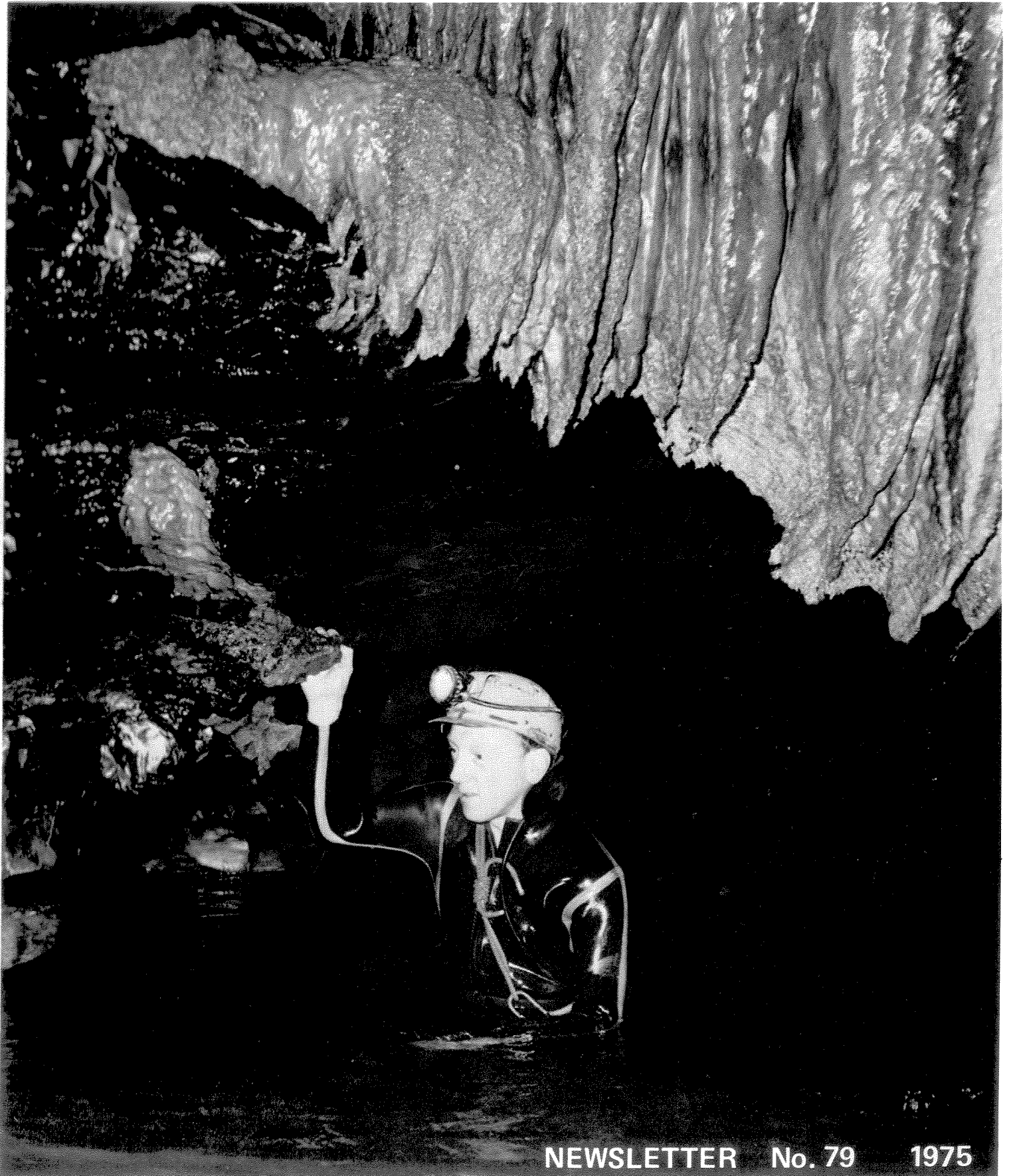


SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

No. 79

NEWSLETTER

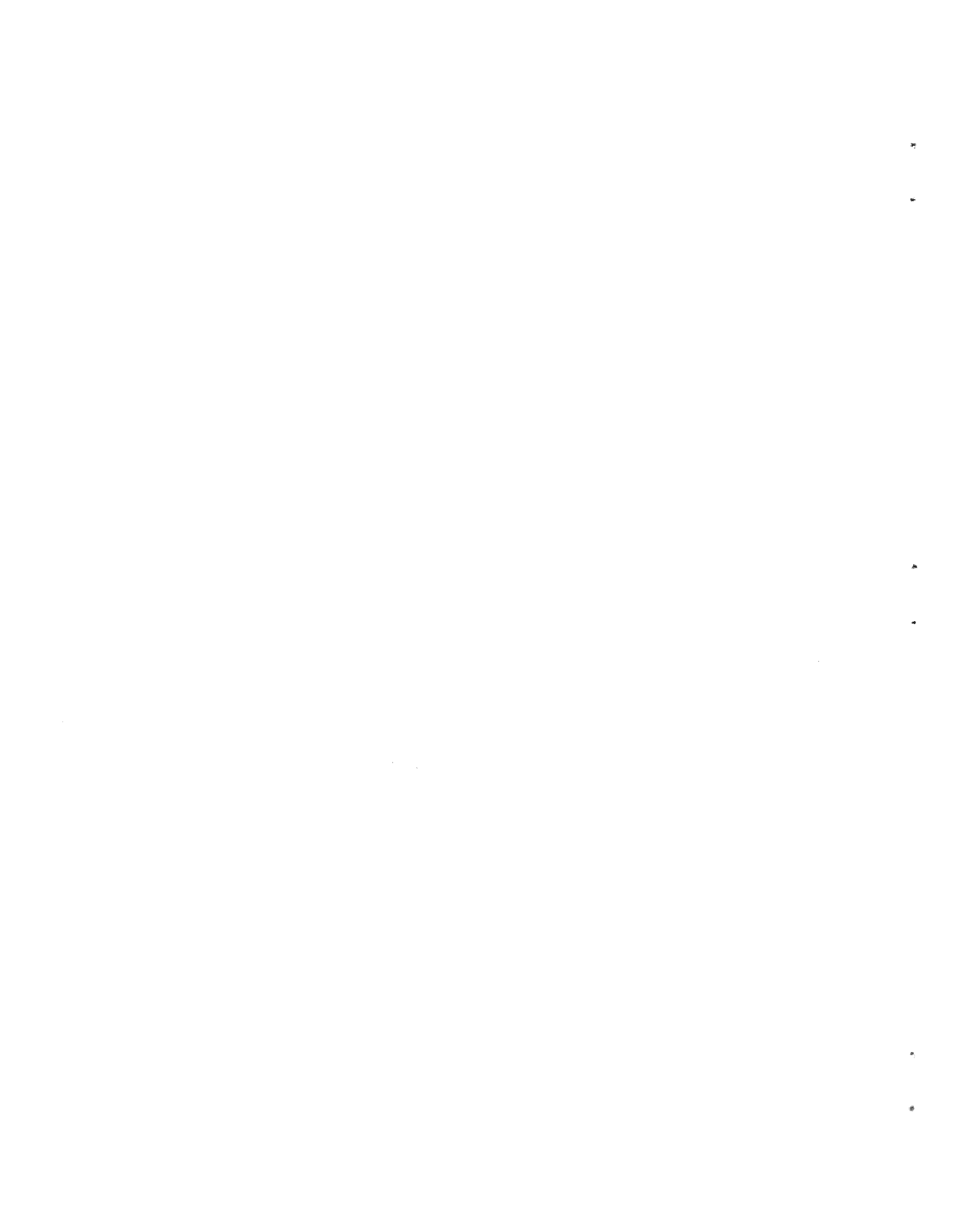
February 1975

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Cover Photograph - Lake 4 Dan yr Ogof by A. Jackson.

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EDWARD ASLETT

(The following Obituary was given by Noel Dilly at Edward's funeral.)

I have been honoured with the task of saying 'Goodbye' to Edward from all of us, those who are here today, and the many who are unable to attend.

We have all had pride and pleasure in him. An extremely modest man whom we have known in many varied roles, as a fine physician, a hill-walker, a caver, a sailor, but, above all, as a true sincere friend.

As a consultant physician his breadth of interest and concern was enormous. He was President of the Thoracic Society of Wales, and his publications covered such varied fields as the tropical disease Kala Azar, the physiological problems of heat stroke, lung volume studies, and his greatest professional monument, his interest in pneumoconiosis. The 1942 survey of Chronic Pulmonary Disease in the South Wales coal-miner has a world renown and influenced the later Acts of Parliament. This, and the monitoring of the modern coal-miner are his living memorial.

As a flyer in the 1930s, his exploits abounded with apocryphal stories. His early instrument flying exploits won the acclaim of his fellow pilots.

As a caver, he was a fine companion and renowned for his exploits. We owe to Edward the vast extensions to Tunnel Cave and Pant Mawr. Agen Allwedd too resulted directly from his labours. But, most of all, we shall treasure his memory as a chairman who fused a magnificent club from a mass of recalcitrant individuals.

As a hill-walker, his walking exploits did much to preserve the footpaths and hill routes of South Wales. As a sailor, his instincts invariably led to superb adventures.

Indeed, he lived a full and splendid life. His enquiring mind always kept pace with the vast changes that occurred during his lifespan. He was young to the last, always involved with new ideas.

His name, his years, his degrees, honours and distinctions are for the record. We can say with pride that we knew the man. We have a memory to treasure that needs no memorial.

Let us leave here happy because we knew him. We should not feel sorry that he is dead, rather we should feel sorry for those who did not know him. Life is transient and does end in death, and we that are left are richer in his fine example of how to live and how to die.

He was not mindless or fearless of death, he knew the fears and frustrations of his last illness; the strength of his intellect was such that he knew fear, but he accepted it with humility and relaxed to sample a final experience.

We should not ask 'Why Edward', he would think little of us if we did. He knew that each one of us is a part of life, and it is life that continues not individuals, and life must change to keep pace with a changing world. Rather, we should treasure him as an eccentric individual with a real identity, whose company we all enjoyed, and whom we shall never forget.

---ooOoo---

THE DEEPEST?

