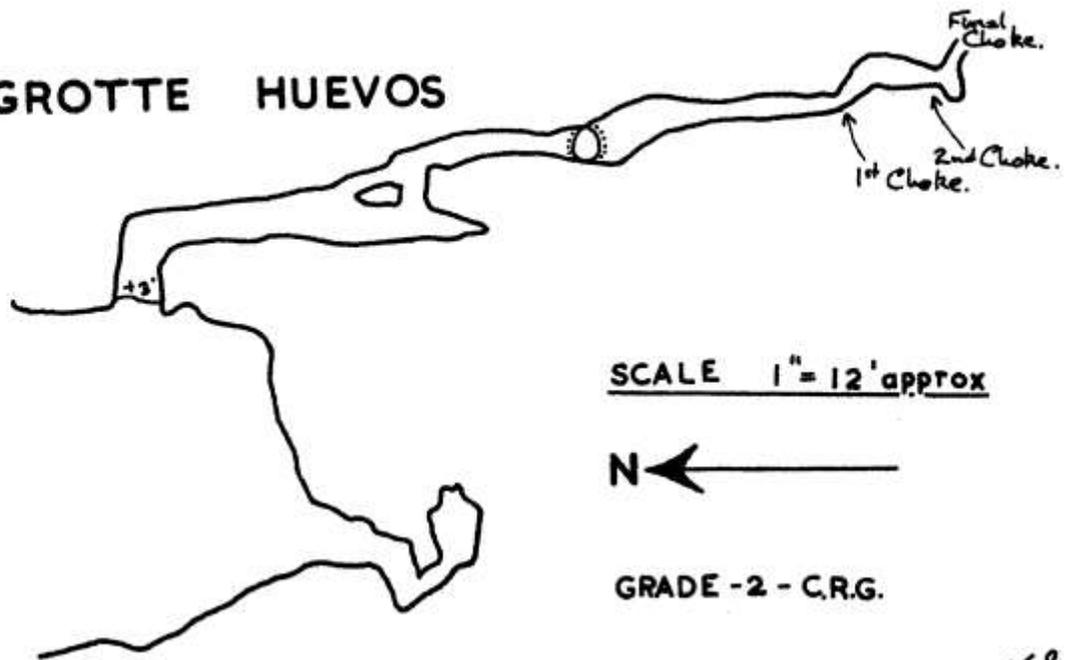


SCALE 1" = 50' approx

C.R.G. - GRADE - I.

T.A. & T.E.R.

GROTTE HUEVOS



SCALE 1" = 12' approx

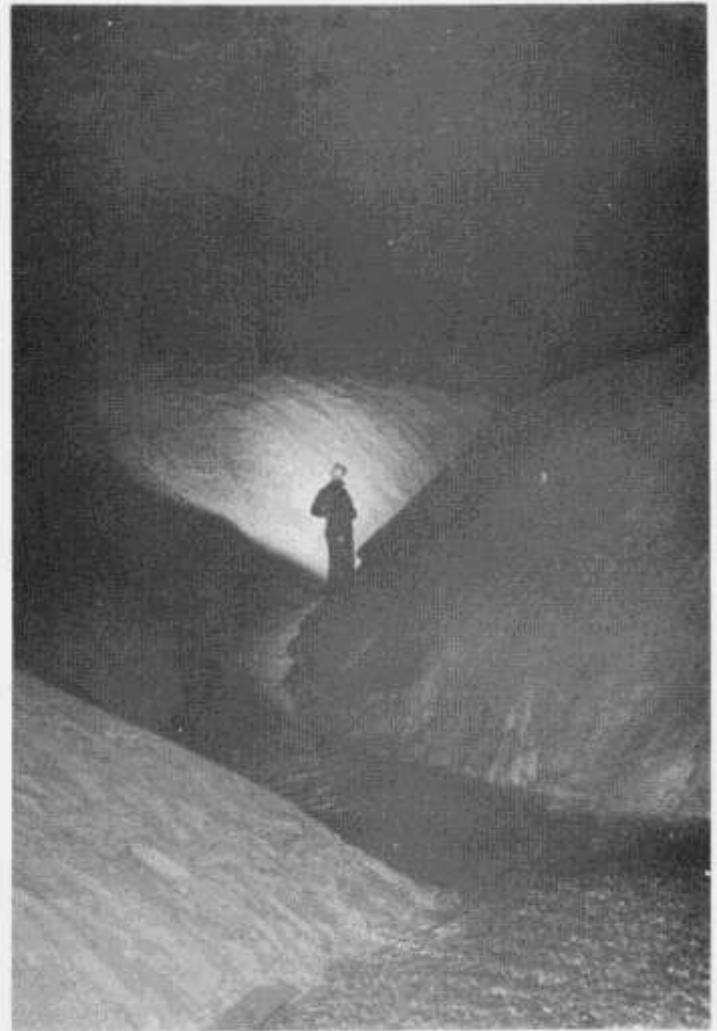
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GRADE - 2 - C.R.G.

T.E.R.



Grotte de la Cigalère : The Eighth Cascade



Grotte de la Cigalère : Mud banks in the first kilometer before the sump

Photographs by Alan Wicks

But the maypole was only the culminating factor in a series of delays and hold-ups we had experienced all through our stay at Benthailou. During the Cigalere trip the knowledge that if we did maypole the 9th Cascade we would have to go back into the cave, either to collect the maypole or to push on to the end the next day, weighed very heavily. The trouble was that we were trying to cram too much into too short a time. The lesson we learnt was that it is wise to follow the French practice and leave some 'rest days' in the programme. This gives some slack to the plan, and means that if anything goes awry, as is very likely to happen on expeditions of this nature when plans are made from a long distance, the result is not too serious.

The next day, Saturday 27th August, was our last full day at Benthailou. None of us felt very active and so we split up. Ian and Tim Atkinson visited the Resurgence de Benthailou, while Carl and Alan returned to the Cigalere to take some photographs (four of which accompany this article), and Tim Reynolds and Tim Phillips visited the Spanish Frontier and the cave which they had noted two days before. A rough survey was made of part of the Resurgence de Benthailou using knotted line and a compass. It accompanies this account. Ian and Tim Atkinson then dug in the mud choke from which the stream can be heard. They were defeated by the lack of a chisel to demolish a stal floor blocking the way on.

Tim Phillips and Tim Reynolds reached and explored their cave without difficulty. It consisted of a large entrance chamber with about 70 ft. of passage going off to the left. This was explored to a choke with some rather spectacular ice formations. As there was a draught the choke was attacked and a small chamber and choked rift found. Another passage to the right of the entrance chamber was also explored. As Tim Phillips was nearly crushed by a boulder, exploration here was necessarily brief. This cave was christened Grotte Huevos, and a survey accompanies this account. In the evening, when it was cool, we began the transportation of equipment down to the valley. The next day, Sunday 28th August, we finished this operation and returned to the base camp site at Lacourt, where we found George, Dave and Bob already in occupation, having just arrived from Spain. That evening we went into St. Girons for a drink, and also met Phil and Pat, Steve, Nick and Rod, who had just arrived from England.

We spent the next morning, Monday, shopping and drinking in St. Girons. At 2 p.m., when Denis and Co. arrived, we set off in convoy for Labaderque, which is the nearest village to the Henne Morte. A guide was found and Nick, Rod, Steve and Bob were taken up to the entrance, carrying a load of tackle each. They returned to the small base camp which had been set up at Labaderque with the news that the track to the Henne Morte was non-existent and the ground was fairly rough and overgrown, but the guide had blazed

marks on trees on the way up to enable us to find the route on the following day. The Gouffre de la Henne Morte is on the eastern slopes of the Pic de Paloumere in the Arbas forest. The entrance itself is impressively forbidding, being in a large shakehole which is extremely dark due to the tall pine trees which cut out most of the sunlight.

