

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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CONTENTS

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- 1. Dry Way? CLIVE JONES
- 2. Latest Developments in Ffynnon Ddu II CHARLES GEORGE
- 3. Dan-yr-Ogef - Still Going ALAN COASE
- 4. Thoughts on Making an Aquareobe JOHN ALDRIDGE
- 5. Dog Rescue FRANK BAGULEY
- 6. A Backyard Balinka (EDWARD ASLETT
DERICK WEBLEY
- 7. Club News

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DRY WAY

Ffynnon Ddu Two has been the goal of many efforts ever since Harvey and Nixon's first discovery in 1946. Over the past five or six years enthusiasms^m has waned a little because of other interesting projects and perhaps because of the failure of some of the bigger attempts, like Cwm Dwr and Coronation Aven, to find the cave.

A breath of fresh air has now been given to the project by the divers. No longer is the digging carried on because of a feeling that "It must be there"; we now know it is there.

After the diving discovery our first thoughts were to follow the draughts from inside the cave and the first "wind of chance" to receive attention was the one which blew in the boulder choke near Pot Sump. Several people have poked this prodigious pile of boulders in the past and have produced a vertical hole, upward through the first 30 ft. of the choke.

When we examined it recently, it looked interesting but extremely dangerous and the only way to proceed was to shutter. Several railway sleepers were obtained one Wednesday evening and taken up to the Swansea Valley. The following Saturday they were cut to carrying size with a power saw and hauled to Boulder Chamber and through to Pot Sump.

Two days' work and the top 10 feet of the dig were secured and we pushed on upwards but only for a further 10 feet or so. We had dug into a space in the boulders 15 feet high, 15 feet long and 3 to 4 feet wide; there was no sign of solid rock. The draught came from the ceiling of this cavity and the boulders were covered in moonmilk. This looked too dangerous to dig without a mammoth quantity of shuttering.

Meanwhile, the divers had carried out a closer scrutiny of the other side and had found a passage which seemed certain to connect with Coronation Aven. Their rough survey showed the connection to be a long dig, probably through loose boulders, but other observations indicated that the old dig had been abandoned much closer to success than we could have known. On the next dive a few experiments were carried out and by shouting and banging (chemical) the connection was shown to be fairly close.

For those of you who don't know Coronation Aven, it is at the far end of Starlight Chamber and is an Aven filled with boulders. It was started on a dig in Coronation year (1952) and so named because a few unexpected coronations were almost carried out in the first few feet.

A route was made through it and a strong draught was followed into a bedding plane crawl which terminated in a boulder choke. But this choke yielded easily and led to a solid passage which seemed to be too good to be true at the time. As you have probably guessed, this ended in a (wait for it!) boulder-choked aven. This was dug for a while but everything was too loose and the dig was eventually abandoned. An interesting point is that in those days we didn't have much banger and brought the boulders down with an instrument affectionately called a long range poking device. There was another place at the end of the passage but this was a miserable bedding place and this didn't receive much attention as it needed banger.

This time we tried the bedding plane first but it showed little

promise; we knew the way on lay through those boulders in the floor of the aven, so we decided to have a go at what we once considered impossible.

Eric Insen, John Osborne and I started to push our way through the boulders one Saturday morning. We dug out about a cubic yard of mud and small stones from between the bigger boulders and went down like the clappers. Suddenly, the draught increased and the bottom of the hole fell in with a beautiful rumbling noise, straight into Ffynnon Ddu Two.

The hole was small but negotiable and Eric went down. We heard lots of boulders crashing and shouts from Eric telling us that he was all right. Five minutes later, he returned with a piece of banger wire left behind by the divers. This was it.

We examined the situation and even though we were very excited, we didn't like what we saw. Anyone going down stood a fifty-fifty chance of being clobbered and we decided that shuttering was essential.

We found plenty of enthusiasm for the project that evening in the "Gwyn" and soon had an army of helpers enlisted. As you all know, I have always had an eye for the quick 'quid' and David Hunt turned up that evening -- easy prey.

I bed him a pound that the following day we would have a dry way into Ffynnon Ddu Two.

Sunday morning and the battalion gathered at "Y Grithig". Timber, tools, ladder, rope, sampling equipment and rope were stacked ready for "in"; David looked suspiciously at this pile and said nothing, but hung onto his wallet.

That evening I paid up a pound as the place had fallen in before, during the day, and we could see no way of tackling the problem.

Another week passed and we had another go. This time we were able to start timbering and get one round and a reef into position. Again the club worked like troopers and brought a vast pile of wood to the dig and Eric Insen, Terry Moon, Charles George and I were left to carpenter our way through the choke.

The boulders came out magnificently and the timber was driven, nailed and braced into position. Everything went very well and in a couple of hours we had a hole through. This enabled us to look at the underside of the choke and it wasn't very pleasant. We decided that it could be timbered, and got down to get the job done. We had completed over half the shaft a few hours later when funny things began to happen.

Boulders had been dropping out from under us all the time and rumbling down into the cave and for the past hour a gritty dust had been falling like rain from the aven above us. Suddenly, everything moved. The thick mud became liquid, the small pebbles rolled out everywhere and a few medium-sized boulders crashed from under us. Then everything became solid again -- it was almost like a change of phase. We continued timbering at a feverish rate and ten minutes later, it happened again.