While not wishing to make yet another claim for fame for OFD, I would like to point out that the deepest natural shaft in Wales is probably not in either Pembrokeshire or Denbighshire, as claimed by Mel Davies (N/L 77), but in Breconshire. Fault aven in OFD is calculated to be 60 metres from roof to floor - I say calculated, because no one has actually ever made the descent from the top to the bottom - maybe someone would like to check the calculations?

PADDY O'REILLY

Editor's Comment

For Pembrokeshire read Dyfed
For Denbighshire read Clwyd
For Breconshire read Powys

SIGH!

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

IRELAND ... OCTOBER 1974

Ask anyone about caving in Ireland and the most that one can expect is the mention of "Clare". There are two generally acknowledged local caving clubs namely the Irish Caving Club and the Reyfad Group, but relations are not all that they might be. Weighing heavily against any positive development has been the lack of enthusiastic local cavers. The weather doesn't help, or the local licensing hours, but obviously the strongest deterrent has been the general instability of life as portrayed each evening on the 'box'.

Things are changing. There is now a nucleus of determined individuals, significantly having acquired their experience beyond the water. The weather is tolerable, but most important of all is the forgotten land itself, it surely boasts some of the best potential in Europe, certainly in Britain.

Prior to the upsurge of the 'troubles', several British clubs made forays and received eyeopeners; but few returned. Articles were published, to be lost in dusty cabinets. The only coverage one might be lucky enough to obtain was that of "Caves of Ireland", by Coleman, but this too was woefully inadequate. The scene was in the making but the script was uncast.

Easter '72, at the invitation of the O'Reilly's, P. Ogden and myself spent our first seven days in the lands west of Holyhead. Flooded out of Clare, a northward trek led to Tullyhona (Co. Fermanagh). This yielded over half a mile of new passage, after a 30 foot sump. With whetted appetite, a partnership was formed with the Irish veteran, the late Roger Solari, and a return made in September. Altogether well over a mile of cave was added to two of the better known caves, namely Arch Cave and Prods Pot. The following summer of '73 we were back, but found it very difficult to muster more than a couple of thousand feet in various caves. Ireland was again the debut for Easter '74; unfortunately I was unable to go. Even so, significant extensions were made, notably in Polanaffrin, and new ground was broken in Leitrim.

October '74, it was thought, would see renewed activity in the area. Not the height of the holiday season one might think and rightly so. In the event just Pete Francis and myself left the homeground, and the desolation that is school, to sample the foreign climes. An all night drive to Stranraer, snatching sleep where possible, and we were finally installed in the Bush Bar, (Blacklion), "operations headquarters", by 2.00 p.m. Saturday. Here we met Dave Morris of the Wolverhampton Caving Group, likewise having secured the week and incidentally having braved the delights of Irish public transport. A fine evening around the fire set the trend for the week and settled the plan of campaign.