The next day, Tuesday 30th August, the caving and advance base parties (Steve, Rod, Nick, Pat, Bob and Alan Wicks) drove their herd of sherpas (everyone else) up to the cave entrance. A small and rather flimsy camp was put up on a fairly level ledge near the top of the shakehole and the sherpas were paid off and sent down to Labaderque with instructions to return on Thursday morning to help carry the gear down again. The caving party then spent the afternoon collecting snow from the bottom of a 60 ft. pitch in a corner of the shakehole. This was the only source of water at the time, which was most ironic considering the weather conditions of the 48 hours which were to follow.

The caving party rose early on Wednesday, having spent a miserable night lying on soggy leaf mould while it rained heavily. The entrance to the Henne Morte was a 30 ft. pitch on to a steeply sloping and very loose boulder ruckle, which ended in a 90 ft. pitch on to a snow plug. The boulders were generally small and covered over with loose, rotting humus and other debris. There were no possible belay points anywhere on this slope, which was about 100 ft. long and inclined at about 40 degrees. The people moving the gear down the slope and over the pitch had to be lifelined from the surface and the slightest movement on this slope sent showers of debris down the 90 ft. pitch. Having assembled the gear at the bottom of the pitch we moved across the ice plug in the large entrance chamber and into a small, high-level dry passage in the N.E. corner of the chamber. Two dry 20 ft. pitches followed in quick succession and a small stream was encountered at the bottom of the second. The stream was followed down several small drops in a small passage to a 10 ft. pitch, followed immediately by a 20 ft. pitch which was directly above a 100 ft. pitch. Thunder had been heard in the upper part of the cave and by now the small stream was rising quite rapidly. Three of the party descended the 100 ft. pitch which came in through the roof of a large chamber with a Swildons sized stream running through the bottom of it. After about 50 ft. of streamway the water disappeared over the lip of a 180 ft. pitch which looked uncomfortable but not desperate. Because of the rising water we decided to pull out, and Alan Wicks started to climb the ladder. After climbing about 15 ft., he leapt off the ladder, letting out a most eerie moan. Nick and Bob, at the bottom of the ladder, heard a thud which they thought was a boulder hitting the floor. Alan, who was on a lifeline, had regained his balance and came down to the floor again. He said that he had felt a stone hit him between the shoulder blades and had been knocked off by it. What had in fact happened was that lightning had struck the cave entrance, travelled down an old telephone cable, the end of which was touching the ladder at the top of the pitch. The lightning

discharged through the ladder via Alan, throwing him off. The thud heard by Nick and Bob was the discharge to the rock through the bottom of the ladder. Carl, who was lifelining Alan, felt a small shock, and Phil, who was above the top of the pitch, felt the shock as well. After this upsetting incident we hastened out of the cave, taking less than one hour to get to the bottom of the 90 ft. entrance pitch, and four hours to get from there to the surface where it was snowing heavily. The camp site was in a very miserable state, and we were too cold to do anything about it. We spent a most unpleasant night in frozen sleeping bags while Steve and Pat, who had stayed on the surface at the camp in case of an accident, did what they could to feed us. As soon as it was light we got up, had breakfast in the snow, broke camp and set off down the mountain for Labaderque, meeting our sherpas en route who were on their way up to collect the rest of the gear.

While the Henne Morte party were battling with the elements the rest of the party returned to Lacourt. On the Wednesday we visited the showcave of Labouiche; this cave consists of a river passage along which tourists are carried in flat bottomed boats. The trip is most impressive, with a superbly decorated upper storey through which the tourists leave the cave. Our party split into two at the Salette Cascade, the end of the show part of the cave. The cavers climbed up the cascade while the others continued with the guide. The passage continues to a sump, but it is possible to bypass this to further passages via a hole in the roof. We could not get into this without a maypole, and so retraced our steps to search other parts of the roof for an exit. We found two previously unentered passages; one a large, loosely floored chamber in the roof, the other a low, uninviting duck near the floor level. This was passed by Tim Reynolds to 500 ft. of stream passage with some large chambers. After exploring this we retraced our steps to the showcave and piloted our boat back to the surface.

After carrying down the tackle from the Henne Morte on the Thursday, the whole party returned to Lacourt in heavy rain. That evening was spent in St. Girons, at the 'Chez Pierrot' and we dispersed the next day in various directions.

The photographs which accompany this article were taken by Alan Wicks.

Bibliography

- “Pyrenees Souterraines” by Yves Grosel, 1958, Flammarion, Paris.
“Cave Men New and Old” by N. Casteret.

THE SECOND DIG AT RESERVOIR HOLE

by
W.I. Stanton

Introduction

Reservoir Hole in Cheddar Gorge was opened in the winter of 1951-52 by Luke Devenish, Howard Kenney, Colin Vowles and myself. Luke had heard of its existence while pub-crawling in Cheddar, from an aged man who had helped to build the old Bristol Water Works reservoir and had noted a small draughty orifice in the cliff above. By liberal application of high explosive we had entered 120' of narrow tunnel that led to a group of three parallel vertical boulder-choked rifts. The widest of these, Main Shaft, was the chief source of the draught, and we had managed to force our way 40' down it before desisting when piano sized rocks began to fall. Eventually the whole shaft became filled. The exploration is described in more detail in the M.N.R.C. report for 1952.

In January 1965, when the dig in Gough's Boulder Chamber was abandoned, we returned to Reservoir Hole. Permission to work was obtained from Cheddar Caves Ltd., who own the cave, and from Bristol Water Works Co. who control access through the reservoir. Reckoning that all three of the vertical rifts should lead down to the same passage, as they all had updraughts, we decided to attack the smallest and most stable one, the Holy Hole (so named because when first entered its roof and walls were pure white with moonmilk). Concurrently we would attempt to drive a tunnel through 8' of solid rock to enter a hypothetical upward continuation of Main Shaft. The situation at this stage is shown in Figure 1.

The dig was basically a Wessex one, though Sidcot, Axbridge and B.E.C. provided casual labour. Will Edwards, Nick Barrington and George Brown were my chief allies, and we were especially honoured to receive two visits from Luke Devenish himself, on which occasions the cave shook to much heavier shocks than usual.

The Dig

Unlike the other two rifts Holy Hole had four walls of solid rock, and was blocked by what appeared to be a big flow of tufa 8' down. This had to be removed by the rapid chemical method. Unfortunately the tufa proved to be only a thin coating on solid rock, so that at this level the rift shrank from a roomy 4' by 3' cross section to only about 3' by 9". Undaunted we made our way down for 9' encouraged by a strongish draught, until to our surprise the rift suddenly heeled over and became a narrow crevice leading west. This too was enlarged until after 5' it broke into the side of a boulder-filled aven that could only be the middle rift. Holy Hole was thus proved to be an oxbow. Excavating the middle rift via Holy would be difficult and dangerous, so we abandoned the site. The work had involved 16 visits, 24 lbs of chemicals and 450 bucketful's of spoil.