This time, a boulder came down from the aven and landed between Charles and Eric. They scarpered yelling to Terry and me to do the same. All

four of us landed in a record-breaking pile in the solid passage and whilst we were gathering our breath boulders crashed down the aven just before the dig.

We came out.

The Pet Sump and Coronation Aven digs are both very dangerous and to make a route safe enough for general use is an enormous task. I think both places are out of the question and are best left well alone.

The answer is an entrance from the top between Penwylt and the Byfre. This objective can be achieved but will require a lot of enthusiasm and effort. A start has been made and the Smithy in the new cave has been located on the surface. It lies, according to the radio test, at least 300 feet below surface just south of the Club and within 200 feet of the last radio point in Cwm Dwr.

The Cwm Dwr boulder choke has been re-examined and the softest place to dig is where the stream leaves the main passage but it looks a difficult job and may head into loose boulders.

More radio tests to locate a better position and then a well mechanised dig looks like the best solution.

Clive Jones Oct. 1966.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN FFYNNON DDU II

8 October Diving is losing its mystic and Ffynnon Ddu II has now been polluted by best Gold Block. We arrived with Clare, Clive and Bruce, while John, Rod and Colin had gone ahead to erect the ladder from water level to the passage above. Unfortunately, on our trying to use the skyhook, the ladder kept snagging and John had to climb the ladder while the courleve was held by the other two. With such a strong party we were able to take the maypoles through to the new streamway. It was found that a large party needs more time to cover the ground, and after a snack by the Cwm Dwr-Byffre stream confluence, Rod and Charles rushed the radio to the waterfall, to meet the time schedule with the surface party. The radio was never located, despite great efforts by the surface party. A quantity of fluorescence which was put in at the Byffre was not seen at the waterfall, although a three-hour watch was kept.

With the maypole the waterfall was climbed, and to our bitter disappointment the passage at once changed its character. It flattened until in a few yards the stream sumped into a very wide and low bedding plane. It appeared to go down dip. The water yielded numerous bugs, some of which were collected and identified by Clare. This looks like being a dead end.

The draught appeared to have got lost some 350 yards back down the mainstream. Clive and Colin climbed into an ascending rift, fairly wide, with the north wall solid and the other loose and made up of unscrewed blocks, 'nothing solid'. They climbed 100' and could see a further 100', but 'it was too dodgy'. This spot bears a marked resemblance to the David Hunt dig near the wall, just above the Byffre.

The stream was retraced and all climbable ledges and avens were

roughly examined. There was no trace of lateral development; it all seemed to be vertical and will need major climbing attacks. The stream is a lot more exhausting than one would expect and I believe that everyone was ready to move out once we were back at the confluence, though we did all go to gaze at the formation below the lime kiln.

On the 55' pitch I found the lifeline jammed and climbed free to clear it. Since I was tired this was a stupid manoeuvre, as I all but fell off - there is a good lesson here. Poor Clare had a nasty tumble as she crossed the boulders below the pitch. Being weary, we decided to follow John's longer but easier route from Collapse Chamber, though the indefatigable Red chose to take his lead out via the bedding plane passage. As it happened, this was a fortunate choice. Climbing out of the lower series up to Collapse Chamber meant negotiating a shaft, which was a rift partly filled by boulders, with a slight chamber in the middle. This had appeared quite stable, but as a precaution it was taken singly as far as the Chamber. John and Colin were still clear in the series below, with Clive and Clare in the chamber and Bruce climbing to join them. I started to climb the second stage, where I could see Red standing some twenty feet above in Collapse Chamber. As I was mounting a very large 8' square boulder it moved perceptibly. I froze and warned Clive, as Red had felt the vibration travel up the boulder pile he was standing on. Bruce was now emerging into the chamber to join Clare and Clive, when with no warning, the boulder wall above my head started down. It is hard to imagine a more awful feeling of horror than when in the instant of being hurled down, one is struck on the head and squashed into a crouching position, unable to breathe. No sense of pain, just a ghastly realisation that one is irretrievably stuck. Red was able to climb down at great risk to himself to see that he could do nothing to help. Bruce, meanwhile, had just pepped his head into the chamber to see a large boulder coming straight for him, 'I ducked', and in fact saved his life. Clive saw my feet and knew he was helpless to do anything, when suddenly there was a further slip and I got thrown out. The three of us followed Bruce down the shaft, while Red called down to warn us that he could feel the boulder mass moving under his feet.

In safety at the foot of the shaft we were convincing an incredulous John 'my safe way' was now gone, when with a splendid rumble the floor of Collapse Chamber vanished into the shaft blocking it utterly. Red was left unsure whether or not all or any of us had survived. He spent a wretched half hour until we were able to negotiate the long alternative way back.

It was a very tired party that was greeted by a most welcome band of kind helpers as they emerged from Dip Sump. Even the dive out was fraught with trouble as both divers and their loads got snagged in the old guide wires laid in 1960. Without the support of that early morning party, willing to wait till 1.0 a.m., we would have been in real distress.

Psychic Notes (To prove that even when you find O.F.D. III next year (?) I can say 'I told you so'!)

1. O.F.D. III.

The Cwm Dwr and Smithy passages are the same system, probably both series are of the same period as the Rawl. This old series of passages has, in my view, no connection at all with the main streamway that we now know runs to the Byffre. It may well be possible to dig a connection from the

Smithy to Cwm Dwr but I do not expect to find a system between the two. To find O.F.D. III search at the top end of the Cwm Dwr Yama or at the end of the passage before Blasted Passage. Expect to find an old cave largely filled with glacial deposit and for it to emerge to the North West of the Byffre. The old sink was truncated by the last Ice Age and is now buried by glacial moraine, this also accounts for a lack of obvious draughts.