On Sunday we set off for Polaraftra, in the North; an isolated spot, on Knockmore Mountain. Cold, gale force winds were blowing in from the north west, the moors were sodden, and runoff heavy. The flood risk was nil but the state of the Terminal Sump was clearly questionable. Over 4,000 feet and two hours later the weary British arrived at the projected site. Two Irish lads had shrewdly opted out at the Canals.

The sump, static, had been dived for 150 feet at an earlier date, so the diver was well equipped, much to the dismay of his faithfuls. The water level was unchanged and visibility about three feet. On submerging the previous limit was easily achieved and new water commenced. The passage meandered on about 20 feet wide and 6 feet high. At 500 feet a small airbell was gained by treading water, and 60 feet later the dive terminated when dry passage was reached. At some point en route the Mainstream had been joined, to resurge from the sump pool with the diver. 850 feet of large passage, 30 feet wide and 8 feet high was followed to a further sump, wet suited feet having little say in the matter. With no more line an exit was made, rejoining the others after one and a quarter hours. The find is clearly significant, taking the cave to within 1500 feet of the resurgence, Legland Rising, which is as yet, unentered.

For the time of the year the weather was remarkably good but not even an indoor fire composed of anything detachable:

"But it came away in my hand", Dave;

"The piano goes well", Pete;

.... completely dried out the wet suits. Consequently, with intense reluctance, Tuesday saw us donning damp gear on a bleak mountainside - destination Prods Pot. But for the fact that there was gear already down, the lure of the Bush Bar fire would have been too great.

Everyone will tell you that Prods is one of the finest caves there is. Difficulty is really minimal, but the entrance passage, three small pitches and a total descent of 160 feet, is a sheer sod. Bottoming, one joins a beautiful vadose streamway which winds its way nearly 2000 feet down to a sump. This was the objective and my third attempt.

A sizeable stream could apparently disappear in blind fissures with no trace of current and little evidence of backing up. It just wasn't on. Covering floor, walls and roof, as on previous attempts, a twisting route was eventually uncovered. This led to an airbell after a 50 feet dive, and the end of the line. Returning for more, a further 150 feet dive, at maximum 15 feet depth, led to free flowing streamway ... dubbed "Solari Way". Unfortunately another sump was met after 80 feet of large passage. The return was made, and the trio made their exit, the occasional photo stop breaking the routine. Tackle was left in for another dive on the Thursday.

For this we were up early, at least 10.00 a.m., and underground with a wealth of diving gear. With over 500 feet of line a major breakthrough appeared imminent. Sump 2 was only 20 feet, a low, wide bedding passage. However,

130 feet later Sump 3 came into view. Initial route finding difficulties were soon overcome and descending to 30 feet a spacious passage led onward, but with very poor visibility. At 250 feet ascending gravel banks were welcomed, but not the dwindling dimensions, 4 feet wide and 9 to 10 inches high. Fortunately air was only another 30 feet and once more, free streamway. Needless to say after 140 feet Sump 4 loomed up. Only a few feet of progress could be made here before the line ran out and an exit was enforced. Prospects of the site are excellent with half a mile, plus, to the rising and a substantial fall. En route back, several short side passages were examined but with nothing worthy of note. Still, 900 feet had been added to the cave and the certainty of a major breakthrough.

.....Dave then experienced a short dive in Papist Passage and we made good time at the Bush Bar.

Apart from the Wednesday which was spent abortively in Cradle Hole, Monday also had its share of frustration. Apprehensive of drowning in Teampall Shetric (Truskmore), I got little further than the previous explorer, and the others, mistakenly roping the wrong side of Pol na Leprechauns, reached a false bottom. On the positive side we all witnessed the immense potential; clearly an area of high priority. Friday saw us circumventing the Truckmore, Ben Bulbin ridge, via Lough Glenade, Gleniff and Lough Glencar. Hedgerow after hedgerow of fuschias in full bloom, the towering Ben, the enchanted features of Glencar; it all seemed so distant from the world of the 'North' and civilisation.

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MARTYN J. FARR

O.D.B. AND ALL THAT!

David Judson's article in Newsletter No. 78 highlights some present day problems concerning cave conservation. I sensed his frustration with what is

actually being done at present and with what has been achieved so far. The views he expressed are those undoubtedly held by many people, but if the attendance at the cave conservation session at the BCRA Leeds meeting in September is anything to go by, there are still far too few cavers interested in this important topic. Sadly, this interest may only be awakened by threats to their favourite areas and caves. Alas, when this happens it may already be too late! An alternative viewpoint is that the majority of cavers have no long term interest in caves and just don't care!

In a piece of general griping about conservation officers, the case of the public enquiry over Ogof Dydd Byraf was specifically mentioned. As one who spent a week of his holiday at that enquiry I would like to make a few observations. It is noteworthy that the cavers who presented evidence on behalf of the Nature Conservancy did a fine job. I acted as Counsel for the NCA case. Of the four witnesses I had expected to call, only one was able to appear. He did so at considerable personal inconvenience and cost. He adopted evidence of one of the missing witnesses as his own and for tactical reasons it was decided not to present the evidence of the other two witnesses. It was a pity that the NCA case was diminished, but let us be realistic about this. If the enquiry had been held at another time in the year, there is no doubt that the position could have been reversed, owing to the possible complete absence of the cave scientists. Attendance by witnesses at a public enquiry is going to be determined by the time in the year when the enquiry is to be held. A public enquiry can and does impose a lot of effort and time commitment on the participants, which it is not always in their power to give; so be warned, luck plays a big part!

During 1974 the Cambrian Caving Council held a Cave Conservation Year. I had hoped that this would be a National affair. Alas, this was not to be. I must admit that I was a little disappointed at the scale of response. However, a lot of useful work was done which would not have been done otherwise. As a result the event was certainly worthwhile and it is hoped that the work will continue.

The National Cave Conservation Fund idea is an interesting one. I proposed such a fund to the Conservation and Access Group of NCA early in 1973. The reaction was unfavourable. It was felt that without identifiable threats the idea would not be supported. I still believe that such a fund will eventually come into being. It may be that BCRA have the machinery to administer such a fund, but I would personally like to see it set up within the existing framework of the National Trust and used with advice from the caving world. Until cavers are ready to accept the existence of such a fund, I think that it is the duty of caving clubs or organizations to set up their own conservation funds when they feel the need to do so. From such seeds it is possible that the larger fund envisaged by David Judson may grow.