SECTIONS ACROSS THE RIFT COMPLEX

Grade 6B

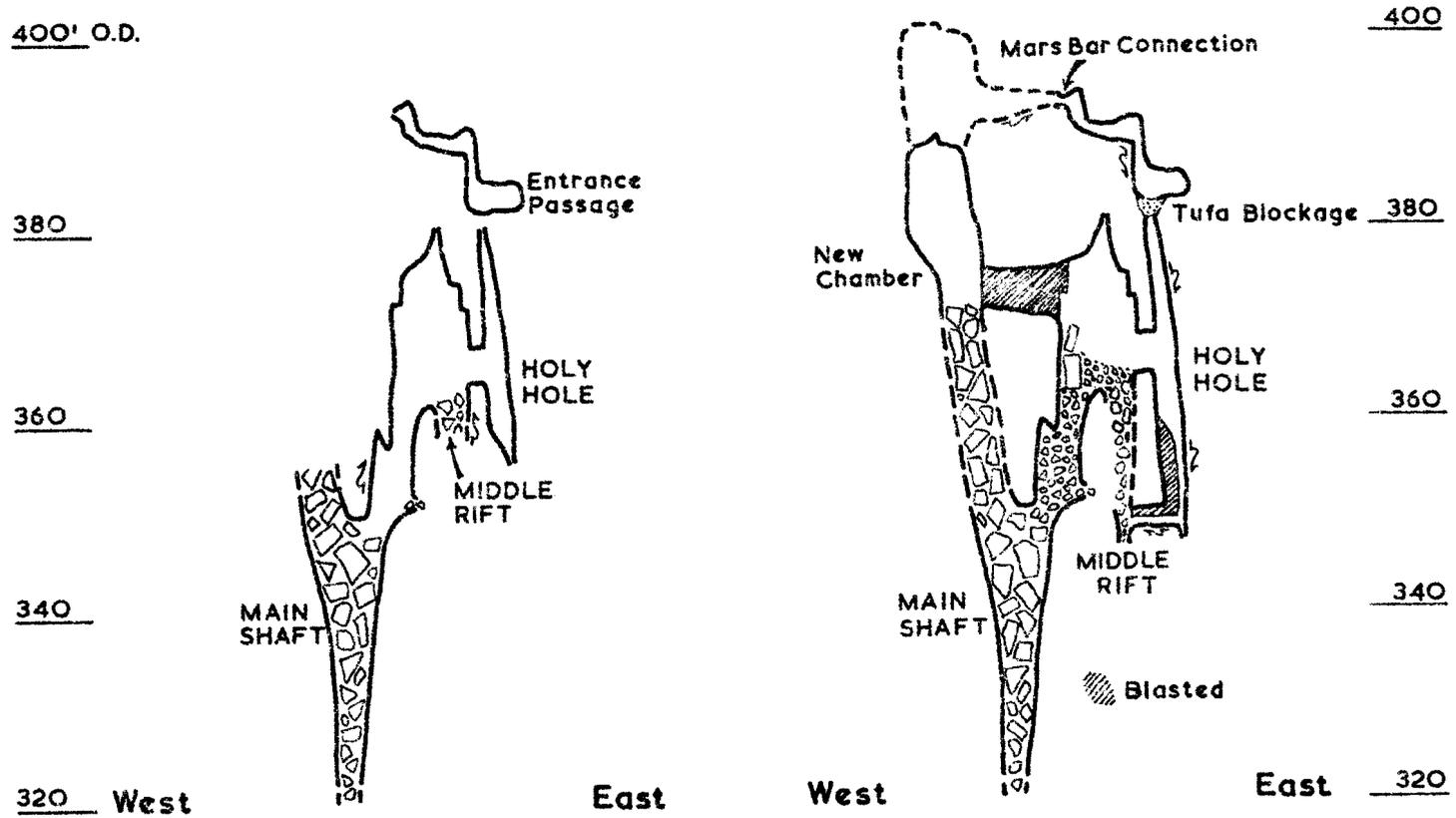


Figure 1. Before the second dig

Figure 2. After the second dig

Meanwhile the other dig had met with success. Many hours spent in hand-drilling, followed by plastering when we discovered that the closely jointed rock permitted this, and the expenditure of 9 lbs. of chemicals in 8 visits, enabled us to drive, like Beaumont, a man-sized tunnel 8' 6" long. At the far end we broke into the hypothetical chamber.

The New Chamber

This runs north-south for 70', reaching a width of 15' and a height of 20'. The tunnel enters 2' above floor level at the south end. The north end is very close to the outside cliff, but about 30' lower than the external bank of scree; an abundance of snail shells indicates an ancient way out. Stal formations include sheets of snow-white moonmilk on the walls and a few nice stalagmites. One of these, 18" high and 4" thick, has been cleanly snapped off in the distant past, and now lies lightly cemented down beside the stump. Similar mysterious breakages have been reported from Banwell Bone Cave (Tucker 1962).* Here and there are nests of pseudo cave pearls formed of limestone chips rounded and polished by drips falling from the roof.

There were bat droppings at several places, which puzzled us at first. However we discovered that a tiny tunnel led out to the east, connecting with an aven in the entrance passage. Stal deposits almost blocked it, but there was still space enough to allow a Mars bar (and presumably the bats) to pass through.

The floor of the new chamber is a jumbled mass of boulders with no solid rock anywhere. Smoke tests show that the famous draught percolates up through them along the whole length of the chamber.

Problems

(a) Formation of the rifts:- Main Shaft and the middle rift both show upward scalloping, and we had originally supposed that all three rifts had channelled water up to the entrance passages. However the dig revealed fresh-looking downward scalloping in Holy Hole, and this can be traced back past a tufa blockage into the Mars bar connection and so into the new chamber. Apparently, then, at a late stage in the cave development a strong current of water flowed down this course (marked by scalloping symbols in Figure 2), ignoring alternative routes. How this was possible is still obscure.

(b) The draught:- During the 1951-52 dig it was thought that the draught was temperature controlled, with relatively warm air rising through the cave system in winter and relatively cool air sinking through it in summer. This would argue the existence of another entrance at a lower level, i.e. further down the Gorge. Many more observations were made during the present dig, and were plotted graphically. The temperature effect is certainly there, but is often subordinate to the effect of the wind blowing in the Gorge near the cave entrance. A down gorge wind tends to cause an out draught, an up gorge wind an in draught; and the

stronger the wind the stronger the draught. This, on the face of it suggesting another entrance further up the Gorge conflicts with the temperature findings. However we suspect a venturi effect at the entrance of Reservoir Hole. We have not been able to test the in draught, which is only common in summer, with smoke or scent owing to the risk, albeit small, that it might drive the tourists out of Gough's (1).

Possibilities

The main way on, marked by the draught, must be in Main Shaft below the floor of the new chamber. In view of the 1952 dig there, which penetrated the boulders to a depth of 50' below the present floor, any further work threatens to be extremely difficult and prolonged. Alternatively the much narrower middle rift may lead down to the same passage more easily, unless it is an oxbow like Holy Hole.

Acknowledgements

The diggers are grateful to Mr. Gerald Robertson, manager of the Cheddar Caves, and to the Bristol Water Works Company, for permission to enter and work in the cave.

Reference

* TUCKER, J.H. 1962. Some Smaller Mendip Caves. Vol. 2. B.E.C. Caving Report No. 9.

(1) On December 3rd 1965 a westerly gale caused a violent indraught. We fired two Wessex Yachtsmoke distress flares in the cave entrance, filling the passages with dense orange smoke. We could detect no trace of this in the Gorge during the next two hours, after which dusk fell, nor in the caves including White Spot cave and Gough's. In fact it never appeared again, nor did the associated acrid smell manifest itself elsewhere than in Reservoir Hole, where it lingered for more than a week.

