

CONTENTS

Editorial, Regional Notes		159
Club News		160
Letters:	NCA (Jenny Potts, Dick Willis)	162
	Mendip Memories (Richard Kenney, Don Thomson)	
GRUTAS DE PORTUGAL	Doug Mills	166
50 Years ago		167
CAVING IN THE 1940s Part 1	Richard Kenney	168
Crossword Solution		173
CAVES, RAIN & PORRIDGE (County Clare)	P. Watts / P. Hann	174
From The Log		178
Back Page (HQ Warden Roster, Riddle)		

NEXT EDITION

VISITS TO THE DORDOGNE 1985	Paul Weston
LA FROMAGERE (VERCORS)	Mark Madden
FAULT CHAMBER – SEVERN AVENS (Swildons)	Mark Madden
MANOR FARM SWALLET (NHASA LOG) Part 2	Brian Prewer (editor)
CAVING IN THE 1940S Part 2	Richard Kenney

CLUB OFFICERS

Chairman	Phil Hendy	Dragon cottage, Westholme Lane, Steanbow, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA5 4EH.
Treasurer	Dianne Walker	Field Cottage, 90 Chelynych, Doultling, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.
Secretary	Bob Drake	Axeover House, Yarley, Nr. Wells, Somerset.
Asst. Secretary	Mike Dewdney-York	59 Kennington Ave., Bishopston, Bristol.
Caving Secretary	Jeff Price	18 Hurston Road, Inns Court, Bristol.
Northern Caving Sec. (Northern caves only)	Keith Sanderson	Heather View, Newby, nr Clapham, via Lancaster.
Gear Curator	Dave Morrison	2 Westholm, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11.
HQ Bookings	Mike Dewdney-York	as above.
Sales Officer	Pete Hann	3 Queens Terrace, Sherborne, Dorset.
Editor	Nigel Graham	60 Williams Avenue, Wyke Regis, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9BP. Tel. (0305) 789770
Committee	Pete Watts, Nick Marachov, Jim Rands, Jim Moon.	
Librarians / Journal Distribution	Pete & Alison Moody	
Survey Sales	Maurice Hewins	31 Badshot Lea, Badshot Park, Farnham, Surrey

Opinions expressed in this Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Wessex Cave club as a whole, unless otherwise stated.

Wessex Cave Club Headquarters:

Upper Pitts, Eastwater Lane, Priddy, Nr. WELLS, Somerset BA5 3AX Telephone Wells (0749) 72310

(c) Wessex Cave Club

EDITORIAL

First an apology for the delayed publication of the last edition, due to a technical hitch: part of the original artwork would not reproduce. Thanks are due to Bob Drake and to the printer for sorting this out. There was also some confusion which resulted in Subscription papers having to be sent separately - hopefully we've sorted this out.

On any Saturday evening in the Hunters', a goodly proportion of the conversation will be on Caves and on Caving. Underground, more especially on digging trips where there is more opportunity for conversation, topics range over anything and everything except caves. More particularly, except caving politics. This is a topic which produces three reactions generally: effortless ennui; long, sometimes rather acrimonious debates; or an indignant tirade. Everyone has their own opinions on the subject, many cavers avoid it in the hope it will fade away (unlikely!), many have various fears, rightly or wrongly, on what "they" (N.C.A., B.C.R.A., N.C.C., S.T.N.C., L.B.S.C. or whatever) will do to our caving given half a chance. Well, basically, most speleopoliticians are trying to represent us, the ordinary club cavers, to outside agencies, as well as acting as an information exchange between the caving regions, etc. This all does stand or fall, however, on clear communications, both ways. Currently, the whole N.C.A. structure is coming under scrutiny in an effort to make it more representative of general cavers' opinions, and less the remote nebula some perceive it as. This does all depend, though, on accurate information.

A journal editor is somewhat at the mercy of contributions: is that name spelt correctly? is this verbal item accurate or bar-room gossip? (I've been caught out on that one) Where regional council / N.C.A. news is concerned, it should be easy to prepare summaries from meetings minutes, official circulars etc. If however, this source is ambiguous or even inaccurate to the point where it unwittingly misleading, any errors the editor then perpetrates only become apparent well after publication, when letters from upset N.C.A. representatives arrive. As in this edition. I have published both letters received in full, plus a reply which includes my source of information. There are those who consider caving is becoming too political - perhaps they are right.

Enough! Let us think subterranean - which is what matters after all! Now is the time to think of Summer (assuming one has been scheduled for 1986). Various members are planning trips away, and this edition puts forward a readily-accessible country which does not seem to have received much attention from the Wessex - why, I wonder? The land is Portugal. Much nearer home, on Mendip in fact, as I write, plans are afoot to do crafty things to the unwelcome sump in West End Series, the Wednesday-Nighters think Swildons One is too short, the Longwood Valley diggers are practising their Yorkshire accents.... 'tis all in the Log' And this year's social events are in planning. Good caving!

REGIONAL NOTES

MENDIP

The New Year started in atrocious weather (the worst was over Christmas, when flood water damaged the BWW installations in Longwood Valley, washing a considerable quantity, of diesel oil down at least as far as Longwood Valley Sink. Most of this oil has now cleared.). In Swildons, the huge boulder in the Water Chamber subsided a couple of feet deeper into the stream trench. On New Year's Day a party very overdue from Thrupe Lane Swallet caused an alert: the first team to the cave met them emerging. A caver died in Longwood Swallet on January 11th when a boulder he was climbing on in the Main Chamber gave way.

SWILDONS HOLE: A reminder after last edition's stop-pressed stop-press that the goodwill fee is now 20p. Pay at the back door of Manor Farm house not at Solomon Coombe.

SOUTH WALES

DAREN CILAU has yielded another three-quarters of a mile of passage, beyond ST. David's Sump.

Access to this fine cave is still free-and-easy (oh, all right, free and b-- awkward!), but this could change, if any entrance (including via a linked system) of the three present major caves and any future finds was discovered on the Craig y Cilau National Nature Reserve. If this happened access would match that of Agen Allweld, controlled by the Agen Allweld Cave Management Committee on behalf of Nature Conservancy Council

Following the recently publicised parking problems near Whitewalls, on Mynydd Llangattock, a small car park by the Daren Cilau quarry track has been proposed.

OGOF FFYNNON DDU: An extension to the Nature Reserve now means CWMDWR QUARRY CAVE lies within the Reserve, so access will be by permit as for OFD II.

CLUB NEWS

A TOOL COLLECTION for use around Upper Pitts is being assembled by Pete Watts and Pete Hann. A booking system will be used. Donations of surplus tools in good condition will be much appreciated: contact either Pete.

CAVE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION. An additional note to the Rules announced in the last edition: judging will be independent, so Committee Members are free to enter.

SALES. Second hand Oldham headset/battery top assemblies --	Sold Out.
Large ammunition boxes (8" x 13" x 19")	£3.50.
Caving boots:	£10 a pair.

DONATIONS TO M.R.O. "Dear Pete (Hann)

Many thanks for the donation. Please convey our appreciation to all at Upper Pitts.

Yours, Jim (Hanwell),

on the receipt of £13 from the collection box at the HQ, and £13.44 Bonfire Party profit. A further £15 from the box handed in, late February.

MISSING from Upper Pitts on January 12th. DUVET, Berghaus, dark green. Probably taken in error: Pete Watts would appreciate its return, please, via Upper Pitts (it may be handed to any Committee member for safekeeping, no questions asked).

KEYS, Upper Pitts doors. A further batch is due. The £5 charge is a deposit, returned on your returning the key should you leave the Club, transferrable should the locks be changed again in the future.

METER, lighting. The coin mechanism on the present meter is damaged, probably by someone trying to use it incorrectly, and it is likely that it will be replaced by a 50pence one.

UPPER PITTS ALTERATIONS: The door called for on the original plan for the new changing-room, between the extension and the present ladies' dorm has been installed. (It cannot yet be used: it is behind the bunks.) A new, fire-resistant, door has been fitted in the lounge doorway.

LAMB LEER FILM (circa 1936). Does anyone know the whereabouts of this film, made by the British Speleological Association? This follows a suggestion that this, and other, early films would be well worth reshooting. (A goodly quantity of archive material, mainly photographs, and including Atty's sketches, left to the Club, is currently being sorted and catalogued for proper preservation.)

NEW MEMBERS

The Wessex Cave Club welcomes the following new members:-

Bruce Michael Levitan. 17 Ridgeway Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3DY.

Ian Frank Pearson .56 St. Thomas Street, Wells, Somerset.

David White. 19 Clevedon Road, North Weston, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8PF.

Chris ("Zot") Harvey c/o The Belfry.

Derek Fincham. 28 Glendale Road, Erith, Kent.

Paul Edward Jessop, David Neil Ward. Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, Plymouth, Devon.

David Roger Taylor. 6 Pound Lane, Fordington, Dorchester, Dorset.

Stephen Ernest Pickersgill. 37 Sandown Close, Bagby, Thirsk, North Yorkshire.

Dr. Andrew Colin Hayter. 36 Green Lane, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 3RW.

Malcolm Poyle (Re-application). Malraymar, Steeple Langford, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

JOINT MEMBERSHIP

Has been granted to Paul Hadfield & Juliet Walsh.

(Paul and Juliet are maintaining her maiden name in line with local custom.)

DIARY DATES 1986

UPPER PITTS WORKING WEEKEND. 22 / 23 March. Work planned: eaves and guttering repairs, fitting new post box, clear out extension and sort out scrap-heap in car park, hedge trimming, firewood cutting.

COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS A.G.M. May 17, 2.30p.m. Hunters'.

W.C.C. Committee Meetings: 5 April, 18 May.

M.N.R.C. SEDAN CHAIR RACE (for Wessex Challenge Trophy). 5 July at their HQ (M.N.R.S.). Plus BUFFET: tickets £2.50 from M.N.R.C.