In conclusion, there is plenty of room for anyone to do something in the cave conservation scene, if he so wishes. I would recommend that in the first instance the appropriate Regional Conservation Officer be contacted.

ROGER SMITH

CLUB NOTES

New Members

Christopher Brewster, 5, Pelican Street, Ystradgynlais, Swansea.

John Fry, 1, Everard Way, Lakeside, Cardiff.

Stephen and Jennifer Holmes, 87, Park Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Elizabeth Jones (Gary's missus!), 37, Springfield, Bradford on Avon, Wilts.

Richard Marsh, 1, Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Address List

The members address list which was to have appeared in this issue has had to be held over for the next issue. This gives you a second chance to ensure the Secretary has your correct address.

---ooOoo---

THE "REMARKABLE CAVERNS" OF LLANDYFODWG

As the South East Wales Area Registrar of the Cambrian Cave Registry, I have, for some time, been trying to locate these caves. There is ample historical reference to them.

In 1833, Samuel Lewis⁽¹⁾ wrote:

"The existence of some remarkable caverns in the parish (Llandyfodwg) has given rise to numerous conjectures; by some they are supposed to be exhausted mines, wrought either by the Romans or by the ancient Britons, before the force of gunpowder was applied to the blasting of the rocks; by others they are thought to be either natural, or formed for the purpose of concealment during the intestine (sic) and sanguinary contests which anciently disturbed the peace of the principality."

H. H. Knight⁽²⁾, in the course of a learned article, described how Llewelyn Bren in order to attack Sir Payn de Turberville in 1316, hid an army of 10,000 Welshmen in the mountains, thickets and woods. A footnote reads:

"Some remarkable caverns in the parish of Llandyvodwg, Glamorgan, may have afforded concealment during the contest."

The latter reference is mentioned in British Caver⁽³⁾ but it is clear that the author had not found the site.

I made enquiries from several local people who were unable (or perhaps unwilling) to offer any help. There were, however, suggestions that the caves might be in Cwm Dimbath. The Geological Map showed this area to be of Pennant Sandstone and the 6" Ordnance Survey Map marked various mine workings and tramways. As the whole valley was wooded, a thorough search was likely to be a lengthy business.

By chance, I received an introduction to Mr. D. Spratt of Blackmill who remembered the caves and told me that they were situated at Daren y Dimbath. I wish to thank him for this valuable help, and also for drawing my attention to a recent book by Miss K. O. Pritchard⁽⁴⁾. This book not only gave the location of the caves but also told some of the local legends. The most significant sentence, from a caver's viewpoint, was:

"After penetrating a few yards into the caves, the candles continually blew out."

This remark suggested to me that there might indeed be caves of some size.

Roger Smith agreed to join my wife and I in an investigation. We took the road almost opposite Llandyfodwg Church and crossed the ford near Cwm-pont-y-fid, where we found limited, but adequate, space to park. We then climbed over a stile and walked northwards along the disused tramway track by Nant Iechyd, until we reached a forestry road. This walk is extremely pleasant and we made a few detours to inspect items of interest on the way. A heron flew up from the stream and, for a time, a fox walked in front of us like a pet dog!

On reaching the road, we turned eastwards and, after climbing a short hill, found a notice on the left (north) marked "Daren y Dimbath". From this point, a walk has been laid out with rustic handrails - presumably by the Forestry Commission.

Daren y Dimbath is a narrow gorge in Pennant Sandstone between SS.9514.8942, SS.9510.8956 and SS.9530.8958. The cliffs are spectacular and unexpected. The floor of the gorge is littered with huge slabs of rock but these do not appear to have fallen recently. It is possible that in the distant past some (or all) of this gorge was roofed over and formed a gigantic cave.

In the cliffs we found numerous vertical cracks which were too tight to enter although often of considerable height. Some were, however, wide enough and these were found to be deep rifts, the entrance being near to the top of the rift. The walls appeared to be solid but we did not feel like descending the rifts for fear that the "floor" might prove to be unstable and the rifts deeper than we had thought. However we traversed along the top of some of these rifts which changed direction abruptly and soon became too tight for comfort. We did, nevertheless, establish a visual link between two of these "caves".

As one ascends the gorge, the cliffs become higher and the scenery more rugged. Chasms descend from the surface and there are warning notices of these (in Welsh and English). It is said that these chasms expose up to 90ft. of sandstone above the Brithdir Rider⁽⁵⁾. Progress, except on the path, is clearly hazardous and not unlike crossing a glacier containing hidden crevasses! Any more thorough exploration would require a strong party equipped with ropes and, possibly ladders. I doubt whether this would be worthwhile.