MENDIP NOTES

by

Cheramodytes

Swildon's Hole; the North-West Stream Passage

The outstanding achievement of the year is the discovery of a new system off Vicarage Passage by the South West Essex Technical College Caving Club (known as Swetc for short) under the leadership of Trevor Faulkner. This is an important strike inlet passage lying at a level intermediate between Vicarage Passage and the main streamway. It could come from a long way away (says Stanton) and has already crossed under Dale Lane. Trevor Faulkner and his lads found it by forcing a choke just short of Vicarage Pot, and descending a 23ft. ladder pitch into the new streamway. This they followed upstream for a distance of 250ft. to a duck, which they later (12.2.66.) passed and so found several hundred more feet of passage, all coming from the NW. Downstream after about 150 ft. they were nearly back under Vicarage Pot and met a sandbank. Subsequent digging let them into a tight and impassable sump.

One of the fascinating things about the system is that no one knows where it enters the main streamway. It is making for the Muddy Sump, which has the peculiarity that, after lowering the water level a certain amount by bailing, it can be lowered no further. This may mean that it communicates with a feeder. The North-West Stream Passage might enter the main streamway in Duck 2 or under the boulder pile in Swildon's 7. There are no known tributaries of significance on the right after the Priddy Green Stream.

The other fascinating problem is whether the N.W. Stream Passage connects with the stream passage under the far end of Vicarage Passage. For a long time we have been listening to this stream, both down an acoustic tube and at the end of Hairy Passage (which doubles back west under Vicarage Passage). On 12.2.66. Bob Gannicott, Mike Wooding and Dave Savage broke through the end of Hairy Passage and after 20 ft. were in this streamway. It goes almost immediately down a pitch of some 15ft. into a chamber which sounds big. It cannot be followed at present, because of a large flake which bars the way.

Casualties

Swetc has not been without its casualties during its exploratory trips. Everyone who has worked in Vicarage Passage knows how arduous it is. Add to that the hours underground it is easy to see what a hazard the 40 ft. pitch becomes on the way home. On 5.2.66. a member of their party had considerable difficulty and needed help. On 12.2.66. Mendip Rescue had to be called out. One of their party had become tired and was being assisted home by members of the Wessex and Shepton, but was unable to climb the 40'. The hauling tackle had to be rigged and used.

Be your own rescuers

I have it on the best authority that M.R.O. is likely to put a pulley permanently on the iron bar over Suicide's Leap, with a note of instructions in Maine's Barn to show how to rig it with a heavy-weight 100 ft. nylon line and a double bowline ("bosun's chair"), so that any reasonably well equipped party can effect its own rescue. This will be needed even for hard cavers, as long as the iron pipe is out. Soft cavers had better keep above the pitch. After all, everyone who caves on Mendip is, ipso facto, a member of M.R.O., so he might just as well adopt a responsible attitude towards the problem.

Your Scribe regrets to say that he thoroughly enjoys himself under that waterfall and looks forward to it on each visit. If he had any conscience, of course, he would admit that the pipe has got to be put back one day.

Divers and Diving

On 15.1.66. the Wessex held its 21st night party and your Scribe met the great Ken Pearce. There had been some diving at Wookey Hole that day, when Messrs. Pearce, Wooding, Savage, Lloyd and Allen had been looking at the known parts of the cave, so as to familiarize themselves with the layout in preparation for the big push on 26.2.66. Wooding and Pearce had gone to the end of the line in 14, while the others went only to 9.

On 21.1.66. Lloyd and Savage went a bit further, the latter tying on a short line in 14 and having a look at 15, where the stream rapidly gets deeper, the former following the courlene line up into 13, where Bob Davies had an alarming adventure on 10.12.1955. It is so much easier going where someone has marked the route.

All the accounts I have heard of Ken Pearce are misleading. They vary from Pearce the Ogre to Pearce the Hero. What was my surprise to find that he is a man of great personal charm and easy to get on with. His magnetism is not that of steel but of something much more subtle and attractive. I am no longer surprised that he manages to get supporters for all his adventures.

SELF DRILLING BOLTS FOR FIXED BELAYS

Peter R. Cousins

Rawlbolts have been used in potholes and caves for several years to provide an anchorage for handlines and ladders where there is no natural rock flake that can be used; examples can be seen underground in every caving area of the country. Pitons are not generally suitable for fixed belays of this nature, since while a rock climber in need of a belay can usually find a crack to take a piton, the ladder pitches underground are often either stalagmite covered or worn smooth by a stream, and thus frequently devoid of cracks in which to insert a piton. So, in order to obtain a fixed belay under these circumstances, a hole is drilled percussively with a 'stardrill' and a club hammer, a process which can take over half an hour. A rawlbolt is then inserted into the hole so made (usually the eye bolt version of the standard 'loose bolt type' rawlbolt is used) and tightened, normally to remain as a permanent fixture, though the eye bolt is theoretically removable, so leaving a threaded socket. The collapsible steel ferrule which encloses the outer ends of the sections (which expand to grip the rock) is designed to tension the bolt without undue strain. Thus, this ferrule should be partly collapsed when the bolt is tightened, this is rarely done in caves and hence the bolts tend to work loose. For sizes up to 1/2" the threaded bolt is the 'weak link' and will fracture (on average) at the following loads

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bolt diam: | 3/16" | 1/4" | 5/16" | 3/8" | 1/2" |
| Failing load (lbs) | 1,250 | 2,240 | 4,220 | 5,695 | 9,550 |
| Static S.W.L. (lbs) | 250 | 450 | 840 | 1,140 | 1,910 |

A safe working load for shock loads is one half of the static S.W.L. (static safe working load). Thus, there would appear to be no need ever to use any bolt larger than 1/4" diam., as the one on Shatter Pot in Swildons perhaps shows. Unfortunately, eye bolts underground are rarely loaded axially since this would involve putting them in the roof. If the load is at right angles to the bolt, then the above figures should perhaps be reduced by an additional factor of 1/2, which would imply that 3/8" is the minimum diam. which could be used, though figures are not available to justify this.

Both Rawlplugs Ltd. and Phillips (U.S.A.) market self drilling bolts as almost identical products, called Super Drillanchors and 'Redheads' respectively. The dimensions are similar to the standard rawlbolts, so no great divergence of strength is to be expected - remember it is the threaded portion which fractures. These bolts are self drilling (no stardrill is needed to drill a hole in which to insert them) but a holder has to be used to grip them whilst drilling. The bolts have a serrated cutting end, and are simply hammered in; drilling their own hole and ejecting dust through the open core. When the bolt is flush with the surface, it is withdrawn and re-inserted with a steel cone in the lower (cutting) end. A few sharp blows will drive the bolt back down over this cone causing the shell of the bolt to expand, thereby gripping the rock. The whole process of inserting a 3/8" bolt into limestone took me 10 minutes, about a third of the time required to insert an equivalent rawlbolt.