MENDIP RESCUE ORGANISATION are 50 this year: celebrations 27 September. Further details will follow.

*NHASA LOG: MANOR FARM SWALLET (Part Two) (ed. Brian Prewer)

*Held over to next edition.

Letters to the Editor

N.C.A. Constitution.

Derby
February 1986

Dear Sir,

I have recently received a copy of WCC Journal No.207 (Dec 85) and was concerned by the report on page 126/7, which refers to a proposal I am supposed to have made to the N.C.A. Executive meeting in October. Your report appears to be based on some misapprehensions arising out of an incorrect report printed by Frank Baguley in "Cambrian Newsletter", (which I had seen) and a report from Paul Ramsden to a C.N.C.C. meeting.

I was most concerned at the report by Frank Baguley which stated that I had made the same proposal to N.C.A. Executive as Dick Willis had made to B.C.R.A. Conference, and I had written to the C.S.C.C. Secretary (who was not at the N.C.A. meeting) before C.S.C.C. November meeting to explain what I really DID propose. Unfortunately, I gather he was not at the C.S.C.C. meeting and therefore my letter was not made known. I have written to Frank to protest that not only did he print a proposal I did not make, but that he added comments of his own which made it appear that I was proposing various changes to N.C.A., which I had no intention of doing.

Not having seen Paul's report, I don't know whether it was based on Frank Baguley's Newsletter or not.

I made my proposal entirely independently of Dick Willis - I had nothing to do with the proposal he made, and he had nothing to do with the proposal I made. I had attended the B.C.R.A. Conference and took part in the debate on Dick's proposal. Afterwards I discussed with several other N.C.A. Executive members who were at the Conference, the general feeling which had been shown by the response to Dick's proposal.

We agreed that this feeling was something of which N.C.A. itself should take note. We were not sure of how this might best be put to the N.C.A. A.G.M., but were sure it ought to be a matter for discussion.

I draughted a proposal for the October N.C.A. Executive Meeting in which I suggested that the Working Party set up to look into the Sports Council's New Approach to Grant Aid might investigate the possibility of making a proposal to the A.G.M., from the Executive, That N.C.A. set up a Working Party to look into a single national body for British caving. I was very conscious that I did not wish to try to make any proposal to the Executive myself, and that any proposal to the A.G.M. needed to be extremely carefully worded if it was not to be misunderstood. In fact the Executive had a general discussion on the subject, which was not what I had intended, and it was eventually suggested that any proposal should come from one of the constituent bodies and not from the Executive.

I did NOT suggest that the Federal system of N.C.A. be replaced by a single national body, although someone raised the possibility in the course of the discussion. NEITHER did I propose or wish that B.C.R.A. and N.C.A. should merge. I frankly do not know what is the best solution to the present problems but I would hope that some rational and unbiased discussion could take place, and that is what I was trying to promote.

I did not word my proposal particularly well, which may well have been the cause of some of the confusion. When I used the expression "single national body" I meant ONLY to imply that we want ONE national body, whatever its make-up, rather than the present situation of one national body accepted by the Sports Council and Government and another quasi-national body which thinks it ought to be THE national body. I would hope that there could now be discussion on what cavers really do want from their national body, and whether the present N.C.A. set-up is the best way to achieve this. If there is a general

feeling that it is not, then I would hope for some constructive proposals as to what is wanted in its place. If it is generally agreed that the present system, even with its many faults, is on the right lines, then I would hope for some constructive proposals as to how it might better achieve what cavers want. I would not expect any proposals for actual changes to be made at the coming N.C.A. A.G.M., but I would hope for a decision to look into the present situation and to report back to all cavers.

The present set-up is not satisfactory, and at present does not succeed in representing cavers' views adequately. The fault may lie in the constitution of N.C.A. itself, or it may lie in the deficiencies of its constituent bodies. This is something which I hope a Working Party might attempt to pin down.

A proposal to the N.C.A. A.G.M. on the lines I was trying to suggest has now been made by B.A.C.I. and is supported by C.D.G. This proposal was put forward at the January N.C.A. Executive Meeting, held on Mendip. I very much hope that all the constituent bodies will support the proposal.

I hope this makes the position clearer to you, and I would hope you might publish my letter if space permits as I am sure you would agree the item gave a false picture of what is happening, although you have obviously accepted in good faith what was reported to you.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Potts.

Bristol.

Dear Sir,

At the recent NCA meeting my attention was drawn to the section in your journal, Vol.18 No 207, in which reference was made to the motion submitted to the NCA Exec, on the subject of a "single national body".

May I correct one point - the motion was not, as stated, "the work of Dick Willis and Jenny Potts". I knew nothing about it until well after the Exec meeting, although I must admit that I was both pleased that it had been put forward and disturbed that it had not been allowed to be debated.

I am sorry that I was unable to be at the last CSCC meeting since I feel that I might have been able to correct some of the other misunderstandings which seem to have appeared. I certainly raised this whole issue in the debate at the Conference and my line of argument seems to have been accepted by a wide range of cavers (not all, thank God, life would be dull if everyone agreed).

I don't know what Paul Ramsden reported to the CNCC but I doubt if he advocated a merger of BCRA and NCA. BCRA is already part of NCA and, as I have said on a number of previous occasions, talk of a merger is therefore nonsense. The issue is not about a merger, it is about the structure of the national body and its resulting responsiveness to the needs of cavers and the pressures place upon them and their clubs. My contention is that the current structure is unresponsive, tedious, time-consuming and divorced from the views of cavers - the very "grassroots" referred to in your article.


The debate before the NCA at present is therefore one about its own structures and working practices. Jenny's motion, and indeed the one proposed to the NCA AGM by BACI and CDG, faced this and asked the NCA, all of it, to look into this question and make recommendations about the ways in which it should change in order to improve the situation. To argue that this is not necessary is to ignore the developments of the sport which have taken place since the NCA was formed. All organisations need to take stock of themselves periodically, to monitor and review their effectiveness and methods of operation.

If such a process is not followed they will stagnate, become irrelevant and pass, rightly, into oblivion.

Incidentally, just in case anyone thinks otherwise, I share your concern about the level of funding to clubs. If funding is obtained for any expansion of services (whether this involves the appointment of staff or not) this should not take place at the expense of the clubs since these are, and I trust will continue to be, the mainstay of caving. I believe, and I think that the NCA Treasurer would confirm it, that the possibility exists for additional funding from the Sports Council.

These would be above and beyond the existing administrative grants which, as I am sure you well know, have not until the very recent past been taken up by CSCC (if you don't already accept any grant aid for or on behalf of your member clubs, you can hardly get less).

I also share your worries about Executives gaining ultimate power. They shouldn't be allowed to do so and the best way to prevent this happening is to ensure that the means exists for "the grass-roots cavers" to swiftly and effectively influence what that Executive does in their name - something which the existing structure of the NCA seems perfectly designed to prevent.

Yours,

Dick Willis.

Editor's reply:

I thank Jenny Potts and Dick Willis for their Letters: I am sorry for the embarrassment caused by a report based on what I had taken as accurate, but is now seen to be at least ambiguous, when put into the context of the discussion at the November C.S.C.C. meeting. I cannot comment on Frank Baguley's report as I have not read it. The whole affair seems to be a series of misinterpretations, and it may be that one of the problems current in Regional Council/N.C.A. admin. is that of communications. Essentially we all misunderstood what had really been proposed: the Minute concerned is as follows:-

"The Meeting then discussed the proposal by Jenny Potts, put forward at the N.C.A. Executive Meeting October 19th, 'That the members of the N.C.A. Executive, bearing in mind the overwhelming support for the proposal recently put forward by Dick Willis, look into a suitable proposal which they may put forward to the N.C.A. A.G.M. in March which will indicate their willingness to look into the possibility of progress towards the formation of a single national body.' C.S.C.C. is not in favour of this - a merger of B.C.R.A. and N.C.A., with individual membership, is likely to take away any grass-roots power, and give ultimate and total control to the Executive. There would also be a case made for having a permanent paid secretariat, and the Council was concerned that very little money would find its way down to club level. It was proposed by Graham Price, seconded by Chris Smart that the investigation should take place, within strict terms of reference which would take into consideration all of the problems foreseen by C.S.C.C. The findings should then be referred to the N.C.A. A.G.M. and not just passed by the Executive. The motion was passed nem. con.."

It should be pointed out that C.S.C.C. has always strived for as much financial independence as possible, on "he-that-pays-the-piper" grounds, especially regarding Sports Council or similar grants.

As both correspondents point out, the system does need reviewing, after all it is supposed to be our national representative organisation. Such a review is not the issue here. Some cavers regard N.C.A. as a remote bureaucracy: it should never be one, and the proposals outlined above are intended to head off such a threat. Now the matter has been clarified, we can indeed discuss the N.C.A. constructively. I

wonder, however, how widespread the misunderstandings which prompted the two letters, have become?
N.G.

Glastonbury

Dear Sir,

I am afraid that your correspondent, Paul Dolphin, has fallen into a gentle but unwitting trap set by me, and not by Howard or the reviewer of his log. Yes, the records tell the true story of the opening of Dolphin Pot, and to an indifferent climber like me, it makes for sporting caving, and that's what it's all about. It is one of the few places in Eastwater that one can remember with pleasure, and its significance for future exploration is without doubt.

In the context under discussion the fact is that it was always open on our visits to the cave. After all, to a fifteen-year-old, the caving world begins at the time of the first trip.

We have all seen the cornered climber in the TV studio saying, "Because it's there". Well, it wasn't until Colonel Everest sent his chaps to do a bit of surveying.

Yours Sincerely,

Richard Kenney.

Leigh-on-Mendip

Dear Sir,

Overheard (following closely behind G*rg* L*c**) at the C.D.G. reunion in Wookey Hole on 4th October 1985:

"I don't recognise many people here - when I did my caving, most of these buggers were just feasibility studies".

Best Wishes,

Donald Thomson.