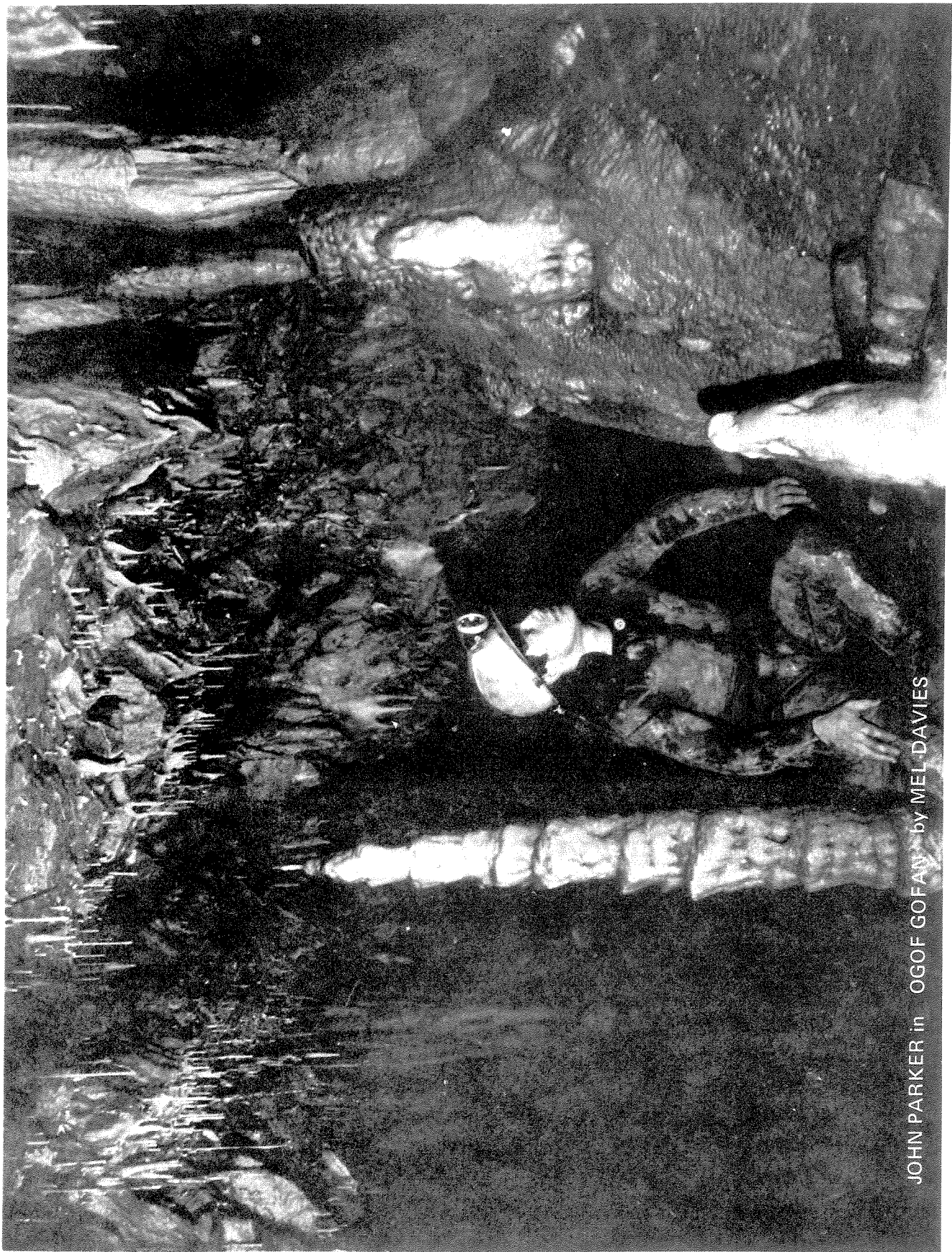
From the eastern end of Daren y Dimbath, one can see the forestry road which is easily reached and affords a speedy return.

Although we failed to locate any huge caverns capable of hiding an army, we had an enjoyable time in unusual surroundings. This article has been written partly to place on record what we saw and partly for the assistance of anyone called upon to effect a rescue! In this connection, it is to be hoped that visitors will leave their dogs at home and keep their children on the lead!

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T. CHARLES BRYANT



JOHN PARKER in OGOF GOFAN by MEL DAVIES

OGOF FFYNNON DDU AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE PENWYLLT QUARRY

The original planning application to extend quarrying in the area was submitted for sites 'b' and 'c'. The thinking behind the application was that by leaving site 'a', the visual effect of the quarry extensions on the upper Swansea Valley would be minimal. This application was lodged in April 1973. The South Wales Caving Club (SWCC) opposed quarrying in site 'c' for the following reasons:

- 1) The scale of quarrying would escalate and result in the alteration of existing underground drainage patterns. Pollution would then affect what was the longest traversible underground natural watercourse in the country.
- 2) Previously unknown parts of the OFD system might be broken into and destroyed with no possible chance of protecting them.
- 3) The quarry would eventually come so close to known parts of the system that cave formations would be put at risk, and the deterioration of certain collapse features within the cave could be enhanced.

At the same time SWCC recommended that:

- 1) No further permission at all be granted until such time as areas within existing permission (i.e. site 'e') are safeguarded by Nature Reserve agreements with the Nature Conservancy Council.
- 2) In the event of (1) being achieved then planning permission should be granted for a limited period only and then renewed if necessary. It was also suggested that in view of the unsightliness of Twyn Disgwylfa (sites a, b and c), then permission for its almost complete removal could be given with little effect on visual amenity.

In September 1973 Hobbs Quarries advertised a modification to their original proposal. This time site 'a' was added to 'b' and 'c'. I subsequently wrote to the Breconshire County Council on behalf of SWCC and Cambrian Caving Council pointing out that whilst we stood by our previous objections we were agreeable to quarrying in sites 'a' and 'b' subject to a number of conditions amongst which were requirements that (1) quarrying be not permitted below the level of the railway track, (2) site 'e' be permanently safeguarded from quarrying activities, (3) the company give written assurance that quarrying activities cease at Penwyllt following the removal of sites 'a', 'b' and 'd' to the level of the railway track, (4) the extraction rate be restricted to the 250,000 tons per annum stated in the application. In March 1974 the objectors to the quarrying proposals met on site with a sub-committee of the County Planning Committee. After inspection of the site everybody retired to Craig-y-Nos Hospital to hear all the letters of objection. A short period was allowed for questions and then the committee retired to consider the application. I understand that the committee

were in favour of granting permission for quarrying sites 'a' and 'b' subject to a number of stringent conditions. Amongst these was a requirement for a safeguard to site 'e', but a decision could not be made at this juncture.

Since the area for which planning permission was sought was not in accord with the County's Development Plan, the consent of the Secretary of State for Wales had to be obtained before an approval could be given. The decision as to whether the application should be put to a public enquiry was expected by the end of July 1974. To date no decision has been made.

I understand from an official of the new Powys County Council that an unexpected problem has arisen. I have written to both the County Council and the Welsh Office asking for an explanation for the delay. In the meantime quarrying continues at Penwyllt and the company are working well within site 'b'. I understand that such activities are in order provided that a valid application has been lodged. The County Council has undoubtedly been slow in dealing with the application so that all blame does not rest with the quarry company. Talk of enforcement orders is not very helpful in my opinion since the consequences could be damaging for the Cwm Dwr part of the OFD system. It should be noted that sites 'd' and 'e' possess unrestricted planning permissions, (i.e. granted prior to the 1947 Planning Act.)

To conclude, there are at least two problems at Penwyllt. First there is the question of how the Secretary of State for Wales will determine the issue of sites 'a' and 'b'. He could determine this without a public enquiry, but it seems likely that one will be called. If he does so it would appear to be in the best interests of cavers to favour removal of sites 'a', 'b' and 'd' to the level of the railway line, provided that suitable safeguards for visual amenity are agreed and provided that a lasting written agreement can be obtained to safeguard site 'e'. SWCC are in a position to oppose such quarrying unless such an agreement is forthcoming due to their registered common rights over Twyn Disgwylfa.