2. During the Ice Age, the older parts of O.F.D. were filled with ice. Perma frost extended well below the depths at which most passages lie. Those shattered blocks that one finds in smooth, water-worn passages have been deposited by retreating ice that once occupied the passage. If this seems too wild a theory, I hope you will provide a better explanation for the next Newsletter.

3. The stream passage and waterfall are under the wall to the south of Charles Jay's dig. There is an extensive bedding plane system, mainly flooded. The only way into the system at the Byffre is to dig at David Hunt's shaft, or the Hot Air Mine.

4. There will be no lateral development at all along the line of the stream-way; it is all far too recent and is merely an enlarged joint running fairly straight to the Club where it happened to meet the Cwm Dwr - O.F.D. III system.

Charles George. 5/12/1966.

DAN-YR-OGOF - STILL GOING

The weekend of 24th/25th September saw entry to an estimated mile of high new stream passage beyond "The Rising" at the end of High Way.

Saturday 24th

Terry Moon and myself led separate parties, mainly of Wessex C.C., into Dan-yr-Ogof 2 on a "working Tour". Weather conditions were excellent and the water in the lakes exceptionally low thus providing an opportunity to tackle the water in the rising at the end of High Way. Here the two parties combined in digging in an attempt to lower the sump but despite strenuous efforts no significant progress was made as the gradient at this point is relatively low and the sump deep. However, a concurrent attempt to scale a tricky 30 foot climb immediately above the sump was successful although it took over two hours and the use of pitons and an electron used as an etrier. At the top, the aven expanded considerably but an initial look for a way on proved fruitless. Eventually, however, after a somewhat exposed climb, entry was made to a small well-scalloped tube (Windy Way) containing a draught two or three times that of the "Endless" Crawl.

A quick wriggle through led, after approximately 150 feet, to a sharp sided rift down which a free-climb was just possible. A beautifully decorated rift passage extended either way at its foot with that to the right ending some 25 feet above a small lake with peat rippled sandy bed. This was entered via a narrow rift, it proving unnecessary to despoil the fine helictites and flowstone at the obvious point of descent. A minute and

narrow airspace led upstream while downstream was a deep sump. (As yet no attempt has been made to establish the length of this but it may well prove a possible free-dive once a line is established).

Upstream was left for a while for information from above indicated that the left hand passage "went". A careful squeeze along Birthday Passage (it being one fortunate's birthday) passed a complete wall covering of helictites and led to a hole revealing a large passage with a stream flowing some 40 feet below. With regret, especially on Terry's part as he was unable to return on the Sunday, we returned being short of both time and tackle.

Sunday 25th

Weather conditions remained excellent and we, Maire Uwin and Derek Tringham (Wessex), Gareth Jones (R.C.S. Dublin), and myself returned being joined by Susan Bradshaw and Alan Murray of S.W.C.C. Descent of the pitch proved most exhilarating for, upstream, the roof rose to well over 60 feet whilst downstream it came down to a low bedding plane and appeared to sump though later Maire ducked through into an airbell and small 'lake' that was almost certainly the one entered on the previous day.

Movement upstream proved relatively easy and rapid at first, for the passage remained high and wide though after a few hundred yards boulder piles became increasingly common. These at first were easily passed but became successively higher and more difficult until finally progress was halted at what appeared to be a collapsed two-level confluence. This area was heavily filled with fine sand, in places beds over 20 feet in thickness, and being well decorated with sandcastles and drip-pockets, one of the latter having been isolated and looking very like a gourd.

Formations were more common throughout this passage, (called High Way Two or the Great North Road from its predominant trend) than in the area between the Green Canal and the Rising (High Way One) and became even more frequent towards the end. While good straws exist at a higher level more curtains (in parallel rows) are found and in a high level meander near the end magnificent crystals, overgrown gour pools, "flow-stone" and fine mud-flows on the floor combine with a perfectly white "cascade" over ledges and good stalactites and curtains to create one of the finest passages in the whole system. A discussion among the somewhat overwhelmed discoverers ensued with every form of superlative suggested before the name "The Mostest" was hit upon.

Our return was again rather hurried although more notice was taken of the relatively few inlet passages which mostly descended as near vertical pots contributing small streams. Apart from these and a number of high avents, often co-incident with the large boulder piles, very few obvious passages enter the extension though the sides are so nearly vertical that some may be concealed on the wall-defined ledges that occur at frequent intervals at a height of 20 feet - 30 feet above the stream.

Other points of note included:-

- (i) Unlike most of the boulder falls and chokes in D.Y.O. I and II, those in III are mostly of limestone. Only one small group of sandstone boulders have so far been encountered. The implications of this are interesting although they would be rather premature if voiced before further examination.

- (ii) The surface freshwater shrimp, Gammarus (pulex?) was noted quite commonly in the stream and yet so far it has not been recorded in either of the major sinks.
(Private comm. Ann Mason-Williams)
- (iii) The air appears to be remarkably "fresh"!

Access to the new system is made via the aven above the sump.

Alan Coase.

THOUGHTS ON MAKING AN AQUAROBEE

To the editor
S.W.C.C. Newsletter.

Twittering Towers,
Tunbridge Wells.
Tuesday.