AGM
&
ANNUAL
DINNER

Provisionally at
STAR HOTEL
WELLS

18
OCTOBER
1986

GRUTAS DE PORTUGAL

Doug Mills

This Summer, three Wessex Cave Club / Westbury Caving Club members went to Portugal for a holiday and for a spot of caving in the Rast region, near Fatima. It all started after we found an article by N. Barrington about a 1957 expedition to Portugal which explored some caves around Mira D'Aire. Three of these are now spectacular show-caves.

Then we found the address of a Portuguese club, so we wrote to them. They replied that we could go caving with them and asked for more information. Holiday arrangements were rapidly sorted out and the information relayed to the club. "No problem", they said, "we'll provide the gear, phone us when you get to Portugal". This was a great relief to us since taking all our tackle by plane and motorbike would not have been easy.

We arrived in Portugal at the end of August 1985. Telephoning the club was not as simple as it looked: a temperamental telephone, no reply and not understanding enough Portuguese when we got one. Eventually contact was made and we met initially to arrange our trips.

We were picked up at noon by three members of the club: Crispin, the leader, a geology lecturer, Pedro, an archaeology student, and Carlo, purveyor of fine honey. After some food and drink, we amused our Portuguese companions by smashing carbide into small chips for our lamps.

The cave entrance was about 1km. from the road, over rough terrain, and the heat was unbearable. Posing photographs taken, we set about the more serious task of caving. OLHO DE MATA (Eye of the Wood) is a resurgence cave, dry during the Summer. Crispin and Carlo were to survey from the entrance inwards whilst Pedro and our group were to dig at a silted-up dry sump 300m. in. After three hours we broke through into a roomy passage about 15m. long, however the obvious way was via a wide, low slope into a chamber. Rope and a ladder were brought from the surface at about midnight, when the air was still stifling. The chamber turned out to be the largest so far seen in this non-too-spacious cave, and a lot of digging would be needed to push any further. The trip ended at 3.30 a.m., tents were erected and weary, hot and sweaty bodies crashed out.

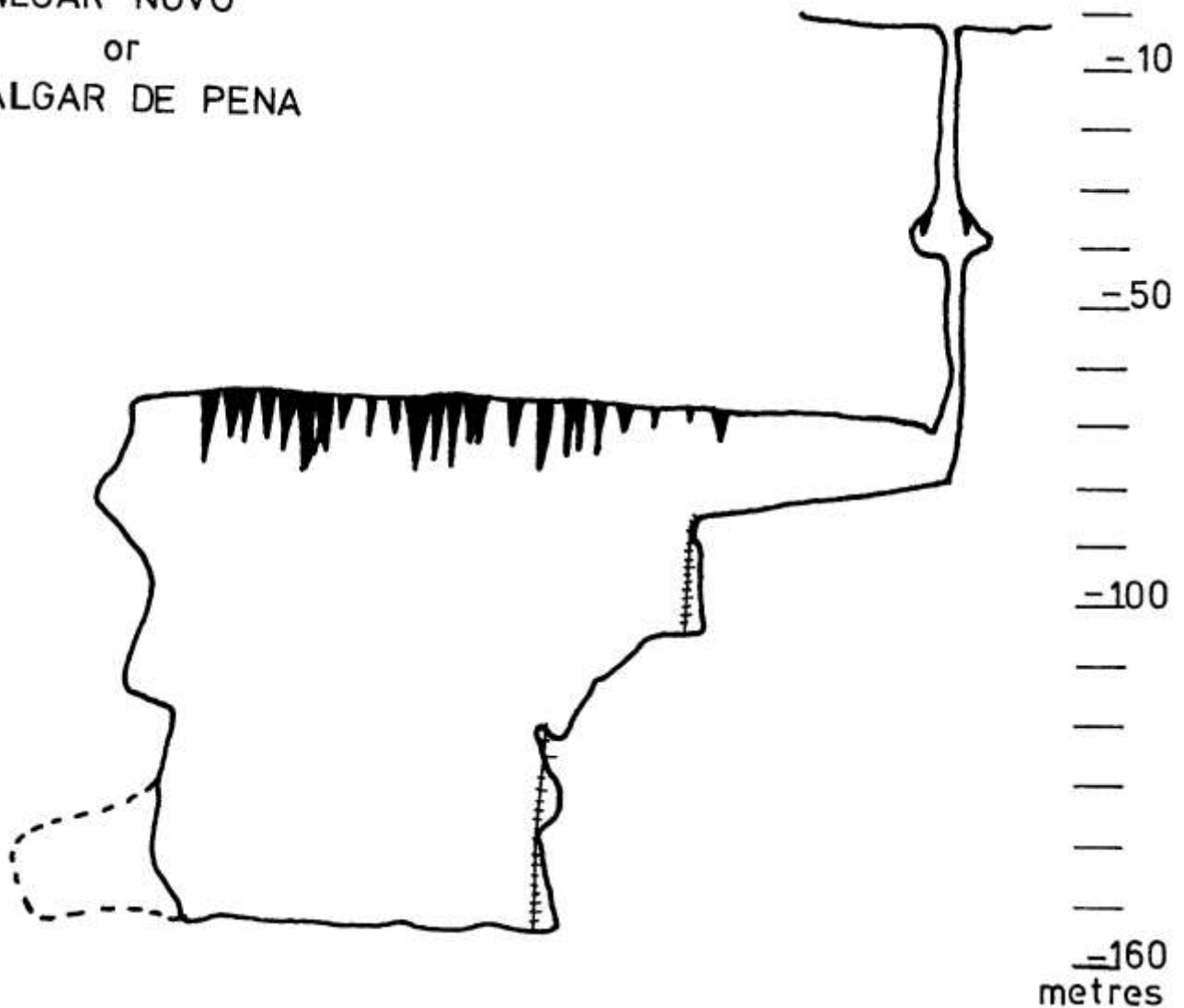
The sun beat down at about 8 a.m., and the heat, even this early, forces you to get up. When we were ready, we moved off in search of our next cave. Crispin had heard of a discovery in the area two months earlier by another club, and by asking around we were eventually guided to the entrance of ALGAR KOVO (or ALGAR DE PENA).

The entrance pitch is about 70 metres with a decorated landing at 27 metres, and a large landing at the bottom. The roof of the huge chamber is littered with long, thick stalactites, the walls and floor disappear in the gloom. Two more pitches, 20m each, to the floor, and the vastness of the cavern becomes apparent: 80m by 60m, and 90m deep. However, there were no passages leading off from the chamber, either at floor level or in the wings. After looking around and taking photographs, we came out with Carlos while Crispin and Pedro finished their survey.

We set off around 11 p.m., having done nearly two months' worth of our normal caving in one weekend. We all enjoyed the experience, and would like to thank Crispin, Pedro and Carlos for making it all possible.

Ian Prosser, Doug Mills, Val Ricketts.

ALGAR NOVO
or
ALGAR DE PENA



50 YEARS AGO

From W.C.C. Circulars

No.10 Nov. 20 1935

No.11 Dec. 27 1935

No.12 Feb. 15 1936

These three Circulars were primarily concerned with administrative affairs.

"Rule 8. That the subscription for Ordinary Members shall be 5s. 0d. per annum due on 31st October each year. (From 31-10-35) every new member shall be required to pay an entrance fee of 5s. 0d."

Circular 11 advertised The "Log of the Wookey Hole Expedition", the "record of the findings and the story of the explorer-divers who for over two months laid siege to the water-chambers of Wookey Hole Cave will soon be available" ... "...it is hoped that some profit will be made .. to assist the continuation of the work. The expenses of the Expedition are heavy, and the amount of work outstanding great".

Some 200 pages, 16 photographs, numerous diagrams, cost 7/6d a copy. Sales to Club members were via Graham Balcombe. (The "work outstanding" has occupied 50 years, and still the upper Axe remains secretive: fitting perhaps for a cave like Wookey?)

CAVING IN THE 1940'S

Richard Kenney
Part 1

INTRODUCTION:
CAVING IN THE '40's.

Backache perhaps? A gut that's too big for the smallest passages? A weight problem that makes SRT risky? No: I don't mean those 40's. I want to mention a few of the techniques and problems of caving in the 1940s, and to highlight changes that have occurred in Mendip caving since Howard started his log.

As time passes, we tend to dismiss our early experiences as being too boring for repetition, forgetting that most of us look to the past with amusement, nostalgia or interest.

There were problems peculiar to the war years, and to the austerity years that followed, while perhaps the most significant change since then has been the introduction of synthetic, non-water-degradable materials. Let's consider events not as separate incidents, but by parameters such as boots, lights, clothes, transport, etc.

Before the first article, I must thank Brian Prewer, who corrected my mistakes, suggested improvements and asked for more details in certain places. His turn, I hope, will eventually come, for we all have tales to tell, and we often wish that people would write things down before they fade from the caving scene.

LANGUAGE

Grots. Weegies. Fester. Thrutch. Gunge. Gloop. Goonsuit. Pretties. Etc. The caving vocabulary has expanded a great deal since the war, both by borrowing and by inspiration. We inherited a static one from Balch, and missed all the terminology devised in the '30s: a pity, for that must have been fairly extensive.

The vocabulary of any activity can be defined in four ways. There are the words or phrases that are borrowed from some other source, there are those that invented for some specific purpose, there are those that remain in the language more or less permanently, and finally there are words that have a transitory presence only.

Consider the enormous impact that the sea-going profession has had on our language. Words or phrases that had a specific maritime connotation are now used not for nautical purposes but as expressions of social behaviour. Examples are; "That person is sailing close to the wind", or "You can anchor it down by doing so-and-so". Some other borrowed phrases just don't stick at all: has anyone ever heard of blasting activity in a cave described as a "wizard prang"?

Words invented for a specific purpose have two origins. A new article appears on the caving scene and we are faced with the problem of "What shall we call it?" In caving, we have "Goon Suit" or "Furry Suit" as classic examples. Highly descriptive, easily remembered and humorous, they have all the qualities of success.