The second problem is the question of site 'c'. Up to the time of writing no appeal has been lodged against the refusal of Powys County Council to grant permission to quarry the site. If such an appeal was to be lodged it would almost certainly result in a public enquiry, and, I believe, would require all our expertise to provide a first class defence. Consequently we need to show that OFD extends beneath site 'c' and also that the rainfall over the area does find its way into OFD. Our case would be strengthened if the Nature Conservancy declared site 'g' as a National Nature Reserve. I have recently received an assurance from Mr. R. Boote, Director of the Nature Conservancy Council, that he is personally looking into progress in this direction.

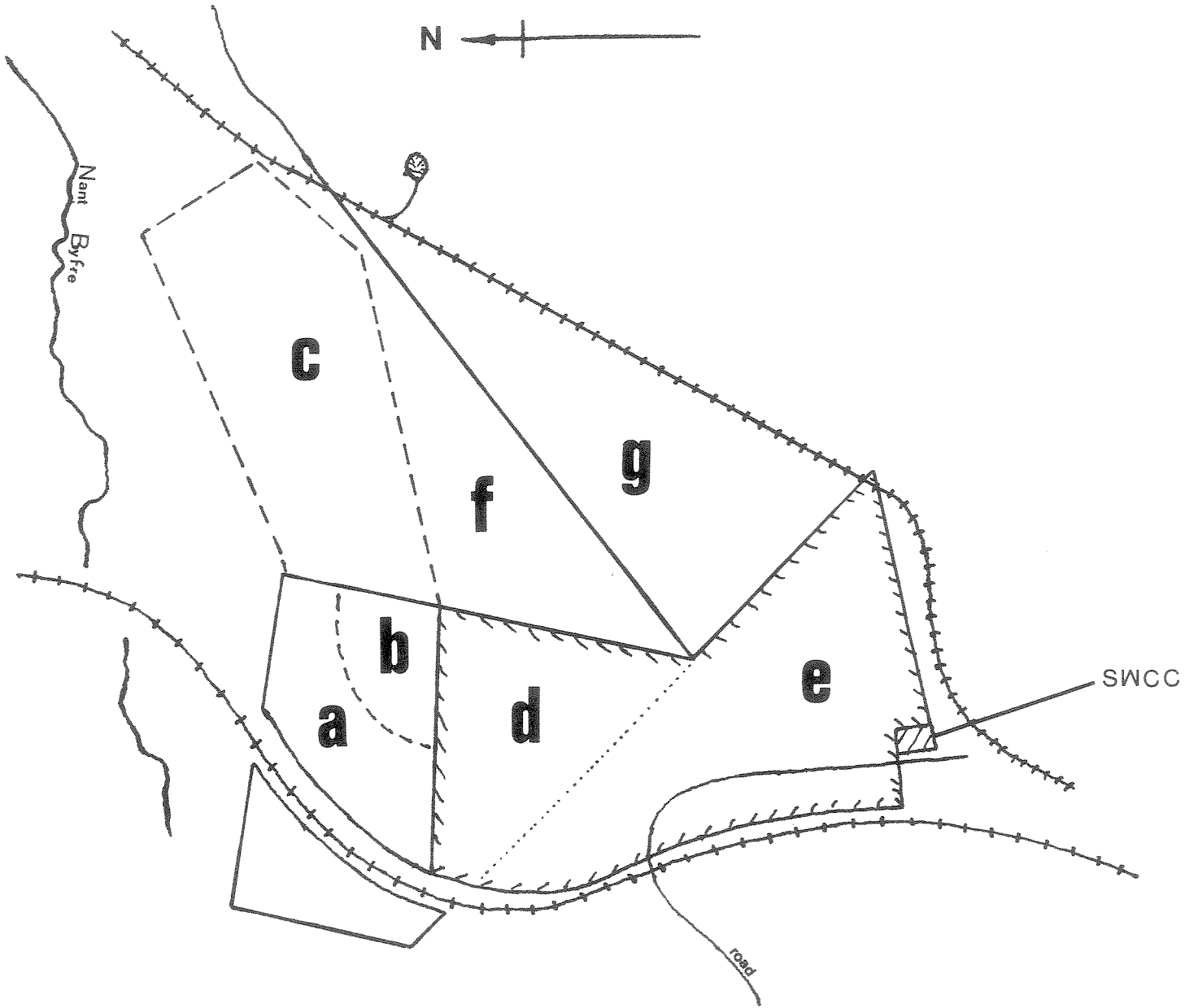
I hope that the above expose of the problem will in some way help everyone to understand the present position. I have deliberately avoided going into detail over the land ownership problem of sites a, b and d as this is a completely

separate problem and one which has no straightforward solution. I welcome comments and suggestions but would like them to be as constructive as possible. It would be very nice to be able to say that the problem will soon be solved, but I regret that this is far from being the case.

ROGER SMITH

NOTES

1. 'a', 'b' and 'd' form (together with the unmarked section of the trapezium west of the railway track) what is known as the 'Common ers Allotment', or Twyn Disgwylfa. This plot was allocated by Act of Parliament in 1819 for the purpose of providing limestone for agricultural use and road maintenance. Such was the wording of the Act that anyone having rights in the quarry area could not legally quarry stone for sale. The South Wales Caving Club and Hobbs Quarries amongst others have registered common rights in this allotment.
2. All but the tip of the triangle 'e' eastwards of the old tramroad, is a plot of land belonging to Hobbs Quarries. Parts of this plot have been quarried for at least a hundred years, and Cwm Dwr Quarry cave entrance lies just beneath the letter 'e' on the plan.
3. 'd' and 'e' have planning permission attached to them which can be traced back to 1947. At present only a 40ft platform above the railway line is left of site 'd'.
4. 'c' is an unenclosed piece of rough pasture, the freehold of which belongs to Cnewr Farmers Ltd. They have leased this to Hobbs Quarries.
5. 'g' including the old tramroad and a large tract of land going southwards and encompassing most of OFD 2, is owned by the Forestry Commission though its mineral rights are vested in the Penwyllt Silica Brick Co. Ltd. The Nature Conservancy have an interest in this land.
6. The southernmost edge of Trapezium a, b, d, is shown dotted. These dots mark the line of the ancient boundary wall. It no longer exists. The northernmost boundary of 'd' is a boundary of planning permission to be found on planning documents. It does not exist in physical form.
7. Solid lines, unless otherwise marked, represent stone walls or fences. Note that the small section marked as going from SWCC to the railway line is an arbitrary boundary.