The comparative costs of rawbolts and drill anchors are as follows: -

| Bolt diam. | 3/16" | 1/4" | 5/16" | 3/8" | 1/2" |
|------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|------------|
| Price:- | | | | | |
| of rawbolt | 1/7 | 1/10 | 2/6 | 3/4 | 6/6 or 8/2 |
| of stardrill | 4/9 | 5/9 | 6/9 | 8/6 | 10/6 |
| of super drillanchor - | | 1/- | 1/2 | 1/6 | 2/2 |
| of hand tools | - | 9/- | 9/- | 12/6 | 12/6 |

From the above figures, it can be seen that the cost of the 'permanent' item (stardrill/handtool) is greater for self drilling bolts, though the cost of the bolts is far less. This reduced cost, coupled with their quick insertion, appears to make self drilling bolts a better proposition for fixed belays than rawbolts. But, the eye bolts for self drilling bolts have to be bought separately, and this will add an extra 1/- to 2/- to the, above prices. This outlay can be reduced if the eyes are removed when the bolt is not in use. In particular, belay bolts can be inserted during initial exploration or during a rescue and the eyes removed when no longer required so that they can be used elsewhere; thus only the cheap bolts are expended. In view of the short time involved in making a belay, this system has possibilities, both in rescue work and in exploration abroad.

Both makes of self drillingbolts appear difficult to obtain, I personally order direct from the manufacturers. Small whitworth threaded solid forged eye bolts, suitable for use with the super drill anchors, are available from lifting tackle specialists; they are termed 'Dynamo Lifting Eyes'.

STOKE LANE SLOCKER

A brief account of some recent developments

By D. Savage

The first part of this article attempts to clarify some recent happenings concerning the future of Stoke Lane Slocker. The second is an account of recent advances down the Stoke Lane streamway into Stoke VIII.

FUTURE OF STOKE LANE SLOCKER

For several years the future of Stoke Lane Slocker has been in doubt and negotiations between the various interested parties have produced no tangible result until recently. The crux of the matter has been that the cave lies within an area of land bought cheaply by the Company operating the Cooks Wood Quarry, and naturally this company has wanted to push the limits of its quarry workings as close to the cave as possible, without suffering the inconvenience of actually breaking into the cave.

On the other hand, the presence of the quarry has caused other parties, namely: the Bristol Waterworks Company; the Nature Conservancy, and Mendip Cavers, to express concern over the future of the cave. B.W.W. have been concerned lest the quarrying should cause collapse within the cave and thus interfere with their water rights. The Cavers' viewpoint is obvious and the Nature Conservancy were persuaded by Cavers that they were supporting a good cause. The Cavers and Nature Conservancy, in spite of their combined efforts, felt that they were achieving little with their appeals to a determined Quarry Company. The B.W.W., however, was a different proposition. It was only a question of setting this organisation in motion for sheer momentum to do the rest.

It was the desire of the Waterworks Company that the Quarry should halt its workings in the direction of the cave before any damage could be caused therein. Further to this, Derek Ford submitted in January 1965 a report based on material from his well known (unpublished) thesis on Mendip Hydrology. In it he outlined geological and hydrological reasons why the Quarry workings should cease within a specified distance of the cave. He also gave advice on how the quarry face should be advanced so that the hydraulic gradient between the Cave and the Quarry should not be upset. (Ford put forward the theory that, should the hydraulic gradient be interfered with, the most likely consequence would be that the Cave would lose its water into the Quarry.) Ford's recommended figures for the minimum distance that the quarry face should approach the Cave were 250 ft. from the northern parts of the cave and 300 ft. from the large chambers constituting the central portion of the cave (i.e. Stoke II). These figures were to be applicable when an accurate plan of the chambers in Stokes III & IV was available.

To counter Ford's report, the Quarry Company enlisted the services of a northern firm of Engineering Consultants. The latter set up recording devices between the cave and the quarry and consequently showed from the results obtained (to their satisfaction) that shock waves from the blasting in the quarry could not affect the cave until the working face was much closer than Ford had recommended.

This was the position early last year when Stokes V, VI & VII were discovered. This discovery showed (on the basis of a rough survey produced) that the cave was probably much closer to the quarry than had previously been considered. Now that the B.W.W's water rights were in more immediate danger of being violated things began to speed up rapidly. Bristol Waterworks first took the step of threatening legal action against the Quarry Company, should it be established that the cave-quarry distance was approaching Ford's limits. Then, with the idea of establishing the exact position of the further reaches of the cave in relation to the surface, the Waterworks enlisted the co-operation of cavers, in particular the Cave Diving Group. The C.D.G. further enlisted the services of the Technical Projects Unit of the British Speleological Association. The latter principally because the inspiration of Dr. H. Lord had placed at their disposal a magnetic induction communication device, developed for the specific purpose of determining the exact position of a point in a cave relative to the surface. Very briefly, this device¹ (as eventually used in Stoke Lane) consists of two units, a transmitter and a receiver. The transmitter produces a varying magnetic field by means of passing an alternating current through a coil of wire, and the receiver detects this varying magnetic field by induction in another coil. In its simplest form the transmitter is taken underground and the receiver is used on the surface, although in more refined versions two-way communication may be established.

At a meeting between representatives from the Waterworks, the C.D.G. and the B.S.A., and with the kind co-operation of Mr. Stock, on whose land the entrance to the cave is situated, a plan of campaign to locate the cave exactly in relation to the surface, was worked out:

A party of divers (Drew, Savage, Wooding, Pearce and Abbot) were to take a magnetic induction transmitter into the cave (suitably sump-proofed) and set it up at two points, one just upstream of Sump 6 and the other just upstream of Sump 4 so that these points could be fixed relative to the surface. Another, non-diving, party were to set up a second transmitter in the Bone Chamber in Stoke II, thus enabling a third point to be located. By means of a pre-arranged schedule, the surface detecting party (H. Lord, etc.) were to 'listen in' at specific times for the appropriate signals.

¹ Proceedings of the British Speleological Association, No. 1, Aug. 1963. "A Device for Surveying and Speech Communication Underground" by H.Lord, B.Sc., Ph.D.

Further, three divers, Drew, Wooding and Savage, were to complete a conventional C.R.G. grade 4 survey of Stokes 5, 6 and 7, tying in the transmission points, and F.J. Davies' survey of Stokes III and IV. An attempt, to dive sump 7 was to be made should circumstances permit.

On the 22nd May 1965 the plan was put into operation. All five divers reached Stoke VI, whereupon Abbot and Pearce set up the transmitter. The other three dived into Stoke VII, pushing on to Sump 7 with surveying kit, leaving air kit behind at Sump 6. Having surveyed back to Sump 6 they decided to make an attempt on Sump 7 and so transported one set of air kit back to Sump 7. The sump was dived and Stoke VIII was entered, although progress was halted by a boulder choke only 20 ft. from the downstream side of the sump. The party then returned to the downstream side of Sump 6, and continued the conventional survey to the upstream side of Sump 4. Meanwhile the other diving party had completed their transmission from the two predetermined points and had returned to Stoke II, where the third transmission had been completed.

Unfortunately, on returning to the surface the divers learnt that Sump 6 had not been located and the Sump 4 point, though located, had had its marker post removed by an over-enthusiastic waterworks official. Only the point in the Bone Chamber had been located and accurately recorded on the surface.

Consequently it was deemed necessary to undertake another operation, and this took place on the 19th June. The divers, Drew, Pearce, Savage and Wooding, proceeded to Stoke 6 where Pearce and Wooding set up the transmitter. However, on operation it didn't seem to be functioning correctly and so no further fixed points were attempted. Needless to say, the apparatus had been functioning perfectly and thus Sump 6 point had been located on the surface and the Sump 4 point could have been re-located after all.

However, enough information had been gathered on this and on the previous operation for an accurate survey of the remoter parts of Stoke Lane, in relation to the surface, to be produced. This has now been done and the results presented to the Waterworks, who now have sufficient evidence at their disposal to legally justify their attitude towards further encroachment by the quarry in the direction of the cave.