The other origin is much harder to define. Someone has a good idea and it just spreads, but how can one tell if the phrase is merely the "in" thing or is here to stay? No way: not common use, nor probability theory - nothing can help.

Luke Devenish appeared one day in the '40s with a metal tray that had sides, pointed ends with a rising base, and eye-pieces at each end for attaching ropes, an excellent article for hauling muck along a passage. Someone said, "How about calling it a sauce-boat?" That word has survived for forty years

because there are several of us still around who have been involved in its use. It is is practical, for at a dig it is so easy to cry "Up bucket! Down boat!" What name is used for a similar article in Yorkshire, I wonder?

A joke, perhaps a touch of cynicism, and someone used "String" instead of "SRT" (Single Rope Technique: come on now, we don't all know the words). Such a simple word, but we can all appreciate the under-lying menace of inadequate gear, the hint of recklessness in straying away from well-proven ladders and the jealousy of those of us who can't master the latest dodge. If ever a word should succeed, it's that one.

Mendip has some really good words, and without exception, the following list will bring instant recall of every aspect of caving at times when we wish that we could indulge in the sport. Let's list a few before talking about them:-

GROTS	Any clothing used for caving.
WEEGIES	A tourist or a caving novice, particularly noted for getting in the way. "Probably came from New Zealand": why, Brian Prewer?
FESTER	An inability to make progress, forward or in reverse, either when digging or not. (More generally applied now as a verb: to waste time idling, instead of caving etc. -Ed.)
THRUTCH	The act of finding the best way to negotiate a passage.
GUNGE	Cave deposits, usually wet.
GLOOP	Cave deposits, usually very wet.
GROVEL	As Fester, but with less intent.
A BIT DAMP	Bordering on the insane and just this side of drowning.
BODY RUCKLE	A crowd, usually reserved for Swildons.
STOOP	A near-impossible crawl for normal mortals, but an easy passage for those who specialise in passing the tighter locations.

If one asked a bunch of Mendip cavers to define those words I am sure that some of my descriptions would be challenged. Meanings are changing all the time and prove the point that caving itself is still a virile activity with much social interchange. Just what we all want, in fact.

BOOTS

The British working-class boot: steel horseshoe-shaped pieces on the front of the sole and on the heel; steel studs half the diameter of a drawing-pin in close rows all down the sole - who needs traverses with boots like that? However they did encourage fast swimming in Porth-yr- Ogof. Attempts were made to fit "Tricounis" and clinkers but the boot construction was all wrong. Tricounis were of hard steel with saw-shaped edges designed to bite into soft rock. Clinkers were softer and flat, and one assumed that they worked in the opposite way.

Steel toecaps were out because their weight would increase the rotting factor of the boot as a whole. The soles soon became loose, often in the middle of a trip. String was essential to stop them flapping too much. A lost sole left all the consol-lasting tacks, which joined the sole to the upper, in situ and these would push back through the soft inner sole and into the foot. It was often more comfortable to take the boot off. Laces soon rotted and always broke in a cave. Boot trouble was the accepted norm for every trip.

Football boots, cricket boots, plimsolls and ordinary shoes: all these were used on early trips - every cave demanded concentration. Commando soles, the original of today's moulded ones, were regarded with awe when introduced.

The introduction of Terylene stitching, nylon laces and soles moulded directly onto the boot have made an enormous impact on caving. A good grip, from a moulded sole, is taken for granted, and one nearly

forgets the early struggles in even the simplest places. No wonder that some of us never learnt decent techniques.

HATS AND LIGHTS

When work re-started at Badger Hole in '41 Balch had to provide, and pay for, the lights, Candles it was then, and by the time we were ready for Swildons we had become accustomed to the "Dependable Illuminant".

There are striking contrasts in Howard's Log. At one point he describes the difficulties experienced at the top of Eastwater Canyon, and much later one reads of him abandoning the ladder and doing a bit of free-climbing in extreme circumstances in Primrose Pot. The only explanation for the former was the use of candles. Do try a trip down Swildons or Goatchurch with this lighting: it is far harder than one imagines.

The standard system was to carry half-a-dozen spare candles and a box of matches, if they could be scrounged from the weekly grocery order, for they too were scarce. The candle in use was hand-held and we never tried fixing them to hats 'cos we had no hats. On tricky climbs it was sometimes possible to keep it burning whilst keeping it propped up in the top jacket pocket.

There is a rule which states that one will never bang one's head on the roof when not wearing a helmet. It was odd how an instinctive memory, related to other activities such as walking or breathing, would bring one up short at odd intervals, look up, and sure as fate the roof would be in close proximity.

All other lighting falls broadly into three categories. First, there is carbide; then comes adapted electric from bicycle lamps or hand-held torches; then finally there are the variants of mining lamps. There is no chronological order to this lot, for our individual experiences are gained from other people's advice, the size of our wallets or our own technological skill with the electric. Two exceptions, however, spring to mind. Large passages could be appreciated better with the use of magnesium ribbon or shavings, or, as in G.B., by the use of a paraffin pressure lantern.

The traditional headgear for use with "premier" carbide lamps in the Radstock coal mines was a soft cloth peaked cap shaped like a baseball cap with a Z-shaped bracket fixed to the front to hold the lamp. There was no chinstrap and one wonders how the miners came to terms with it.

On a long trip the weight of the lamp would make the whole unit tip forwards over the eyes. In its proper position the angle of the bracket was often wrong and directed the light towards the roof. This could be rectified by bending the bracket retaining clip on the lamp. This in turn led to metal fatigue and one often saw lamps held on by minimal means. Cavers always seemed reluctant to carry a decent bit of string.

One could write a book of stories about carbide lights, and I don't think that any other item of caving equipment has caused so much villification or jollification. I recall Howard's look of surprise when he attempted to free a blocked jet by pouring water into the carbide chamber and screwing it on quickly — the burner popped out with all the force of a bullet. Suffice to say, no carbide man is afraid of cleaning a blocked carburettor jet with a piece of wire.

Carbide was readily available at most ironmongers but modern regulations concerning its storage now make its sale less profitable so there are few stockists. Quoting Brian Prewer, "I can remember cyclists in Bath using carbide lighting in the 1950s, and carbide was being used in Fairy Cave Quarry for exterior lighting when I did my first trip into Hilliers Cave (about 1957)"

There is nothing else quite like the Chinese food stall on the urban roads of Malaya and Singapore. A few lumps of charcoal supporting a wok, a ridged roof of corrugated iron as protection from the tropical rain, a lovely smell from the 'mee-hoon' - and the carbide lamp going full blast. Surely that is a scene that is almost timeless, for the nightlife of the tropics has a vibrant quality.

The one thing that carbide did teach us was the art of caving in the dark. The novice would flap around on the Forty-Foot in Swildons and would often descend again to relight before attempting the top part of the climb. We would know the wet parts of a cave well enough to press on to a suitable relighting point. The second person would be pulled up the Forty before the first got a light going again, and so on.

Extreme wet caving was a different problem, and the only answer was an electric light. There were two possibilities: mount something on the back of the hat to counterbalance the carbide or have a hand-held torch. These developments more or less coincided with the appearance of hard hats. Don't forget I am still writing about the pre-plastic age. One couldn't have a hat made from "Bakelite", and a Celluloid one would be interesting in the presence of smokers or carbide people. No, it had to be fibre, which was O.K. for the mining industry but had the unfortunate result of becoming horrible and floppy when wet. One could scratch the top of one's head by pressing the helmet gently downwards and then moving it from side to side. The rot factor again: any chinstrap had a short life, and so did the innards that were supposed to hold the hat in place. One would meet cavers holding their hats in one hand, and accept it as normal behaviour.

Bicycle lamps and hand torches could be held in the hand or could be fixed to the front, side or back of the helmet. All makes suffered from the same disadvantages. First, they were not robust enough for cave use, the metal work being thin and the glass easily broken. Second, many parts of their construction relied on pressure contacts and these were sure to fail after a few bounces. Third, any mud or grit was impossible to clean from the system. Fourthly, they soon rusted. Fifth, there is nothing worse to deal with in a cave than the screw-thread used by torch makers. Sixth, battery life was shortened by exposure to wet, multi-cell batteries tending to disintegrate. One can imagine or remember the frustrations and hold-ups that ensued. Hours could be spent devising suitable brackets to hold these lamps, and more time could be spent taking them apart to extract the vital components.

The best systems, as always, were the simplest, and Howard was a leading exponent. I tried alternatives, but eventually came back to his standard. One started with a 4.5V battery, about the smallest capacity having screw terminals. This was tied to the back of the helmet or cloth cap with two pieces of string, one at right-angles to the other so even if it worked loose it would not drop off. At the front was a Woolworths bulb holder, with screw terminals, taking a standard 4.5V bulb. All that one had to do was wire it so contact could be made on one line by simply twisting two wires together somewhere above the ear. This could be done easily without removing the hat. Other items used in this ensemble were a reflector and a switch. The former was unsupported on its rim and violent contact with the rock often broke the bulb. In any event the light was not really strong enough to justify its use. A related 1" dia. switch could also be used, but mud and grit again made it unreliable. The system was intended for emergency wet use, including sumps, and was never intended as a replacement for carbide.

Trips, rescues and expeditions get longer, expertise broadens and modern lamp maintenance assumes an art form. The exponents of acid, caustic and expedition lamps have their say, but what happens on a routine trip? There are very few cavers who have sufficient knowledge to the relative merits of such things as bulb voltage and amperage, battery charging rates and time, tapered charges, tapered use, recovery time, capacity, charging from full or partial discharge, new electrolyte or the gourmet version, tap water or distilled - when shall I stop?