PENWYLLT

OFFICERS' REPORTS

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The past year has not seen the upsurge in Club activities which was hoped for and which is overdue. The increases in petrol prices have taken their toll many people are now only able to visit Penwyllt half as often as previously and this has made it difficult to maintain interest in long-term projects.

Caving activity has again centred on Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and there have been several minor discoveries but there has been no concerted "push" towards virgin areas (such as between the Clay series and Cwm Dwr or, more speculatively, between OFD III and Pant Mawr). Digs have been worked near Pwll Byfre, in the northern choke in Cwm Dwr Jama and at several other points in the cave but there is, as yet, no major success to report.

Dan yr Ogof has seen less activity than usual this year - not least because of the weather! It appears that all possibilities in Mazeways have been explored and we must now look elsewhere for DYO IV. It is understood that the BCRA survey and publication on Dan yr Ogof is almost complete and will be published fairly soon.

A newly collapsed shakehole, directly above Sabre Junction in Pant Mawr Pot, has received sporadic attention, as has a dig known as "Y Gwal" in the Neath Valley.

Martyn Farr has extended Agen Allwedd via the downstream sump, but while pushing still further, his companion, Roger Solari, tragically lost his life. Roger was not a member of the Club but he was well known to many of us and his death is a great loss to the caving world.

Several of our members have directed attention to Ireland during the year and they have already achieved considerable success.

Following the direction by last year's AGM that "the current (access) rules (for OFD Top Entrance) be rigorously applied", keys have been issued only to parties holding a letter from SWCC Hon. Secretary. This system has operated well but it is not clear that rigorous application of the rule has benefited the cave. The Top Entrance is still carrying "heavy traffic" particularly as many clubs use Top Entrance as the ideal introductory trip for novices.

Access arrangements for other caves have operated as in previous years, except that parties requiring weekday access to OFD I are now asked to make prior arrangements with Mr. & Mrs Barrows.

During the year we have, with regret, recorded the death of two of our members, namely Dr. Edward Aslett who was our Chairman for many years, and also Dr. Bertie Crook. The Club is honoured to have been left £1000 in Edward's will.

New members number 15 to date but 21 have allowed their membership to lapse, giving a final total of 233 compared with 241 last year.

I have continued to produce the News-sheet and from the support which it receives it would appear to be a useful supplement to the Newsletter.

The committee has functioned well, committee meetings have averaged over 80% attendance and have been fairly peaceful affairs! I would like to thank the committee members for the help and support they have given me and I would particularly like to thank the Assistant Secretary, John Harvey, for the considerable help which he has given me - notably by arranging OFD I leaders and addressing the Newsletter and News-sheet envelopes.

Finally my thanks are due to my predecessor, Mary Galpin. My introduction to the job of secretary was made relatively easy as a result of the efficient way in which Mary had organised the job and I have consequently been able to keep my head above water most of the time!

J. J. ROWLAND

---ooOoo---

WARDEN'S REPORT

The weather has been against us this year. The time and the will have been there, but with hardly a dry Sunday for three summer months a great deal remaining undone.

Some significant progress was made with pointing both on the front, the endwall and on the back of cottages 3 and 4, where Frank and Laurie have worked alone. Thanks are due to all those members who followed up their promise of last Easter to its conclusion. I am sorry that several members failed to start their work, and sorrier still that a few started but failed to finish their sections of pointing.

The water supply has only needed slight attention this year: last year's efforts have paid off. A huge amount of old iron and other rubbish was taken to the tip and the old shed opposite the club was cleared to house the rubbish sacks.

Two of the men's bedrooms were redecorated and the floor of No. 9 back bedroom was made safe. A new ceiling has been put up in the long common room. Some plastering and painting was done in the small common room. Some external paintwork has been done. A leak in the roof of No. 10 was repaired but the chimney stack is now in serious need of attention.

Some difficulties have been experienced in obtaining coal, gas and lighter flints as suppliers have been slow to deliver.

An attempt to get duty officers to enlist idle members in cottage work failed, as many duty officers themselves failed to turn up this year - committee members among them. I am personally appalled that some people hold their responsibilities so lightly.

You will doubtless be aware that the shower/heating project nears completion and I must once again thank Laurie for the effort he has put into this project. I hope we all go caving enough to justify it!

I have, I regret, not given as much energy to being cottage warden as perhaps I should have, as I have been starting a new career, trying to go caving and working for rescue at the same time. For this reason I do not intend to stand again, leaving the way open for someone else with more time to devote to the task.

BOB HALL

---ooOoo---

RECORD OFFICER'S REPORT

This year, with the club records being easily accessible, has seen a growth in demand for the records, which is very welcome. Indeed, for certain items, especially books, there has developed a waiting list.

During the year I have purchased a number of caving books, especially guides to various regions in Britain, which I felt would be of use to our wider ranging members. However they have been used less than I expected; indicating, I suppose, either a strong resurgence of the Swansea Valley syndrome; or the members' excellent knowledge of the various caving regions; or the need for us to convert a few oil sheiks to caving!

I also felt that although I have informed members, through our Newsletters, of current articles of interest in other clubs' journals, many people were still missing interesting and informative articles by not following up my 'leads'. Therefore I have put all magazines that I felt were concerned with the South Wales caving 'scene', in the dining hall.

The obvious objection to doing this before was, of course, that they would soon become soiled, therefore I have placed them in folders to protect them and they should not be removed from these.

This would seem to be a popular move and is one way of ensuring that the records are more widely read. If anyone can think of any journals I have omitted to display, please let me know and I'll try my best to furnish them.

Next year many magazines will need binding; this should have been done this year but I felt that I had overspend myself on books and so delayed binding.

It is hoped, on publication of the club's eightieth Newsletter, to form another volume (No. 4). It would also be useful if we could form another complete series of Newsletters for binding, as these are often the most popular items in the library.

On the publication of the eightieth Newsletter I am hoping to produce a supplement index edition covering all Newsletters so far. The advantage of this, over an ordinary filing system housed with the records, is that every member can then consult what is available at his leisure, especially when he may want to use the time spent at the club in caving rather than endless searches for obscure articles.