Respected Sir,

In view of the recent cascade of learned articles in your journal concerning the theoretical and practical aspects of cave apparel, I feel compelled, Sir, to put down on paper my own fearful experiences with wet suits for which I received simultaneously, by the same afternoon postal delivery, an Honours degree in gardening and a demand for three years' water rate.

My first attempt at making a wet suit was quite unintentioned, for as a young man I found myself at Burton-on-Trent in an experimental automatic brewery and there I was casking around for inspiration. Suddenly, I conceived the idea of calibrating a specific gravity meter with sulphuric acid of predetermined concentration, because the beer was all of quite unknown strength and some of dubious composition. This splendid idea worked well until it became necessary to remove the corrosive acid and replace it by a more potable fluid. No ready means was provided for this removal, and during the clumsy operation which followed, a considerable quantity of strong acid came into contact with my trousers and the portions of my person which were beneath. Without more ado, and in the twinkling of a pawnbroker, I had taken off this dangerous lower garment and placed it in a sink full of cold water. A quiet wash of my knees and neighbouring parts removed the remaining hazard but I was now faced with the problem that I had, not to put too fine a point on it, a suit that was indeed wet, but yet not a wet suit of a very practical kind. In order that the world at large could be faced once more without loss of dignity, there was no alternative but to replace the garment as normally worn.

Luckily, the horseless carriage in which I was to ride back to Cambridge was fitted with the latest type of device for utilising waste engine heat and converting it for the purpose of warming the interior air, and so the fibres of the garment eventually returned to their normal humidity, but, I fear, not precisely to their original shape.

In late middle age, in fact quite recently, I was invited by a young native of Wales bearing the honest name of Smith, to descend with him, at a place many miles up the vale which leads from Swansea towards the desolate

interior of Brecknockshire, into the fearful uttermost darkness of the earth. We met at this place upon a sunny morn, but eschewed the life giving rays and passed through a great iron door set in the hillside, to subterranean chambers beneath, where twinkling incandescent lamps, cunningly concealed, beckoned us on. Passing beyond the cavern viewed by the public and through the gate of an ornamental balustrade, we descended a flight of stone stairs to the inky blackness of a large pool or lake.

To my horror, this callous Smith motioned me and my companion, one Clarke (tall, strong and intrepid), to remove all our raiment save a kind of truncated woollen bathing dress worn next the skin, and to place our best serge within a voluminous cellophane bag. This done and boots laced tight, he raised his countenance, which was crowned by a kind of miner's headgear and balloonists' goggles, and at once ordered us to cast the cellophane bag and our own bodies silently upon the waters. I will not pain my gentle readers by dwelling unduly upon the cold black horror of the next few minutes, for this experience was like none other, such that I feared I would never again see the light of day. Stealthily we crossed not one lake, but three or four with a cataract between and emerged at last from the water to a dry but chill place beyond. Alas! When we came to put on again our blue serge we realised that disaster had overtaken us, for in that transparent sac lurked an unseen orifice. Being at the bottom of the bag my clothing had become saturated and thus for the second time in my life, I was unwittingly the owner of a wet suit.

Strange to relate, soon after returning to the blessed sun and sweet airs, I became possessed of an overwhelming desire to return once more to the bowels of the earth. I found that I visited these caverns again and again, but was sorely in need of some protection against the harsh environment. Therefore I conceived a plan for a garment suitable for this dark and damp activity. Soon I found that others before me had pondered this problem, especially Mr. Little, the well known explorer and philanthropist. I therefore made haste to consult the works of reference prepared by he and Master Laurie.

While some claim to have manufactured such suits from diverse materials such as patent leather or even American oilcloth softened by repeated applications of camel dung, there is in the opinion of the experts, nothing to beat good chamois lined with thick horsehair and smeared with partially burned tallow; wire reinforcement may be added by choice, rather in the manner of the better made corsets used by gentlefolk. An inflated feanlike effect can be imparted to the suit by spreading a liberal quantity of carbide of calcium between each of the separate layers, and allowing the suit to become damp overnight in a warm darkroom or cellar.

Having procured the material the most delicate operation is the very first, namely, the measurement. Self-measurement is a snare and a delusion, a false idea put about by scoundrels for their own advantage. For the measurement, since one must reveal oneself in the entirety, a warm room is essential, as well as help from one's wife, but only if she be of a practical turn of mind; for seduction plays no part in the making of the suit. If such a thing should occur, then the completion of the suit will be long delayed. If the wife be not practical or the explorer unmarried, then one or two male relatives must be summoned at once for the task. Before the operations commence any children in the house should be sent to the nursery, the door of which must be securely fastened.

When work begins a whole network of lines must be drawn all over the body in the way that the cartographer's imaginary lines of latitude and longitude envelop the globe, but these lines must be inscribed exactly to the directions given by L.S. Galpin esquire. The lines may be marked on the skin by chalk or by drawing a sharp point gently over the surface; better still, you may utilise Indian ink and a pen with a new nib (not the patent fountain type). All the figures of measurement must be written in a notebook suitable for the purpose, and the information then converted to the form of an intricate pattern, one piece for each portion of the suit. The pattern is best made from stiff brown paper. Failing this, some old pages from the "Illustrated London News" will perform admirably. Most persons, not being desirous of remaining for an indefinite period with an appearance like Mercator's Projection, attempt to remove the lines thus inscribed upon themselves: this may be speedily effected by the use of coarse emery paper, pumice powder or carborundum. During abrasion the skin goes through three stages, which are:

- (i) a slight graze
- (ii) a darker rougher surface
- (iii) small holes appearing in this surface with bubbles of liquid seeping through.