My experience of, say, fifteen years with these lights is to fall back on Howard's standard. In virtually every case on a trip when other people's lights have failed, the cause has been the presence of too much "gubbins". Variable resistors, fuses, spacers, spring contacts, you name it, it all causes trouble. Unless one is knowledgeable and is willing to do the necessary maintenance, one should keep things simple. I rip out the gubbins and connect my wires directly by screw contacts. Wires are then easily replaceable as soon as capillary electrolytic action weakens them. I always carry a repair kit on long trips, but this is only used by non-degubbinised members of the party.

Modern hats:

"Red, blue or yellow, squire?"

"Matt or shiny, mate?"

Even today there are useful adaptations. Twice, I have nearly been garrotted when lifelines inexplicably wound their way around my helmet. Knicker elastic chinstraps allow the helmet to come off, but a full chin restrainer would not: which is the best, then? The internal harness, or cradle, relies on plastic perforations and lugs for size adjustments. One day they will break. I reinforce mine by winding them with terylene cord.

New equipment, new materials, new pleasures; yes, I have swapped over to halogen. I can now upset the people I don't like by blinding them on tricky climbs, but more importantly, a whole new world has revealed itself. To anyone interested in looking at pretties or at roof level cave development they offer a whole new scene. What will come on the market next, I wonder?

(To be continued.)

(* Chinstraps: which, indeed, is the best? There is a school of thought which holds that knicker elastic straps are dangerous, precisely because they allow the helmet to come off too easily, especially if the wearer falls. On the other hand... -Ed.)

FROM the "Dorset Evening Echo" 20th January 1986

Bats come within a squeak of death

EIGHT bats had a narrow squeak with a chain saw — and it was a squeak that saved them.

Mr. Brian Huddy and Mr. Mike Walden were felling trees on the roadside at Broadmayne. Down came a large ash tree, which they began sawing into short lengths, when they heard some agitated squeaking.

They turned over a log and there just inches away from the saw were eight bats clustered together in a frightened huddle.

"I have been cutting down trees for

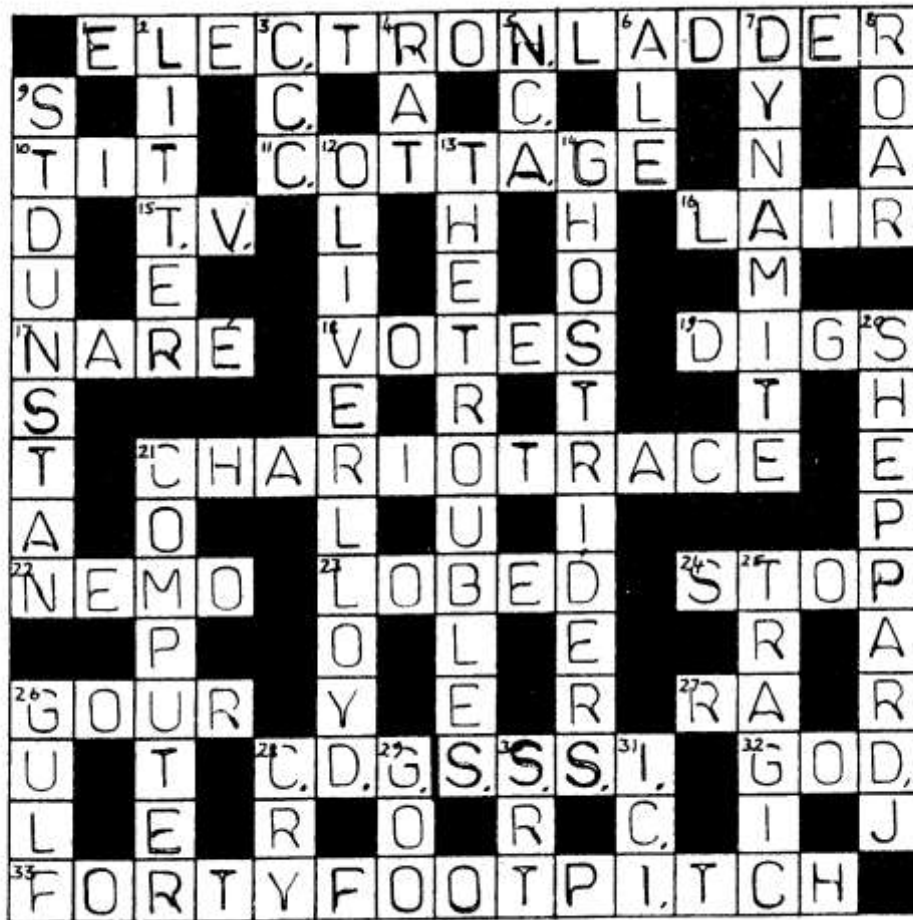
20 years or more and I have come across bees and even squirrels, but never bats," Mr. Huddy said.

He and Mr. Walden carefully collected the bats and put them in a box, and they spent the night safe and sound at Mr. Huddy's home in Sutton Road, Sutton Poyntz.

Police advised him to find a suitable hollow tree and return the bats to it. "They are hibernating, so we're now looking for a tree which will be safe for them, and then back they will go," Mr. Huddy said.

A short follow-up article a few days later reported that the bats, by then identified as Natterers, had indeed been found a new roost

PRIZE CROSSWORD SOLUTION



COMPILER: PHIL HENDY.

The Editor received only one correct entry, indeed only one entry, written on the back of a fragment of O.S. 1:50 000 (Sheet 190 - I think -), enclosed in an envelope marked "CROSSWROD'." Not a true anagram...

The winner was TONY JARRETT, the prize, a WCC car badge.



CAVES, RAIN & PORRIDGE

(With Apologies to J.M.W. Turner)

Pete Watts
Pete Hann.

Having been unfortunate enough to have been rained on in most European countries over the last few years, Mr. Hann approached me with the novel idea of going somewhere hot, sunny and with an abundance of nubile dusky maidens, so where did we go? Ireland. (0 out of 3 can't be bad). After much deliberation the month of August was hit upon. The logic was faultless, the reality something completely different.

What follows is a reasonably accurate, if somewhat cynical, account of what happened over the next three weeks.

Whilst that august (!) publication "The Caves of County Clare" - (not to be confused with "The Caves of North-West Clare") describes some things very well, due to changing geographical features and man's intrusion, not everything appears to be what it really is. This applies particularly to some of the Cullauns.

Personnel: Jo Beckett, Beth Yates, Pete Hann, Pete Watts, Tony Bennett.

August 19th 1965

CULLAUN 2

J.B., B.Y., P.W., P.H.

As happened five years ago, looked in the wrong field. What a fine start. Two hours later, read the book and walked to the right field. The entrance was taking a stream that wasn't supposed to be there. The first inlet made a nice sight, but only if you looked and didn't think about it. The same could be said of the foam and flood debris scattered liberally about the passages. A fairly quick trip to the pitch above the sump. Only Pete H. went down. He said the sump looked horrible and we believed him. Retired upstream, taking some pictures as we went, we also retrieved two helmets. Feeling foolhardy the nearer the entrance we got, we explored some of the inlets, but thoughts of Red Moss and Eastwater soon put a stop to that stupid game.

August 21st

POL AN IONAIN

J.B., P.W., P.H.

The usual pilgrimage to view the Great Stal. The entrance is still full of the ubiquitous dead chickens dressed in blue polythene, and yes, they still smell, but the water being taken in made it just about tolerable. The crawl in the stream isn't any easier when it's wet - it still hurts the knees, the foam just helps to concentrate the mind on other things. Mr. Hann taking lots of pictures and cursing the inadequacy of his non-photographic assistants, being of timid disposition went off and grovelled around in 59 Series, creeping out again when all the flashes had gone. On the way out a certain female disturbed an unmentionable object: it is fair to say the smell of rotting chickens is worse downstream and downwind.

Faunarooska: The wooden fence leading to the F1 entrance is in a poor state of repair and may well disappear altogether in the near future. This may not sound serious but it is the key to following the instructions in the book.

August 23rd

FAUNAROOSKA

J.B., B.Y., P.W., P.H., T.B.

Down via F1 entrance and into the main stream between F2 and Heads pot. The passage down past the First and Second Cascades and the chert bridges is mostly sideways crab way, sweet memories of

Disappointment but that's another story. There was a lot of water about, but the flow-stone obstructions were passable. The one disappointment was the lack of foam to wallow about in, but some of the bits of tree in the roof made up for that. In the low sections there were some very nice formations but Red Moss reared its ugly head again for one of our Yorkshire representatives, so onwards. The dreaded and much looked-for roof traverse was duly noted after we had passed it, and the two pitches were omitted as: the wet pitch was very very wet, the dry pitch was very wet - and we didn't bother to carry any tackle. Deliberately? we missed the F1 entrance on the way out and explored upstream as far as F2 before deciding it was stupid.

Poulnagollum: The signpost that used to say Poulnagollum has vanished, no doubt to adorn the wall of some caving club. All that remains is the post 10m down the road from the only obvious pull-in.

August 25th

POULNAGOLLUM - POULELVA

All five.

The classic County Clare through-trip - and then reverse it. Entered the system at Poulnagollum and into the Main Streamway via Shaft Gallery. Found an abundance of assorted footwear on the way, but no matching pairs: jokes about one-legged cavers will not be printed here. Carried on down the main streamway, trying not to suffer from agoraphobia as we went, made a few small diversions at Main Junction before sanity prevailed, and carried on past Coleman's Bath to the junction with Cotter's Gallery.

The cave changes completely at this point, getting very low in places and only opening up just before the Maze. Having made the mistake of entering the Maze once before, we took the Craven Canyon route to Poulelva Pot. Reached the bottom of the Pot and decided that in future we would be better off rigging things, still, turn round and reverse it all.

One notable diversion on the way out: took the High Road after being assured it would drop down into the main stream again. Drop is the operative word - the small hole Mr. Hann tried to pop out of was a good sixty feet up in the roof. Backtracked rapidly and went the sensible way out, some exploring parts of Branch Passage; others, suffering from tea and nicotine deprivation, crept away quietly.