STOKE VIII

Stoke VII was first entered and explored as far as Sump 7 by Drew and Wooding² on the 20th February of last year. Wooding had investigated Sump 7 without air kit, and had succeeded in following an airspace for an estimated 100 ft. to a small chamber.

² Wessex Journal No. 100 "The Discovery of Stoke Lane V, VI, and VII" by D. Drew & M. Wooding.

On the 22nd May, Drew, Wooding and I transported one set of air kit to Sump 7 and I dived into the sump on a light courlene line. After following a narrow, rift-like passage, elongated along the bedding (which dips at nearly 80° to the horizontal here), for about 30 ft., I emerged into a small chamber with 3 ft. of airspace, roofed by mud and loose boulders, from where it was possible to talk back to base via a small overwater air connection. The way on from this point was not immediately obvious, but after feeling around with my feet a small opening was located beneath a boulder at a depth of about 4 ft. Diving again, and squeezing through this opening, I wriggled horizontally through more boulders in a tight rift passage for a further 4 ft. to a shingle bank, similar to that at the upstream entrance to Sump 4 in Swildons. A short tight squeeze at the top of this bank led me from the Sump into a small, low chamber some 10 ft. long and 6 ft. wide. From here the sound of a stream could be heard and I concluded that this must be Stoke 8! Hopes of substantial additions to the cave on this occasion were soon dashed when, having taken the trouble to dekit, the way on was found to be blocked by boulders only 20 ft. downstream from the sump. I did some gardening, but concluded that something in the nature of a lump hammer would be essential to remove several large flakes and pulverize the odd boulder. Consequently I returned uneventfully through the sump, to be greeted by a volley of curses from Drew and Wooding, who had been standing in the Sump pool up to their waists for the last 20 minutes. On a subsequent occasion, the 30th October, when the next opportunity of visiting Stoke VIII presented itself, I made sure that a lump hammer was handy. Half an hour's work in an awkward position with the hammer enabled me to pass with difficulty through a very tight vertical squeeze between loose boulders, whereupon I came into a small chamber with the stream entering beneath another pile of boulders to the right. Climbing down over boulders directly in front, I followed the stream along a straight, strike-determined passage around and underneath boulders, until after 100 ft. or so the way on was via an impossibly tight duck beneath a large boulder. A further half hour's work with the lump hammer failed to open up this duck sufficiently to get through and so, in the interests of safety (my spare light had become slightly damaged) I decided to leave it for a later date. The way on past the duck can be seen and looks promising.

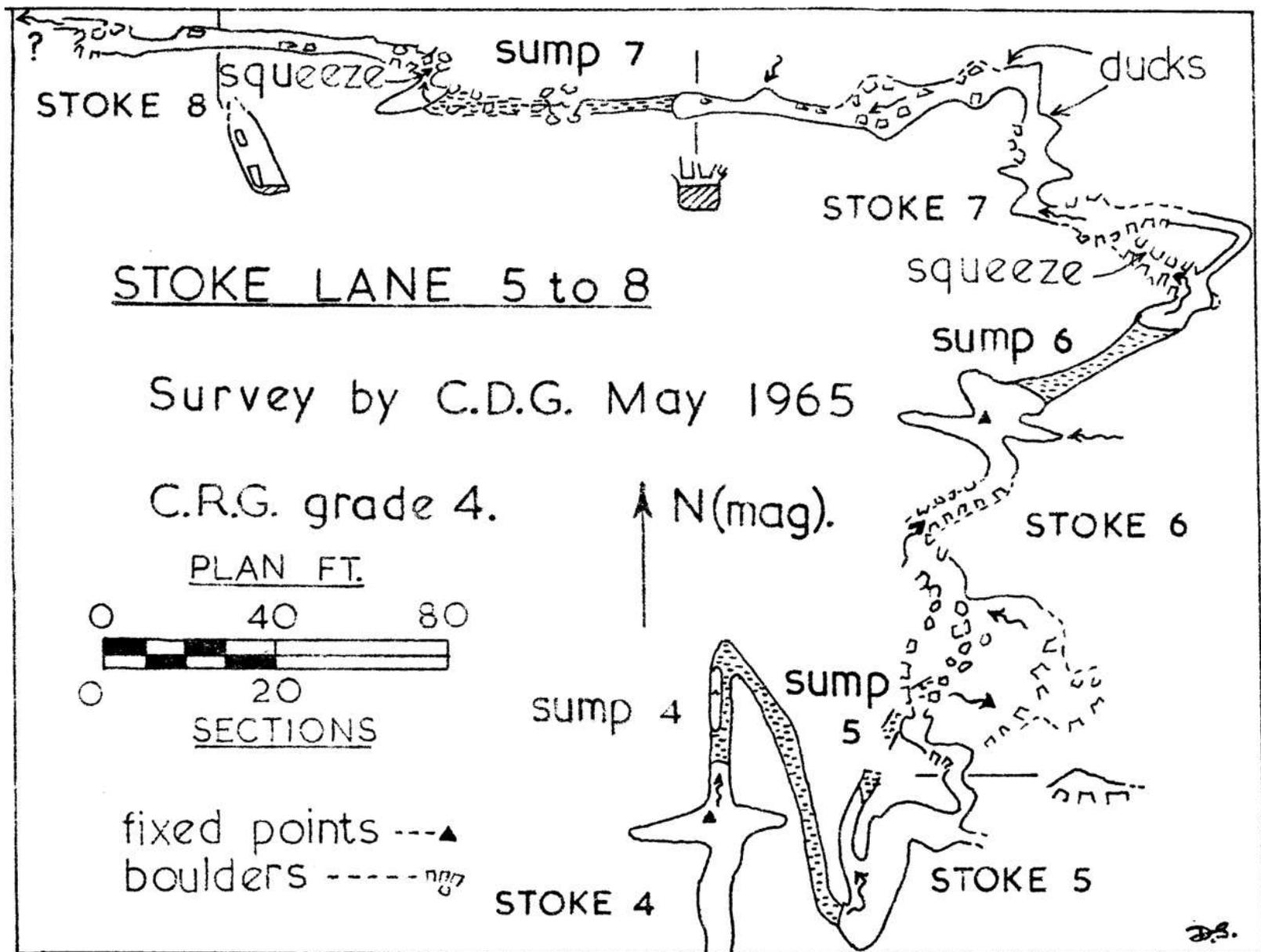
Stoke Lane is now about half way to its resurgence at St. Dunstan's, and a consideration of the local geology indicates that most of the rest of the cave will be similar to Stokes 7 and 8, i.e. developed along the strike, with frequent boulder obstructions and perhaps the odd sump. I think that an eventual through trip is not beyond the realms of possibility, though it will entail some pretty determined effort.

Notes on the Survey

The Grade 4 survey was carried out with a prismatic compass having a probable maximum error of 2° and a non-reinforced linen tape 50 ft. in length. The two fixed points marked on the survey are accurate to within 2 ft. horizontally, relative to a point on the surface, and the conventional survey was tied in to these points.

Surveying through a sump is never easy, especially in Stoke Lane. In this case measurements were taken by means of a line through the sumps, and bearings taken along each end of the line when stretched taut.

When tied into the fixed point downstream of Sump *U*, the conventional survey of the cave as far as Sump A (I & II W.G.G. | III & IV G.D.G.) was found to close to a high degree of accuracy.



LIBRARY NOTES

by

Donald Thomson

So much has come into the library during the last two months that it is necessary to be brief in its description. Perhaps the most generally useful is the "Speleological Abstracts"; two copies of Vol. 1, No. 2 of which have been received. It is published by the abstracts service of the British Speleological Association.