I have carried the process only as far as stage two, as this was deemed sufficient for the purpose in hand.

Cutting out the pattern itself proved easy and each piece was then pinned to the corresponding piece of suiting material. Cutting through the material and around the pattern pieces proved more difficult; I had to resort to a pair of sharp good quality garden shears. I also found it important to hold them correctly, with one handle grasped in the bend of the knee and the other clamped firmly between the jaws. For left handed persons I would strongly recommend that they try a lawnmower (the grassbox need not be attached).

To join the cut pieces the proprietary glues serve well enough but I preferred to manufacture my own by the following recipe: "To embark upon the task take a handful of honey and half a cubic yard of gum arabic. Mix together with a peck of sardines and three bushels of chlorate of potash. Dissolve all these in seven gills of scarcely boiling water and stir vigorously for one and a half hours, taking care to use for this purpose a branch freshly cut from a young cascara tree. Allow to cool slowly and in two or three days you may drink it sparingly or use as an adhesive."

The assembly of the garment should give very little trouble if the genuine instructions are followed exactly. Mine was finished within the short space of two hundred and fifty three hours of happy labour, but my spouse must have made a slight error whilst engaged in the measuring. When after a violent struggle I had put on the jacket, it proved very effective as a tourniquet for both my arms, while in the trouser there was space enough for both of us. This caused not a little embarrassment and a whole week to be devoted to making alterations. When at last all was well and ready with the suit, I laid myself down in a bath of cold water to test its efficacy. My children were horrified. "Dearest Papa," they cried, "do you not know that it is extremely vulgar to take a bath with your boots on?" and again, "Oh, darling Daddy, you are so black!" But I was not daunted, for success was mine at last.

I have worn my suit for three years now and only this very week my

dear wife ventured the opinion that it was high time I removed it; but I fear I cannot for I have become very attached to the ingenious fastening invented by the late Mr. Zippe. Furthermore in the so-called difficult areas, under the arms etcetera, the hairs are beginning to grow through as they do with sticking plaster. Please render me a service by sending for Dr. Aslett, Dr. Findlay or preferably Dr. Dilly because not only is he a medical man but he may be acquainted with some person (as yet unknown to me) who would be willing to pay many guineas for a bearded caving suit. This besides, once I become parted from my suit, I may need surgery to place leather patches upon my bare knees and elbows. Please help. Come speedily and please make haste to help. HELP. HELP, help, hel, he.....

(the signature is illegible ... Editor.)

J.D.A. 20.8.66.

DOG RESCUES

At 5.45 p.m. on September 22nd, I received a callout through Colin Graham at the Grithig, from the Abertillery Police to go to the rescue of a dog down a fissure on Forestry Commission land on a mountain between Abertillery and Cwmillery.

Telling Colin to collect some more tackle from H.Q. I then proceeded with my own equipment to Abertillery Police Station, accompanied by Ella. A dense fog prevailed, and I opened two new sections of the Heads of the Valleys Road, getting there at 6.30 p.m. A sergeant accompanied me to the farm of the dog-owner. The warden for that area had just left. Another police officer and the farmer's daughter went to get him from a nearby farm. It was getting dusk when a man came rushing up to ask if I was the man who had come to rescue his dog, so I presumed that he was the farmer. The conversation for the next few minutes was rather confusing, but it eventually transpired that this man had taken his dog up, off the lead, to see the site of the first accident, and his dog had also gone down!! How b----- silly can some people be. Anyway I told him to go to the site and wait there, and leave his friends to guide me when the police and the farmer had returned, which was soon.

We proceeded to the scene of the first accident at 7.30 p.m. up a mountain road that was worse than the one to Tunnel Top with weather and light conditions failing fast. About a mile from the farm I came to the scene of the second accident, and I gave the owners the choice, so the second dog had preference.

It was 20 feet down in a 14 inch wide fissure, uninjured, able to walk to and fro, which was a help, as I was able with relative ease to dig out the mouth, to widen it, from 6 inches as it was, and to remove all the loose boulders down to the first ledge. I laddered the pitch, and as the owner was small, light, willing and better at handling his own dog, I lifelined him down. I preferred this to his lifelining me down! It was over in a few minutes, the dog climbing fantastically half-way up to help with the operations. We received no thanks - perhaps it was too easy!

Colin had just arrived to help de-ladder the pitch and with local help we moved on foot to the 'first' site, which was a far more formidable proposition. We had to cross obliquely a virgin forest, though we did not

see any about. It had been deep-ploughed for tree-planting and there were open and hidden crevasses. About 200 yards away we came to the handkerchief on the tree marking the site. There was not a sound from the dog, and it could not be seen even when the 'pilot' lamp was lowered. A Nife lamp proves very useful for this. The fissure was about 15 inches wide at the top and about 30 feet down where it curved away under us it was 8 inches wide, we could not see below this.