August 28th

ST. CATHERINE'S ONE to Aran View, visiting FISHERSTREET POT.

This proposed trip was modified, checking water levels. The author (P.W.) hung the ladders down Fisherstreet to see if the through-trip was possible. Got soaking wet going down to look, but didn't get off the ladder as 6ft of water would have made me even wetter. Entered at St. Catherine's One but I didn't think it should be this wet. Fifty feet inside, decided it definitely shouldn't be this wet. Decided discretion was very prudent and retired gracefully.

Cullaun: For Cullaun One, park by the 5th telephone pole past the farm on the left. Enter the new forestry plantation and walk parallel to the grassed-over stone wall for approx. 100m to the largest depression, sallow bush covered. Take care in these bushes. P.W. fell through with a leg either side of a branch which rapidly stopped downward momentum - albeit painfully. This is the 4m entrance shaft. P.H. fell through the bushes covering the 5m pitch at one of the upper entrances. Only his arboreal agility and gibbon-like traits saved him from a terrible fate (ridicule and rescue!). So beware, who needs hazards in caves when the entrances are so well hidden?

August 31st. CULLAUN ONE

Typical of the Cullauns, didn't find it until I fell in it. Then not really sure if it was One. Took the stream passage as opposed to the dry oxbow. Pretty uninspiring passage apart from the vertical features. Three inlets on the right and the main tributary are the only relief in a very atonal passage as far as the second vertical. This part of the cave is the start of the formations, calcite, flowstones etc. After this point the roof dips considerably and with thunderstorms forecast we decided not to go any further.

A steady trip out, taking photos on the way. After getting out we decided to explore the upstream parts of the cave via a higher entrance. Lots of moonmilk and grot about, plus some amazing calcited flood debris. There was also a pretty innocuous-looking boulder in the stream, but when you went near it, it made noises closely resembling a flood pulse: most off-putting.

Doonyvarden: Park in the picnic area on the main road by the wood. Then walk back along the road towards Corkscrew Hill and Ballyvaughan as far as a short block wall on the right. Climb into the field and follow the fence towards the wood. In the area of the obvious mound which intrudes into the plantation a small stream sinks. About 20m to the left of the sink, cross the wire fence, and 10m into the plantation a muddy depression marks the entrance. It is not advisable to wander willy-nilly into the plantation: it is deep, dark, dangerous and full of beasties - and no-one to hold your hand!

September 1st.

DOONYVARDAN

J.B., P.W., P.H.

The U.B.S.S. description of this cave is great. In reality, a grot hole. The climb down into the shake-hole is very muddy, and the mud is very slimy, especially when it goes down your neck - Thanks, Pete!

The entrance squeeze is not 3m long but it is tight and awkward and brings you into the streamway about two-thirds of the way downstream and about 8ft up in the air. It's quite presentable a cave down as far as the Third and Fourth inlets, after that a grovel in water and crap and red stuff that gets everywhere. This part of the cave is in very shattered rock that must be pretty close to the shale margin. Once again lots of flood evidence about. Carried on downstream past the 4m pitch, and chanced the low section for a little way. Decided we didn't like it so went back upstream, past the entrance, and into some more grovelling bits, sometimes in water, sometimes in crap, but never in "large canyon passage"? Finally we'd had enough of it just before Gour Passage, partly due to Pete H's light failing, Jo's tea craving and my nicotine deprivation, but mainly due to sheer boredom.

September 3rd

CULLAUN ONE

J.B., P.H.

After the obligatory tea-break...

This time we went in via the top entrance and followed the stream down. The boulder still made the same noises. Went beyond the previous trip's limit, down the pitch and as far as the deep pool. The cave beyond this point was probably flooded, but as no-one else followed down the pitch, I didn't look too closely. This part of the cave contains the best formations, much to Mr. Hann's chagrin as for the first time, he'd left his camera in the car.

CULLAUN TWO

This time a photographic trip for Pete H. Two went down the pitch with just a handline, but it wasn't that easy to get back up it again.

The weather was pretty abysmal for most of the three weeks. St. Catherine's was attempted on more than one occasion, but the risk just didn't seem to be worth it. CULLAN FIVE was also looked at but the proximity of rock to water was minimal. COOLAGH RIVER CAVE was looked at in various stages of flood, and FERGUS RIVER CAVE managed to flood a very large area with apparent consummate ease. Three show-caves were also visited; AILWEE, MITCHELSTOWN and DUNMARE. Great fun was had pretending to be grockles, but is calcite really a living organism??

Having spent every single day five years ago caving, and age being what it is, and the company being what it was, this was more of a holiday holiday in some respects. In the insatiable thirst for knowledge and the true meaning of life, various places of interest were visited: The Burren Display Centre at Kilfenora, Bunratty Castle and folk-park near Limerick, and the Craggaunawen project near Quin (a 16C tower-house, with replicas of a pre-Christian crannog - lake dwelling - and a ring-fort.). Also visited were the Hunt Museum at Limerick and various other castles, ring-forts, tombs, etc. Plus numerous well known

watering holes...

In writing this report, thanks are due to everybody who took the trouble to arrange things, to the Irish, who were as friendly as ever, to Jo for not playing her pipes and whistles in public, and finally, thanks to all those who didn't come (?? -Ed.).

Turlough round-tower, County Mayo, Eire.

Drawn by Pete Ryder (Moldywarps Speleo. Group).



FROM THE LOG

Charterhouse Cave

7 December 85. Pete Hann, Julie Bolt, Julian Taylor. More work in boulders. Cave nice and wet again.

31 Dec. 85. P.H., N.G. Redistribution of sediments and a play with the boulders: a push, a pull, and a grunt = one crushed finger.

8 February 86. Pete Hann: builder, Julie Bolt: cement mixer, Nigel Graham: "soup dragon" (& the helictites as "music trees"? -NG). Lots more cement in, on, around boulders.

16 Feb. 86. P.H., N.G. Experimenting with stal repairing techniques, a bit of stal washing and a tour of inspection of Midsummer Chamber.

Eastwater Cavern

16 November 85- Pete Moody. Detackled West End forgetting a ladder and ammo box had been left below Lolly Pot. Also failed to remove top ladder on Gladman's; the krab is jammed closed and requires Mole Grips.

1 December. Alison Moody, Geoff Newton. Failing to be tempted by the delights of Warren Farm mud, instead quick trip to Gladman's armed with Mole Grips to remove the final ladder and krab.

3 January 86. G.N., Mark Simpson (N. Leicester M.C.). To top of Gladman's to put in another bolt. Then introduced Mark to the pleasures of Regent Street as some compensation for the grovelling needed to reach Greek Street. The Blotifce was very refreshing - lots of ice-cold water!

27 January. G.N., Duncan Frew, Paul Ibberson, Ian Pearson, "Steve the Parachute". Basically a Regent Street tourist trip, however Gladman's pitch was left rigged for "The Big Push", and a voice and light connection established between head of Greek Street and a passage off the bottom of Regent Street, prospects for other ways on at head of Greek Street look minimal. G.N.

("Shaftesbury Avenue" if made passable?? See an 'A-to-Z' -Ed.)

Lionel's Hole

15 December. P.M., D.F. Sophisticated digging techniques reach Horrorfice Two dig. Instead of crawling up the choked passage, grabbing an armful of cobbles and backing out again, we used bags attached to a rope. This advanced method is highly recommended: a good quantity of spoil was removed, opening out the workface ready for next week's breakthrough.

11 January. P. & A.M., Andy Sparrow (BEC). Half hour digging at Horroface Two saw us up as far as two large blocks. The first was safely extracted, the second was too stubborn and will require chemical persuasion. Entrance series crowded: MCG, Whitchurch Trogs, and groups unknown. Then to Pierre's - Pseudo Johnny Nash's to show Andy the link.

1 February. P & A.M., G.N., D.F. Digging passage beyond Horrorfice Two. A good deal of work remains to be done.

Palmer's Cave

5 January. P. & A.M. First trip of 1986. No doubt there will be many more. Christmas floods had not made the cave any more pleasant.

19 January. P. & A.M., G.N., D.F. Finally reached cross-rift at the end of the drainpipe. To the left appears to be an inlet, right looks like the way on: the floor is dropping away fast and doesn't look too bad a prospect. Life will be a lot easier however if we can establish a turning point. Work continues.

26 January. P.M., G.N. Banging the end. The T-junction is in fact a cross-roads. However the largest way on (R) is only 4" or so wide, descending, probably to mud fill. Looks long term - only the draught gives any hope of progress. The crawl to the end is desperate! - and to Lionel's to bang boulder beyond Horrorface Two.

Pierre's Pot

24 DecemDer. P. & A.M. Drove to BURRINGTON and RICKFORD to look at the floods. East Twin stream was overflowing the swallet and running off down the road. West Twin stream was so swollen that it was overflowing Flange Swallet to sink in the excavated trench opposite Pseudo Johnny Nash's. Decided it was worth a quick trip down Pierre's to see if we could hear the stream inside the cave. It could be heard faintly at the lowest point, and clearly at the bottom of the rift in the connection to Pseudo J.N.'s.

27 December. P. & A.M. After Warren Farm trip, to Pseudo's to start the dig. Stream still sinking at entrance. Rather loose hole excavated down through mud, boulders and "clatch". Short bit of open 'passage' found, all rather choked however. Not really sure where to dig: will have another go tomorrow.

28 December. P. & A.M. Had a good look around lower end of Pierre's, decided the best bet was where we were digging yesterday. Spent several hours furling around, opened another route into the "passage" found yesterday; definitely no way on there. Under the worst part of the choke a vertical hole was uncovered which sucked in air like nobody's business, and the stream could be heard clearly. An attempt to open this up revealed boulders too large to pull out, too small to offer support to the mud and other debris around.

Cursing, we gave up - Pete
Until next time! - Alison.