With the advent of central heating in the club headquarters there is the possibility of housing the records there in the near future. Indeed number ten back room would be an excellent room to use for this purpose. This would further improve access to the records, but they should not be made too readily available, as items can easily become lost or damaged.

I feel that the moment is opportune for another member to establish himself (or herself) in the position of Records Officer, to inject some new enthusiasm into the job in preparation for the future; I am therefore standing down this year.

P. FRANCIS

—ooOoo—

EDITOR'S REPORT

I am pleased to report that during 1974 I received a steady flow of articles and photographs, which enabled me to produce a succession of, I hope, interesting newsletters.

After the issue of newsletter number 80 we will be changing from the current non-standard format (American Quarto) to the standard A4 format. This will enable us to buy our paper from virtually any supplier, rather than us having to find one who is willing to supply the non-standard size. It may also mean that we will be able to purchase our paper a little cheaper.

Apart from a general appeal to all members to continue sending in articles during 1975, I would like to make two special appeals. First of all I would appreciate articles from any of the older members, describing caving in the Swansea Valley or Gower during the formative years. I would be especially grateful for old photographs, even if they are not accompanied by an article. Secondly, an appeal to all those itinerant members, I am sure that there are many interesting, overseas, caving articles which remain unwritten and therefore unread.

I would like to conclude by thanking all those members who contributed items to the newsletter in 1974 and, in addition, I think we all owe a special thank you to Alan Jackson, for his good work in doing the printing.

B. T. JORGENSEN

---ooOoo---

RESCUE OFFICER'S REPORT

The past year has been one of average activity. The number of incidents per year is slowly increasing, presumably keeping pace with the increasing numbers of people who come caving in Wales.

I regret to have to report one fatal accident. Roger Solari died while diving in Agen Allwedd. There was also one serious injury, Kate Bailey, a member of Swansea University Caving Club, fell from the Nave pitch in OFD II, breaking her back and injuring her head. We were fortunate in this instance that there was a party from Mendip near the scene of the accident, including a Mendip Rescue Organisation Doctor. With their help we were able to get the patient out of the cave to the ambulance in about 5½ hours from the time the accident occurred.

The list of the year's accidents with brief details is as follows:-

18th May 1974	OFD I-II	A Party from St. Bartholomews Hosp. overdue. Party found in Salubrious Passage, tired and with poor lights.
16th June 1974	Agen Allwedd	Roger Solari lost whilst diving in Agen Allwedd.

21st August 1974	OFD I-II	Mendip Caving Group overdue. Party found at Confluence and escorted out.
2nd November 1974	OFD II	Member of visiting club fell in stream, no help needed. It was later confirmed he was suffering a broken rib.
16th November 1974	OFD II	Kate Bailey of Swansea University fell from ladder at Nave. Suffered compressed fracture of the spine and head injuries.
14th December 1974	OFD II	Party from Croyden C.C. reported overdue. Forgot to remove note from destination board.
14th December 1974	OFD II to Cwm Dwr	Party from Midland Cave Exploration Group overdue. Found in Smithy area - lost.
26th January 1975	OFD II	Imperial College removed ladders before all their party had finished Pendulum Passage to Nave trip.

It is noticeable from these incidents that a number of visiting parties undertaking 'thro' trips' in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu do not know the cave well enough, or are not experienced enough, to undertake this trip safely. Last year C.R.O. went to the help of three of these parties. One of these, St. Bartholomews Hospital, were helped out for the second year running.

It is also noticeable that none of last year's incidents was in connection with one of our own members. I hope members will not lose interest in Rescue Practice because of this, but rather to regard the experience gained as good insurance for themselves.

Equipment

During the year all the Rescue Equipment has been kept in order and I am glad to report that the construction of two new Clarke stretchers is under way.

Medical Stores

The medical stores have been checked by Dr. Alison Stone and all the old stock has been destroyed and replaced with new. On the advice of Dr. Don Thomson several new drugs have been included.

Rescue Practice

Two were held during the year, one in July and the other in October. They were not well attended but useful lessons were learned. In October the practice was joined by members of EGONS.

Insurance

The Dyfed Powys Police Authority has taken out an insurance policy covering those helping police during incidents. It is therefore important that the Controller of any rescue incident sends details to the C.R.O. including the number of persons taking part.

The position with the Police Authorities in neighbouring areas with regard to insurance is at present uncertain.

Future of Rescue in South Wales

The Dyfed Powys Police have appointed Chief Superintendent Morgan of Newtown to liase with all Cave and Mountain Rescue Teams. It therefore looks possible that a South Wales Rescue Committee will be formed with Chief Superintendent Morgan in the chair and say, two members from each team. At the present moment this would be two from the Gwent team and two from our team. I see this as a big step forward in integrating us with the other Rescue services in the area. We will also have an Authority with whom we can discuss all our outstanding problems.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those people who have helped in the Rescue organisation, especially the members of the Rescue sub-committee.

P. HARVEY

---ooOoo---

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

On looking back over the past year there seems to have been a general lull in caving activities. This has undoubtedly been brought about by the dreaded inflation and enormous rise in fuel costs. I certainly feel less in touch with routine club activities, as my visits have become less frequent. However, with the help of Brian Jopling, who was co-opted as an assistant at the beginning of this term of office, I think I have managed to complete most of the routine tasks of the Tackle Officer.

The two major projects which I had hoped to have completed this year, i.e. Tunnel Top Entrance and OFD top entrance, although not finished are now taking shape, and we are also making 1,000 ft. of ladder.

The only major purchases this year were materials for ladders, a replacement Sunto Compass and Clinometer and sundry Rawl Bolts. One large outlay that the club made was to purchase 18 Nife cells plus spares. After initial problems with the lamps, Bob Hall managed to get these to a saleable state and by now all should be sold to club members.

Fixed Aids - new wires have been placed on Bolt Traverse in OFD I - new rungs for the Chain Ladder in DYO into Gerrard Platten Hall have been taken into the cave but as yet have not been fixed, due mainly to bad weather conditions. Several other fixed aids have been replaced and these consist mainly of hand lines and chains.

I would like to thank everybody who has helped me with tackle and let us hope that in 75/76 we shall need 5,000 ft. of ladder and a great big gate for OFD IV.

PETE CARDY

**It is announced with deepest regret the death of
John Bevan
on Friday 21st Feb. after a long illness.
Our deepest sympathy
is extended to his wife Robbie and two children**