We cleaned up the top, put two large beams across, which I had taken, and laddered the pitch with 50 feet of ladder, though the lamp had gone down to 80 feet! The dog had been down since 9.45 a.m. that day, and it was not until I lowered Celia down that we heard the first sound from it, as being a sheep-dog it naturally had been taught to lie dogge. It wagged its tail furiously - we could hear this hitting the crevasse walls, and it gave one hefty bark. Celia got down to 25 feet and it was tight, he had to forgo the use of his helmet, and the ladder was only of partial use. To us the dog's sounds seemed to be between Celia and us. We then put down a local 'petheler' of about 16 years, Barry Stevens, who got down another 6 feet or so, but with no luck. Then we tried Red and a friend who came from H.Q. and despite a gallant attempt, they were just as unlucky. A brother of Barry, a young miner, with a motor-bike that sounded mere like a traction engine, then went back down the mountain to get himself kitted out at N.C.B. expense. He got down to just over 35 feet, but still the dog could not be seen. It was really dangerous, and frustrating to these going down. It was now midnight, and I explained to the farmer that we would have to give up for the night, and await the arrival of two local cavers who the Police said would be returning on Friday. We called at the police station, and asked that these two be sent written messages to be there by 9.30 a.m. on Friday, when I was returning. I arranged for the police to cancel a conference I was due to attend the 'next' day, i.e. Friday.

On Friday, I returned and waited at the station and then at the farm and then back again to the station, but no luck. After the police made various calls to local factories, we were unsuccessful in getting the persons we needed, so I said I would require Bruce Foster, who I understood was now working with the N.C.B. in S. Wales. A callout went out via the Press also, and I got in contact with Eileen at Bridgend. I found out he would be coming to H.Q. that evening, so I told the Police this and said I would return with him as soon as possible. I went back to the farm at 1.00 p.m., had lunch and went back up to the site at 2.00 p.m. and stayed there until 6.30 p.m. trying to pinpoint the dog with a pound of steak on thin twine. I found the depth was 70 feet, and I 'raised' a few black and white dog's hairs, but I could not raise a bark; not even another dog (on a lead) which had been teased to bark, could raise one from the dog below. The farmer and I agreed to wait until Bruce came, so I returned home for a rest, and rang Celia to ask that I be notified as soon as Bruce arrived.

I went to fetch him and take him, with his brother and a friend, after he had had a meal, to the site, I was now finding my way automatically. We called at the police station at 1.45 a.m. and woke up the farmer and his shepherd, and proceeded to the site for the final onslaught. Fortunately, it had stopped raining. We let Bruce down, he got down to 48 feet at least. We could hear the dog breathing deeply in the same spot, but it was basic breathing. I did not give much chance for it now. Bruce could not see it, even though it was 18 to 20 feet below. It was time to stop any further

attempt, and it took three strong men to haul Bruce out. He had done well. I told the farmer the position, and he agreed that we had done our utmost. We both agreed that no-one else should make the attempt and we packed up, removing all our tackle, returning somewhat dejectedly, but at the same time satisfied we had done all that could be expected of us. The farmer could not thank us enough, even though he had lost his dog. We dropped him at his home at 4.30 a.m. and went to the police station. I told them what we had done or perhaps rather what we could not do, that under no circumstances was anyone else to try, that the R.S.P.C.A. Officer be informed, and I suggested that a heavy gas be used to put the animal to sleep humanely, as it was no use using poison bait. I felt I was entitled to give this advice.

We arrived home at 5.30 a.m. ready to sleep, and yet ready to get up to H.Q. next morning, or was it the same morning? only lighter, for Bruce to present himself for a B.B.C. film.

The Police there and the locals were quite impressed by our organisation and persistence in our endeavours, and they could not thank us enough. We have all been thanked individually by the Monmouthshire Deputy Chief Constable, and I have been thanked by the local R.S.P.C.A. Officer, Mrs. Lloyd, who asked for her thanks to be passed on to Bruce, whom she had already met at a recent attempted dog-rescue in the same area.

The dog was put to sleep eventually, but the danger of these terrible crevasses on our mining mountains still persists, with neither the N.C.B. nor the Forestry Commission accepting responsibility. It may be a child next time. I knew a padre who is anxious to join the club soon; we'll be needing him there, and perhaps elsewhere.

Frank Baguley. 3.10.66.

A BACKYARD BALINKA

Sometimes, late at night, or in the small insignificant hours of the morning, at least two people have wound their way winchless to the heady vastness of Ogef Haffes. People have been put off, told of other digs with confusing initials - D.Y.O. - O.F.D. - W.W.F.; a 20 mile walk was organised to kill off activity - you know the runners - T. Lloyd out of Luck by Senni, D. Webley out of Bed by Prodding, and Edward by Dam. But it hasn't worked, people have continued to pester and so, reluctantly we have decided to throw the place open. The fact that visits have only been made twice a year (that was the peak year) shows the calibre of the dig, the standard and organisation required. We gave up taking ladders. With this preamble we become more serious.

We both felt when we started that the effort was worth while since few swallowholes had been dug and even though it might lead nowhere and lose a lot of friends, it might provide information about swallow hole evolution. The hole was chosen because it had been observed that there was solid rock on its western side and in winter much water ran into it. The Log is entered in Powell Street, it only needs here to summarise our findings.