29 December. P. & A.M. Third attempt to reach the elusive stream, this time digging at the bottom of Pierre's. Even though all the stream was now sinking at Flange Swallet, it could still be heard within the cave. Spent three to four hours excavating a pit between solid rock walls, only trouble is that it doesn't look to be the right place. -P.M. Joined by D.F. and Jim Rands - "a social visit and wandering".

Swildon's Hole

ONE STREAM WAY.

29 December. HENSLER'S DIG. N.G. 3 hours.

1 January. Emerson Fitti-Newport and Ian Jepson to One Streamway. Operation Rolling Thunder continues, looking good. Cave very wet. 1hr. I.J.

2 January. P.H., G.N. Looked into WATER CHAMBER DIG - flooded, small stream flowing. Then to an area just past Barne's Loop. G.N. continued down cave while P.H. looked at area on right 15ft up, dug under calcite floor for 3ft until digging got harder. Next time will climb up over flow and place bolt and rope to render digging at better site safer (i.e you won't fall 40ft to the streamway!).

G.N. carried on to North-West Stream Passage. All inlets in vicinity of Vicarage were spewing out silage. Stream in N.W. was low despite high Main Stream, the ducks were easy. Pits at upstream end had different water levels.

3 January. P.H., D.F. To the dig below Barne's Loop. Climbed into roof and inserted bolt and rope.

15 January. P.H., G.J., M.I. To three digs near Barnes' Loop. Top one has large calcite deposit, middle has very hard compact gravel, lower has mud and rocks, easier to work but not looking so promising.

22 January. P.H., G.J., M.I., J.S. J.S. removed all digging kit from Butcombe Chamber and Water Chamber. As soon as the latter dries we will be back.

29 January. Same 4. LOWBOW: looked at prospects of resuming this dig - must be mad! With the four of us, it would mean moving the spoil out in two shifts. If nothing better can be found and the men in white coats don't catch up with me, and there's no mutiny, may start some time. -P.H.

5 February. Same 4. Looking in roof of Streamway to Twenty. One place looks as if it could be worth wasting two years' work. -P.H.

12 February. Same 4. Same place as 5 Feb. While Pete put in a bolt for a handline above the new dig, the other three played around in the stream way instead of removing a hanger and bolt from the Barnes Loop dig. New site is on left just before Twenty, at roof level in same joint as a small passage at stream level.

8 February. "& Others". Digging on left-hand side just below Barnes' Loop. Gone in 4ft in red sand and boulders. Looking good. 3hrs.

SHATTER POT DIG

11 November 1985. Jim Rands, N.G. Repaired Mud Sump dam. Six buckets of spoil from the dig. Cave very sporty. 3hrs. -J.R.

SHATTER SERIES

4 January. P. & A.M., G.N. Banging boulders in roof of aven near Damp Link. Visited Shatter Chamber and Fracture Rift while fumes cleared. Little progress evident on return.

FAULT CHAMBER

18 January. Mark, Sean, Kev, Rob. Back to Severn Aven. Rigged traverse from main route into the aven. Climbed main Severn Aven, about 45ft high but no go, closing down at top. Investigated alcove 15ft up: leads to small aven and interesting muddy passages needing digging. P.H., J.T. carried some kit for the climbers. 7hrs. (FULL REPORT on this trip will appear in the next Edition -Ed.)

Warren Farm Swallet

23 November. A.M., Dave Walker taking photographs. P.M., rabbiting in end dig trying to look along the bedding continuation, broke through into open passage similar to the approach to the dig. We're not out of the sumpy zone yet but at least now we have a fresh stacking area.

24 November. P.H., G.J. Work on gate nearly finished.

30 November. P. & A.M., G.N., D.F. Open passage dug into last week went 15ft to end in a too-tight rift. Having gone down expecting to be confronted by another choke there was little we could do. Only good thing about the trip was the timing of our exit to meet John Small at the entrance and get a lift back across the fields in his Land/Rover.

31 November. P.M., D.F. Did today what we should have done yesterday so that we can get into the passage next Saturday which we would have been in today. (Confused? Note the date of this entry...)

7 December, P. & A.M., G.N., D.F. The Big Push. Took bang with us this time on the assumption that if we didn't, it would be needed. We found what we had been hoping for - a reasonable little stream flowing across our pools and along the passageway. Trouble was, it was this side of the dig. 15ft from the hoped-for breakthrough point we had a real wet-ears duck, and a few feet further, a bloody sump. Trying to cheat Sod's Law seems a bad idea; we didn't need the bang but not for the reason hoped. Now have to wait for a draught. Before coming out we checked a couple of leads which quickly pinched out.

14 December. P. & A.M., D.F. "The Big Push -Take 2". Water still flowing into the dig which was effectively sumped again. No draught, no chance. Maybe next week.

21 December. P.M., G.U. The dig had drained. After heroic efforts by Pete to move an obstinate boulder, a breakthrough was achieved, to gain all of 5ft before it got too tight. Emerged extremely muddy: who's pinched the boiler-suit I left down there?
-G.N.

22 December. P. & A.M., G.N. Plus bang. Overnight rain had caused the dig to become rather damp again. The end choke is just mud fill and we have plenty of stacking space in a bedding and the rift. Access was very constricted so a charge was used to open things up a little.

27 December. P. & A.M. took John Small (landowner) on a quick tourist trip. The end was sumped back for 60ft. Later to Pierre's / Pseudo JN's.

29 December. P.H., Pete Watts. Photographing.

18 January. P. & A.M., G.N., D.P. Much to everyone's surprise the dig had dried right out. Conditions always were bad, now they are worse, almost on a par with Watergate. An hour's digging showed the way on to be a wide bedding at a higher level, requiring Dr. Nobel's.

8 February. P. & A.M., Paul Ibberson. The charge put in the bedding on 18/1 had opened a vertical rift which we had not realised existed. With only a short crowbar it was quite exciting poking one's head out of the bedding at the bottom of the rift and trying to dislodge large blocks of rock jammed directly above. When we gave up two large bits remained. Three or four feet higher, the rift could be seen opening out into a good-sized bedding.

9 February. P. & A.M. After a little early difficulty negotiating the bend up into the rift, we were soon into the higher bedding. Down-dip the way choked almost immediately, while back behind a climb up led out of the sump / choke area. One way led back to the choke area, a second was dug to an "aven" blocked by boulders, bones and stream debris ending a few feet further in a boulder choke. A third way at a higher level again was blocked by a boulder on which we put a charge before exit.

*** ** ***

(The following contains a number of Swildons One digging trips inadvertently omitted from the Swildons section.)

16 November 1985. DAREN CILAU. Jim Moon, Doug Adams, Bob Pyke, Ken Dawe, Angus Dawe. A tourist trip arranged in France. A chance for the self-called "Old-Timers" to peep at the joys of Daren Cilau. Set off for the bottom but the entrance crawl and a silly Moon missing the right route for the pitches allowed time for people to realise how tiring the cave can be. We settled for a trip to see the White Company and Antler Passage, where we had an extended brew-stop. A thoroughly enjoyable tour, of about 8 hours. Please God, let me still be caving that steadily when I'm over 50!
-Jim.

17 November. SWILDONS. I.J., A.N. Applied a quantity of Dr. N.M.R.R. to a "secret" site in the streamway.

22 November. SWILDONS UPPER SERIES. P. & A.M. Looking for the fabled link between Renascence and the main streamway.

23 November. BATH SWALLET. Lynne & Phil Hendy to re-stake our claim on it. After carefully removing stones carefully put down the dig by persons unknown we removed about 20 buckets of mud and stones, leaving two large stones to be beaten into submission next time, and a ginormous rock which will need frightening with a suitably loud noise. 2h

24 November. NINE BARROWS. Maurice Hewins, Eleanor Hewins, John Thomas, Michael Thomas. To Crystal Chamber. Took pictures, 1 hour good trip.

27 November. SWILDONS, BUTCOMBE CHAMBER. P.H., G.J., M.I., J.S. After running out of reasons and being outnumbered the dig at the top was restarted. Much spoil removed. There appears to be a passage going off on the right, looking like Lowbow: is this going to be another two years of madness and sleepless nights picking grit out of the parts normal grit doesn't get to? Think I'll go and see a head-shrink - or take up flower-arranging!
-P.H.

1 December. Sw. I.J., A.N. Operation Rolling Thunder continues (see entry for 17-11-85). Soon we shall break into vasty caverns where the hand of man has not yet set foot
-I.J., Pull the other one -anon.

1 December. Sw. HENSLER'S DIG. N.G. About 1½ hrs useful progress (in inches per session).

4, 11 and 18 December. Sw. BUTCOMBE CHAMBER. P.H., G.J., M.I., G.S. Lots of spoil removed in a cramped position, but next time it should be a lot better. (11/12): plus Matthew Tuck (BEC) -a spy in the master diggers' camp! More spoil removed: what else can you say. The dig in the floor became too tight to work so the boulders in the aven are being poked about.

7 December. DRUNKARD'S HOLE, BOS SWALLET, BATH SWALLET. A.M., G.N. As some compensation for being thwarted at Warren Farm we went over to Burrington to tick a few more caves off the list, prospects for extension look reasonable, but if they continue in the same fashion it won't be worth the effort.
-G.N.

8 December. UPPER FLOOD SWALLET. P. & A.M., P.H., John Beacham, G.N., D.F., Tony Knibbs, Denise Samual, plus Pete Glanvill, friends & relatives. A mass WCC / Cerberus invasion of the new extension. A pleasantly-decorated streamway was enjoyed by all, particularly those who escaped having to model for photo-fiend Glanvill. The dig at the bottom looks good, hopefully we can look forward to an even better trip in the future.