I have removed a few books from the Hillgrove Library. These are the older and rarer, and some of the more recent and expensive, and include the following:-

Log of the Wookey Hole Divers 1935, Cave Hunting (Boyd Dawkins), Baker's Caving, and the Cave of Roufignac. They are, of course, available on request.

The University of Bristol Speleological Society Proceedings 1964-65 contain the article on the Brean Down Temple by Arthur ApSimon. This was dug between 1956 and 1959. By way of caving are the write ups of Poll Cahircloggon West One and the Fergus River Cave. The former is named after the local townland and is preserved for its unpronounceability. The proceedings also include:-

S. Clevedon-Brown on the Romano-British site at Portishead, a spectral analysis of amber found at Gough's Cave, and an account of the Coole Cave, County Clare.

The Devon Speleo Society's Journals for October and December 1965 contain useful accounts of smaller caves in Devon. We do not exchange with them, but I have several journals which I am prepared to lend.

The Cerberus Newsletters for August, September, October and December 1965 have arrived. The demise of Balch's Cave makes depressing reading, but Hillier's seems to have suffered less damage.

The N.S.S. News, the Voice of America, for June to November contain some fine photographs of Seamay Cave, Guatemala, and the account of a most unpleasant accident at Devil's Hole, where a party of four divers lost two of their number in an illegal and dangerous dive. The November edition describes a climbing cam, a substitute for Prussik knots. The cam is said to hold much better than Prussiks on wet rope. The Bulletins Vol. 27, Nos. 3 and 4 are of interest to Mendip. No. 4 is devoted largely to Derek Ford's paper on the development of caves with special reference to Mendip. It also describes tidal movements of rock measured in caves and a theory on the formation of gour pools.

The Belfrey Bulletin always makes good reading. Vol. XIX, No. 10 contains some very sane comments by Alfie Collins on the misguided actions of those who removed the Swildon's pipe. Alfie probably visualizes himself on a sticky rescue early on a Sunday morning, the thieves doubtless do not. There has already been a M.R.O. call out, on the night of February 12th, which would probably

have been unnecessary had the pipe been left in place. The victim stated he would like the pipe put back. No. 12 carries another account of the Dachstein Ice Caves, and George Honey told us why he liked Rhodesia, even if he could not spell it.

The C.R.G. publications include the Newsletters Nos. 97 to 99. The Oxford University Expedition to Northern Spain (Publication No. 14) is a very detailed expedition log, and the British Hypogean Fauna contains some well produced photographs and a review of Prof. Vandel's 'La Biologie des Animaux Cavernicoles'. Also published by the C.R.G. is the Mendip Cave Bibliography and Survey Catalogue 1901 to 1963 (Publication No. 13) compiled by Messrs. Mansfield, Reynolds and Standing. More detailed than Speleological Abstracts, it is limited to Mendip, and gives the archaeological as well as speleological references.

The Cave Diving Group Newsletter for December 1965 is devoted to Oliver Lloyd's observations on drowning and his description of the sump rescue equipment.

The Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings for 1861 to 1862 were found on a second hand bookstall, and have since been donated to the library. This is perhaps not a recent publication, but it contains Boyd Dawkin's original account of the excavations in the Hyaena Den from 1859 to 1862.

The Plymouth Caving Group Journals Nos. 18 and 19 (August and September 1965) are concerned as much with mining as with caving. No. 19 has an hair-raising description of man engines. About the most dangerous machines ever devised, and often driven by water power, they were used to raise miners up long shafts. Rods with platforms attached were raised and lowered alternately in the shaft, and with perfect timing, the miner stepped from one to the other as it reached the top of its travel. Occasionally he missed his footing, and it was not unknown for the whole system to collapse.

Other journals received are:-

Axbridge Caving Group Newsletters

Bradford Pothole Club Bulletin, Vol. 4. No. 7.

British Caver, Vol. 42, 1965.

Chelsea Speleo. Society Journals, Vol. 7. Nos. 11 and 12 and Vol. 8, Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

M.N.R.C. Journal, Vol.2, No.1. November 1965. This recounts the history of Lamb Leer with several photographs.

Severn Valley Cave Club Newsletters.

Shepton Mallet Cave Club Journal, Series 3. No. 10, November 1965.

Sottoterra (Bulletin of the Speleo. Club of Bologna.)

Speleo (Newsletter of the South West Essex Technical College. It has a full account of an expedition to Norway).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

On the evening of the 12th February, there was an M.R.O. call out to Swildon's which provided an opportunity to talk with several people, including members of the S.W. Essex Technical College and the Shepton Mallet caving clubs. It was obvious from this that there is considerable unease on Mendip about the running of the M.R.O. Much of this criticism was crystalized in a leader in the S.V.C.C. Newsletter, 'Cascade'. Unfortunately, this took the form of a particularly ill informed and very bitchy article, the writer of which found it necessary to cloak his identity under the pseudonym of 'Sagacity'. However, this article merits study and comment.

The essence of the complaint seems to be: first, M.R.O. is non-democratic; second, it is run by non-cavers; third, it is inefficient; and fourth, that the sump rescue equipment is frequently away from Mendip.

The M.R.O. was formed about twelve years ago when it became obvious that the increase in the number of younger, bolder, cavers and the number of discoveries were going to increase the number of cave accidents. It has always been non-democratic, in that the M.R.O. wardens have not been elected by individual clubs, at least not by Wessex at an A.G.M. I am not convinced that democracy has a place in the M.R.O. any more than in the ambulance service; anyone who disagrees can die when they fall if they want to. The M.R.O. was in existence before it was given a name and a committee, and all clubs operating on Mendip were asked for their views before the organization was formed and the mechanism of call out was formulated with the police. The first essential of the M.R.O. is that it should work, but if cavers think they can improve it (and after all it is the individual cavers who make up the M.R.O.) they have the privilege, and indeed the duty, to contact their own secretaries or the Secretary of the M.R.O.

Nor is it true to say that the M.R.O. is run by non-cavers. The wardens were chosen as representatives though to have special caving ability or the experience to muster forces. They all, of necessity, live locally. The medical wardens consist of all the doctors in the area known to have caving experience. 'Sagacity', might like to know that in the interests of democracy any of these would step down - nothing disorganizes a Monday morning surgery like a rescue call out. The other wardens are experienced cavers, and include currently active divers. The secretary is a very active caver.

It has been pointed out that the M.R.O. is inefficient. It is true that there are no squads standing by on Priddy Green dressed for emergency. It is also true that when the call goes out, the rescue party sets out from the Hunter's Lodge. In the North, which is 'Sagacity's' model, this may be different, but on Mendip it is doubtful if there are enough cavers within reach to make this possible. There are certainly more cavers in the Hunter's Lodge on a Saturday evening, when a high percentage of the accidents occur, than within the next twenty miles, and in cases of exposure time is all

important.

It has been proposed that a general meeting be called to discuss the M.R.O. If this is done without a preliminary airing of views, it will be like Paddy's market and nothing will be settled. If this meeting be held we shall expect 'Sagacity' (without mask) and expect to hear what he can contribute to the M.R.O. of which he is, after all, whether he likes it or not, a part.

Yours faithfully,

Donald Thomson.

BOOK REVIEWS

SHEPTON MALLET CAVING CLUB JOURNAL Series 3 No. 10 November 1965.
20 pp. at 2/- from F.J. Davies, Withy Lane, Neighbourne, Bath, Som.