The cave lies 200 yards north of the Tunnel Cave entrance shaft. At the bottom of a swallet is a small chamber which is entered by straddling

its water-fretted sides. On its floor, a near vertical tube descends to a narrow rift and after traversing to the left through an awkward vertical passage, one emerges at the top of a smooth-walled chimney. Chimneying down this one lands on a steep boulder slope which descends, on the left, to a terminal chamber and, on the right, to a crawl into another chamber with a boulder floor and some formations. The entrance of the latter is now partly blocked with boulders from the floor where we dig and its roof is unsafe. To date, the cave is about 130 feet deep. The left hand terminal chamber has been dug out to a depth of 6-7 feet and the disposal of the excavated boulders is the main difficulty as the rock slope encroaches on to the cramped digging space, and, indeed, it is possible (one of us is sure), that the way on lies under this ruckle. At the present it is impossible to bring boulders to the surface since they cannot be passed with ease through the rift traverse; only with sufficient labour could material be hoiked from the floor and chainganged above to fill the rift. Another difficulty (why make more?) is the filling up of the dig with mud carried down from the surface - a foot or so must be dug out each time before serious digging begins. All the walls are solid and are fretted with downward solution and at our last visit (last June) four of us commented on a cold upward draught coming from the right hand terminus, even allowing for the warm bodies in a cold closed tube causing convection currents.

We hope this dig will be continued because we feel that it is worthwhile and rewarding even if no cave is found. The place has plenty of interesting theoretical problems to sort out. (1) The shaft may result from simple percolation and solution down joint planes - but would this result in right-angled changes of direction as each joint meets a bedding plane? (2) Will the shaft continue to the water table? (3) Run out of limestone? (4) How was it formed if not entirely by solution?

It is the opinion of one of us that the cave was originally formed by a wedge of ice opening a joint, its enlargement being due to simple percolation. The extent that ice has played a part in cave formation has not been appreciated, perhaps, and this might be the place (where else) where other examples of 'ice' phenomena in South Wales might be cited. At Pant Mawr for instance, the present entrance is a collapsed roof due to the weight of ice on the surface of the limestone - one feels that other examples exist of chambers near the surface that have been enlarged by permafrost activity during one of the ice ages - the bone chamber in Tooth Cave near the surface has been enlarged by such means. But Pant Mawr again shows another feature - the sharp breaks in the columns there suggest the grip of a river of ice which 'flew' through it. This means that this cave has received two glaciations and therefore it is far older than the other caves in the area (O.F.C.) by the nature of the fact that those columns were in existence a long time before the Penultimate Glaciation - its height above sea level would support this - the cave is older than O.F.D. etc. Geologists, please comment.

If Ogef Haffes was 1,300 miles away, the shaft would have been bottomed with rockcrushers and muscles, and yet it hasn't - even though the caves are basically similar. Both are faults, big and small, both have been enlarged by water. One has been explored; there's a lesson here, somewhere; perhaps in Ogef Haffes.

E. Aslett.
D. Webley.

CLUB NEWS

Address Changes and Corrections to the List of Members published in Newsletter Number 54.

Peter Foreman, 24 Fewberry Crescent, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne 4.
Mr. & Mrs. W.D.G. Toye, 64 Leatherhead Rd., Ashted, Surrey.
Bryn Thomas, "Garthfield", Mumbery Hill, Wargrave, Reading, Berks.
S.C.C. Philips, "The Newlands", Highley, Bridgworth, Salop.
John Hartwell, 71 Heol Isaf, Radyr, Cardiff.
Mr. & Mrs. C. Baglin, Flat 9, Ullesthorpe House, Ullesthorpe, Nr. Lutterworth, Leics.
D.H. Lloyd, "Hills Brow", Brynamanya, Nr. Bridgend, Glam.
P. O'Reilly, "Griffewe", Copley, Bishopston, Swansea.
Mr. & Mrs. R. Roberts, 30 Heol Y Ferlan, Whitchurch, Cardiff.
R. William Dr., 17 Wilson Court, Merthyr Tydfil.
Mrs. A.M. Williams, c/o Dept. Microbiology, University College, Cardiff.
D.J. Hitchings, 105 Dunvelt Road, Killay, Swansea.
Gwyn Saunders, 40 Twyn-y-Bedw Road, Clydach, Swansea.
Mrs. Laura Jefferies, 29 Angel Mead, Woolhampton, Berks.
David Dilly, 72 Sherwood Road, Luton, Beds.

We welcome the following new members to the club:-

Idric J. Williams, 13 Caemawr Road, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.
Michael J. Gernat, 23 Cerperation Road, Grangetown, Cardiff.
Anthony Day, 132 Banwood Road, Gloucester.
Miss Mirelle G. Bonnefoy, 2 Maesfron, Abercrave, Swansea Valley.
Robert Pyke, 88 Redland Road, Bristol 6.
Susan Bradshaw, 119 Mayals Road, The Mayals, Swansea.
T. Charles Bryant, "Glyn Goed", Victoria Road, Hengoed, Glam.

Correspondence Received

The Birmingham Medal Society has invited our help in compiling a record of medals and awards presented to cavers in the course activities. We ask, therefore, that any member possessing relevant information should contact Mr. Michael F. Minton at 50 All Saints Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14.

Club Equipment

I expect that many of you or perhaps most of you are fed up with hearing me talking about equipment --- bringing it back, cleaning it, notifying me of damaged tackle etc. etc. ad infinitum. If I have not emphasised this in my reports at the A.G.M., then I have failed to get over the message, save to one or two who positively resent these sorts of references and continue to treat equipment and the Equipment Officer with complete disregard. This, unfortunately, has a reflex action on the more sincere cavers, who treat the equipment with care, and when they do need it, find it is not available due to the lack of care by others. It is then only natural to

blame the Equipment Officer, for these apparent shortages without knowing the circumstances.