14 December. RHINO RIFT & LONGWOOD / AUGUST. Ken & Angus Dawe, Jerry, Fred Davies, Doug Adams, Jim Moon. Doug, Jim and Ken tackled Rhino while others thrutched down August. Swapped over at half-time. Rhino 2nd pitch very wet, like a shower-bath. Ken managed to rig rope 4ft too short on 1st Pitch so jumped remainder, relying on re-belaying above. August very wet, almost exciting. Waterfalls thundering down in upper boulder chambers where I've never seen a drop before. A most enjoyable and sociable days touring: 4½ hours.
-J.M.

21 December. RESEVOIR HOLE. D.A., J.M., Jeff Price, photographic and tourist trip, 3 hours.

21 December. LOXTON CAVES. P.H., P.W., Beth Yates. None of us had been down Loxton Cave and wanted to go somewhere new. Found Loxton Quarry Cave so had a quick look around that first. Then went down the main cave, where the 2 Petes spent a good hour squiddling among the boulders and Beth spent her time avoiding the spiders.
-B.Y.

22 December. LOXTON etc. P.H., P.W., B.Y., N.G. Pete W and Nigel went for a quick trip in Loxton Cave while Pete H and Beth went into Loxton Quarry Cave looking for bones (they had thought it was an antler). All then to PURN HILL CAVE. N.G. crawled to end to assess its dig potential - not impressed. Lots of brambles close to entrance and both Petes complained of prickles in uncomfortable places. DENNY'S HOLE. After being chased by a dog, managed to find entrance. Nice little cave with bats. And SANDY CAVE - there it was so we did it. -Beth.

27 December. LONGWOOD VALLEY SINK. N.G. Inspected flood damage reported by D.P. and J.R. Valley stank of diesel oil from BWW pumping station, where fuel tanks had been damaged by the flood. Debris cleared from winches and old shaft, and cave inspected. Only damage to the Longwood Valley Light Railway (the truck had been washed down the rift.)

29 December. DAN- YR- OGOF. Keith & Roz Fielder, Chris & Annie Milne.

31 December. BATH SWALLET. P. & L. Hy. asked Brian Prewer to make the Earth move for them at Bath Swallet. 12oz "Jellimex" above and below the offending boulder made a very quiet 'crump', and we now have a kit-form boulder to remove. The stream sink dig, once taken to 6ft depth by P. Hy. is now only 1ft deep but takes all the stream happily. This re-appears about 6ft down the main cave and sinks in gravel in the floor just before the foot of the entrance climb. 1 hour.
H.F.

31 December. DALLIMORE'S CAVE. P. & A.M., G.N., Chris -?, Carlton -? The cave and vicinity showed evidence of recent flooding. A large stream had obviously flowed into the entrance and adjacent shakehole. Some slumping had occurred and it was necessary to dig back into the cave and remove debris at the various squeezes en route. The Terminal Rift had sumped to a depth of 25ft or so, and the rotting vegetation left was suspected of causing bad air. Apart from this an interesting time was had ferreting about various side passages and avens.

31 December. SANDFORD LEVVY. Paul, Garth and Simon Heston. A pleasant morning's activity in the Levvy - take care, bats hibernating - and an open shaft about ¼ mile away. P.W.

1 January 1986. The 1986 W.C.C. Hangover Expedition, P. & A.M., G.N., P.H., D.F., J.R., Roz Fielder, N.G. Descended BUDDLESWOOD SHAFT NINE. Good look around (part mine, part natural). Back at HQ. in time to be stood by for an overdue group from Thrupe Lane Swallet.

1 January. TWIN TS. A sort-the-men-from-the-boys trip. Only a little shower of rain, and only Albert Francis, Brian Prewer, Brian Workman, Lynne & Phil Hendy turned up. Fired up the compressor to test new rock drill, but the couplings were wrong! Lots of water has entered the cave as roof drips, much was washed clean. No digging done. H.F.

5 February. SLUDGE PIT. P.H., N.G. Measured entrance. To build shaft using the 5ft dia. pipes supplied means digging a hole perhaps 8ft dia by 12ft deep - about twenty cubic yards of material! N.G.

4 January. DAREN CILAU. P.W., B.Y., Jeff Price, Malcolm Foyle, Doug Adams, Kev Gannon. Malc came out of 4yrs retirement to do this! Pete did it as a 32nd birthday treat. If you can tolerate boredom the entrance series is a doddle - take a "Walkman" next time! P.W., B.Y., J.P. to White Company and Antler Passage, rest reverse way via Man-In-The-Roof. 7 hours. P.W.

18 January. OGOF CRAIG-A-FFYNNON. J.P., M.F., D.A., J.M., Bob Pyke, Ken Dawe & son Angus. Trip to Fifth Choke, Promised Land, North-West Stream etc. Excellent trip - many thanks to Arthur Millet (Chelsea leader).

18 January. DAREN CILAU -again! P.W., B.Y. Supposed to have been a trip to the loose lumpy bits at the end of Antler Passage. Stopped by light failure in White Company area: perhaps it's not advisable to run a "Walkman" off a Ni-Cd? P.W.

25 January. PORTLAND. N.G. joined two local, non-aligned cavers, to prospect (unsuccessfully) in new quarries, inspect the approach to their dig site (not very accessible!), then a session in old un-named rift dig of mine. N.G.

1 February. MANOR FARM SWALLET. P.W., D.A., J.M. Most enjoyable 1½hr trip preceded by 1 hour wait while four tackled entrance shaft horribly with enough SRT kit and a lifeline for GG Main Shaft. A shame they had only one descender.

9 February. LONG WOOD VALLEY SINK. Clive & Janet North, Pauline -?, Rich Witcombe, N.G. Two-and-a-half hours general excavating ever downwards.

15 February. PORTLAND. N.G. invited as consultant to Phil Strong & co, the 25/1/86 group, inspecting their new dig site in cliff high above Chesil area. Promising looking: an alcove crossed by a grille of vertical chert bands, and stuffed full of hard-packed silt overlying coarse gravels of similar type to the finer gravels found in Blacknor Hole, Sandy Hole, etc. - hopefully ancient stream deposit.

14 December '85. YORKSHIRE. Nick Marachov, Andy Summerskill, Doug Boomer & crew. A few short, pleasant trips in LANCASTER - EASEGILL system: Graveyard Series (very pleasant grovelling in nice muddy passages), and Manchester Flood Bypass (very crawly and horrible).

YORDAS CAVE: photography, filling Main Chamber with smoke.

'Twas Christmas Day in the Wessex...

SAINT SWITHIN'S HOLE. Sanity Clause, Rudolph, Prancer, Dancer & Vixen. As the water was high the rest of the team decided not to come. The Short Dry Way was used - signs of flooding were noticed even here. At the Forty, Santa's bag got too wet so he waited for our return. Foam and grass lay high up the walls but a safe descent was made to Sump One. Prancer and Dancer went on through a longer, deeper and more spacious sump to a large silt bank, then an 8" airspace through Duck One. Foam a foot above the arch greeted us at Creep One but the way was open. Duck Two had about 3" airspace, and was soon passed to Sump Two. A short break then the return.

At Duck Two Prancer cocked it up and dived under a lip, surfacing at the same time as Dancer but 10ft upstream, spitting out great quantities of water. The rest of the return was uneventful, picking up Santa at the Water Chamber, to Wessexland for hot showers, plenty of grub & beer.

Prancer.

Boxing Day. Hangover Bay (the official one).

Santa's work done he retired to the Hunter's while Prancer, Dancer, Vixen and Rudolph wandered the Hill inspecting entrances. Eastwater was impassable, St. Swithin's slightly up on yesterday - during the night the water had been into the blockhouse. Longwood Valley totally stank under a water/diesel oil mixture, Longwood entrance sumped, Valley Sink blocked with gunge and a sort of nondescript red organic scum covering it (red fuel oil). The flow was well audible. G.B. and Charterhouse appeared relatively dry although the roads were mucked about: more gravel in the middle than at the edges. And so back to Wonderland as the waters subsided, the beer and snaffle were consumed in the greatest quantities we could cope with.

Dancer.

P.S. From Santa's Grotto. In fact Santa went walkabout with NHASA and others, plus three dogs. From Harptree Combe, where a river was flowing, to Smitham Hill, Wigmore, Stock Hill and the Hunters. Lots of water everywhere: impressive waterfall going down Wigmore Swallet. Excellent cobweb-clearing session, but the good work was destroyed by an extended session in H.L.I. Returned to U.I. to sleep it off.

Cast in order of appearance

Sanity Clause	.....	Phil Hendy
Rudolph	.....	Jim Rands
Prancer	.....	Pete Hann
Dancer	.....	Duncan Frew
Vixen	.....	Pete Watts

BACK PAGE

UPPER PITTS HUT WARDEN ROSTER 1985 / 1986

Mar	14	N. Dunmur	Jul	4	J.Scott
	21	Liz Green		11	
	28			18	
				25	
Apr	4		Aug	1	
	11			8	
	18			15	
	25	A. Newport		22	N. Dunmur
May	2	M. Cooper		29	J. Price
	9	K. Gannon			
	16	S. Gough	Sep	5	R. Drake
	23	J. Glowacki		12	B. Hansford
	30			19	J. Price
				26	J. Glowacki
Jun	6	B. Pitman	Oct	3	
	13	D. Adams		10	
	20	M. Thomas		17	M. Dewdney-York
	27	R. Hyde			

All dates are of the FRIDAY evenings.

Volunteers for the unclaimed weekends will be most appreciated:
contact Bob Drake (address in front cover).

After the Prize Crossword, back to the non-prize Riddles.

People have asked if these produce much response. Since they are not competitive, but are simply there for fun, it is difficult to say, but members do comment on them from time to time.

So try this one: no additional clues or it will become too easy.

Who / What / Where am I?

My first, completed, is in Eastwater but not in Wastwater.

My second is indicated by the Vatican cartographer.

My third, capitally Roman first, leads to 50 for 4.

My fifth is suggested obliquely by caving safety.

My sixth, exclaimed? Yes and no!

My seventh appears initially in these Journals.

My last, in an archaic form, is preserved by honest mathematicians?