The Editorial in this issue takes up the rather dated cause of the missing pipe in Swildons, saying that when the S.M.C.C. remove an artificial aid they return it to its owners! However, the Editor goes on to say that "People with a yen for the anonymous removal of objects from caves might restrict their activities to the piles of rotting clothes, rusting tins and decaying food" a very valid point!

Bryan Ellis's article on "A mounting for Cave Survey Instruments" describes an accurate arrangement which holds both a compass and an Abney Level, thereby speeding up the taking of readings.

"The Great Flood at Eastwater 1910" is written by one of the officers who was trapped in the cave with E.A. Baker and Co. How the Editor came by the M.S. is not quite clear but it presents quite a scoop with some interesting anecdotes which are not included in the accounts given by Balch and Back.

Some more passage was added to Holwell in 1965 and this has now been written up by Bryan Ellis, with survey.

The Journal is concluded by a review of the Mendip Cave Bibliography.

A.D.O.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SPELEOLOGY Edited by George Claus
Vol. 1. Part 4 173 PP. 29 Pl. Published 20.7.65 by J. Cramer (694 Weinheim, Germany)
Subscription DM 80 (£7.4s.0d.) per annum.

The International Journal of Speleology is a new quarterly periodical devoted to publishing papers of original speleological investigation. It is intended that each volume will comprise of four issues totalling about 400-500 pages and each issue will be divided into three sections; microbiology botany; zoology; and geology-geomorphology; after the three major fields of speleological research. Papers are printed in any one of five languages, English, French, German, Italian or Spanish, together with two summaries one in the language of the paper, and the other in either English, French or German. In the past it has been very difficult for research workers to locate certain articles, especially in a language other than their own. Many authors publish their findings in Journals within their own scientific sphere, thus research carried out on the microflora of a cave may appear in a microbiological bacteriological, medical or botanical journal. It was with this in mind that an international group of scientists evolved the International Journal of Speleology to encompass all branches of cave and subterranean research.

This is the concluding part of Volume one of the International Journal of Speleology and brings the total number of pages in the first volume to 571 plus plates. This issue contains 3 articles in English plus the News and Reviews, 3 articles in French and 3 articles in German (abbreviated to Eng. Fr. and Ger. after the titles in this review).

The Journal contains numerous plates; and the articles, which are as follows are well presented.

"Notes on the cave dwelling Coleopteres of Bulgaria V." (Fr.) by Vassil B. Gueorguiev (Institute of Zoology, of The Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria). The author describes a new species of cave beetle from three caves in the central part of the Bulgarian Balkans.

"Explorations in the Caves of Banat (Roumania) in 1963" (Fr.) by St. Negrea, A. Negrea, V. Sencu and L. Botosaneanu (institute of Speologie "Emil Racovitza" Str. Dr. Capsa No. 8, Bucarest 35, Roumania). The authors describe 23 natural and artificial underground cavities in the Banat Mountains. The longest is 1,115 ft. (340 m.) whilst the average is about 65 ft. (20 m. long).

"Underground Confluences" by Marcian Bleahu (Geological Institute of Roumania, Bucarest). The author describes different types of underground confluences and the way in which different water courses assist in the formation of underground streams.

"A contribution of the knowledge on Well Fauna in the Bela Reca River Valley, Roumania" (Ger.) by Constantin Ivlotas and Iosif Capuse, (Institute of Speologie, "Emil G. Racovitza" Str. Dr. Capsa 8, Bucuresti, 15. Roumania). The authors summarise past research into the fauna of wells in the river valley of Bela Reca, Roumania and then describe their studies in 13 wells in this district where a total of 34 species of fauna were discovered. 15% of these species consisted of

phreatobites and 85% of phreatoxenes.

"Preliminary Note on the Algae of Crystal Cave, Kentucky" (Eng.) by J.P. Nagy, (Biological Institute Matthew Maury Research Center, Long Island, New York, U.S.A.) Collections of a preliminary type carried out in Crystal Cave, Kentucky, resulted in the identification of seven algal taxa of which two were recorded for the first time in a cave. As no correlation could be found amongst the algae occurring in Crystal Cave and those of nearby Mammoth Cave, the conclusion is reached that the cave algae floras do not originate from the surface but may have arrived in the caves during its formation.

"Algological Investigations in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky" (Eng.) by H.J. Jones, (Biological Institute, Matthew Maury Research Center, Long Island, New York, U.S.A.). Algological investigations carried out in Mammoth Cave revealed the presence of 27 Taxa representing all Divisions of the Algae except Pyrrhophyta and Phaeophyta. A comparison is made between the algal flora of the Mammoth Cave and algae found in several European caves. The ecology of cavernicole algae is discussed.

"Diatoms from Mammoth Cave, Kentucky" (Eng.) by Sam L. VanLandingham, (Department of Biology, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A.) Samples collected in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, revealed the presence of a diversified but not too abundant Diatom community in the cave. As the material was not subjected to culturing experiments but was investigated immediately after arrival, both in native and permanent preparations, it was possible to:

1. ascertain that the majority of the diatoms contained well developed, apparently healthy and functioning chloroplasts and,
2. to get a rough estimate of the actual number of specimens present in a microhabitat.

The identifications resulted in the recognition of 16 diatom taxa of which possibly 4 are new to science. Further studies are, however, required to ascertain this point.

"Date on information regarding the Algal Flora of Kolyuk Cave near Manfa" (Ger.) by George Claus, (Department of Biological Science, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, U.S.A.) The Kolyuk cave lies in the southern part of Hungary in the Mexsek Mountains, about 3 km. (1.8 miles) from the village of Manfa. The material for this paper originated from part of the cave cut off by a sump. In all a total of 29 different taxa were noted. Since the cave from which the collections were made was completely devoid of light, it is especially significant that a well developed blue-green algal flora was found, thus producing further evidence that algae were present in the caves at the time of their origin.

"The plant life of the Lillafüred Caves" (Ger.) by Klara Verseghy, (Botanical Department of the Natural History Museum, Budapest, Hungary). The vegetation of the Forras and Istvan caves at Lillafüred in Hungary is composed of algae, micro and macrofungi and mosses. The moss flora is

richly developed and it can be supposed to represent a secondary vegetation at the artificially illuminated places of the caves.

The journal is concluded with an eleven paged section devoted to News and Reviews by G. Nicholas (Philadelphia).

A.D.O.

Speleological Abstracts Vol. 1. No. 2. (1963). Published Jan.1966 by the British Speleological Association, Settle, Yorks. 87 pp. 4 to. 6/6 post free.

Right has triumphed again. Your reviewer, when reviewing Vol. 1. No. 1. of these abstracts (W.C.C. Jl. No. 97, Vol. 8, p. 145 September 1964) complained about the way in which the material was listed, under areas of publication instead of areas of location. The latter is, of course, the most sensible way, if you wish to look for Quaking House Cave for instance you turn directly to the Somerset and Bristol District Section on pages 19 onwards and under Cave Descriptions is Quaking House Cave, together with cross references to articles on the cave which appear in the Geological and Biological sections. Certain pseudonyms have been uncovered, whether or not these are correct I cannot say but I have no doubt that Cheramodytes will write on this subject in the near future.

The 489 abstracts make an impressive list, only marred by numerous errors. In many cases 'H' has been used for 'M', as in abstract 459 - Hilverton and H.N.R.C. instead of Milverton and M.N.R.C., the result, I understand, of employing a non-speleological typist.

Let us hope that in the next years' Abstracts typed M.S.S. and proof readers are used.

A.D.O.