Only recently, a 'full' member used an expensive surveying tape for towing a dinghy through the 'Green Canal' - the result? It sank without trace or even a mention in the despatches or the log book. I must put in a word in his favour here; he is very busy indeed in the pursuit of his caving interests. But when some other conscientious club members wanted to do a survey soon afterwards, there was no tape - only an empty case. I shall reserve the right to refuse to issue special equipment in future to members who, it is considered, cannot take care of it, and in this category, the Committee have given me the authority to decide what is considered special equipment, and this can include ladder. We have 'lost' eight lengths of ladder, i.e. one a month since Christmas, at a cost of £30 for us to make, which will now be much greater to replace, quite apart from the work, effort and time involved. I have put up notices in the tackle room and on the notice board to the effect that no lightweight ladder must be left in caves. I see already that someone has defiled the notice, - such is the mentality of some. We have now not enough ladder to go down Pwll Dwfn. In future I may or even will have to ration the issue of ladder; this may result in an improvement of the appreciation of the value of the equipment, and the consequent shortage.

We have lost through neglect, appropriation, but not fair wear and tear, in the past two years, nearly £70 of equipment. We cannot afford to keep losing equipment like this. We have lost 6 lump hammers in this time, and no-one has taken the trouble to book them out, or notify that he has retained them. But others have to go without as a result, when they wish to proceed with a caving project. It's not fair on the Club or the majority of conscientious members. At the same time, though the Club may be registered as a Friendly Society, that does not make it a charitable institution.

In order to be fair to anyone who has now found that he has by some means or another found that he has an item of Club equipment in his kit, and to those who have officially borrowed equipment on a long term basis, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you all to return all equipment to the stores within a week of the receipt of this newsletter, so that a grand tally may be made. No equipment will be issued that weekend until the tally has been completed. I realise this is an indefinite date in one respect, but it is the best time I can give under the circumstances. I sincerely hope there will be a good and complete response.

If an item should get broken, please bring it to my notice. Some members do this, and I appreciate it very much; even though it means work for me, at least I can get the item repaired in my own time and often without cost to the Club, and returned into service quickly. (Amend the word 'quickly' in the last sentence; when ladder is involved, it takes at least 3 hours to repair one damaged rung!)

Please use the workshops, but keep them tidy. Those who have not got tools or have never owned or worked in a workshop are the usual culprits. I cannot do the whole job myself, I must depend upon your help and co-operation, so please do your best to see that my appeal is successful. It's an invidious job at the best of times. No reasonable offer will be refused for taking it on any time.

Frank Baguley.

P.S. The surveying tape has now been replaced by the member.

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB. DAN YR OGOF ACCESS RULES. SEPT. 10th. 1966.

1. All parties shall be accompanied by a leader appointed by the SWCC and shall possess a permit card signed by a Committee Member.
2. The Leader is responsible for his party at all times and must check that the party is suitably equipped for the trip contemplated. Normal caving clothes may be worn up to the 'Green Canal'. Wet suits MUST be worn beyond the start of the 'Green Canal'. If in his opinion this is not the case, he is required to refuse to lead it.
3. The book is to be signed at the Manager's Office, on entering and leaving, showing the party, destination and purpose, if relevant.
4. The destination board at the H.Q. should be used.
5. The primary means of lighting shall be electrical, and the secondary means, to be used only in an emergency, may be carbide. Any person using an acetylene lamp shall carry a suitable container to bring out the spent carbide. The Leader shall see this is done. The Manager shall have the right to check on lighting equipment, and the biologists shall have the right to complain of spent carbide deposits.
6. The party shall be limited to a maximum of six, excluding the Leader, but for all parties containing novices, this should be reduced to at least one competent person per novice. NO NOVICE WILL BE PERMITTED BEYOND THE LONG CRAWL.
7. The Leader shall be familiar with the route over the lakes and he must be satisfied that the party can all swim, or are protected from the danger of drowning at all times.
8. There is to be no loitering in the show cave or in the areas outside open to the public. The changing hut is to be used.
9. Parties are to be in the cave before 10.00 a.m. (11.00 a.m. Sundays) and are to be out by the normal closing time, unless special permission is given by the Manager. During the 'closed season', these times may be varied, provided prior application has been made to the Manager, who shall have the right to grant or refuse entry.
10. No work is to be done which may endanger other cavers. Any digs started are to be left in a safe condition. Parties wishing to use explosives in the cave must have a permit card signed by the Manager and two Committee Members. The purpose and location of the work is to be stated. No explosives are to be used in the cave, this side of the 'Long Crawl', unless personal written application has been made to Dr. Price, giving the location and purpose, supported by two Committee Members. NO PERMISSION will be given for lowering the level of the lakes.
11. Leaders are expected to see that no damage is caused in the cave. Any accident or damage is to be reported to the Manager.
12. Any apparatus seen in the cave is not to be tampered with, nor are any of the tapes (which mark special sites) to be crossed.
13. Members must respect any directions or instructions issued by the Cave staff and in particular to see that parking does not interfere with coaches using the car parks.

14. The Cave Management can refuse access if, in their opinion, the lakes are too high or the weather uncertain.

15. The position of 'Leader' may be withdrawn at any time by the owners of the cave or the Committee, without reasons being disclosed.

Hon. Secretary.
South Wales Caving Club.

Rules presented to, amended by, and agreed to in a meeting between an S.W.C.C. sub-committee and the Management, on Saturday, September 10th 1966.