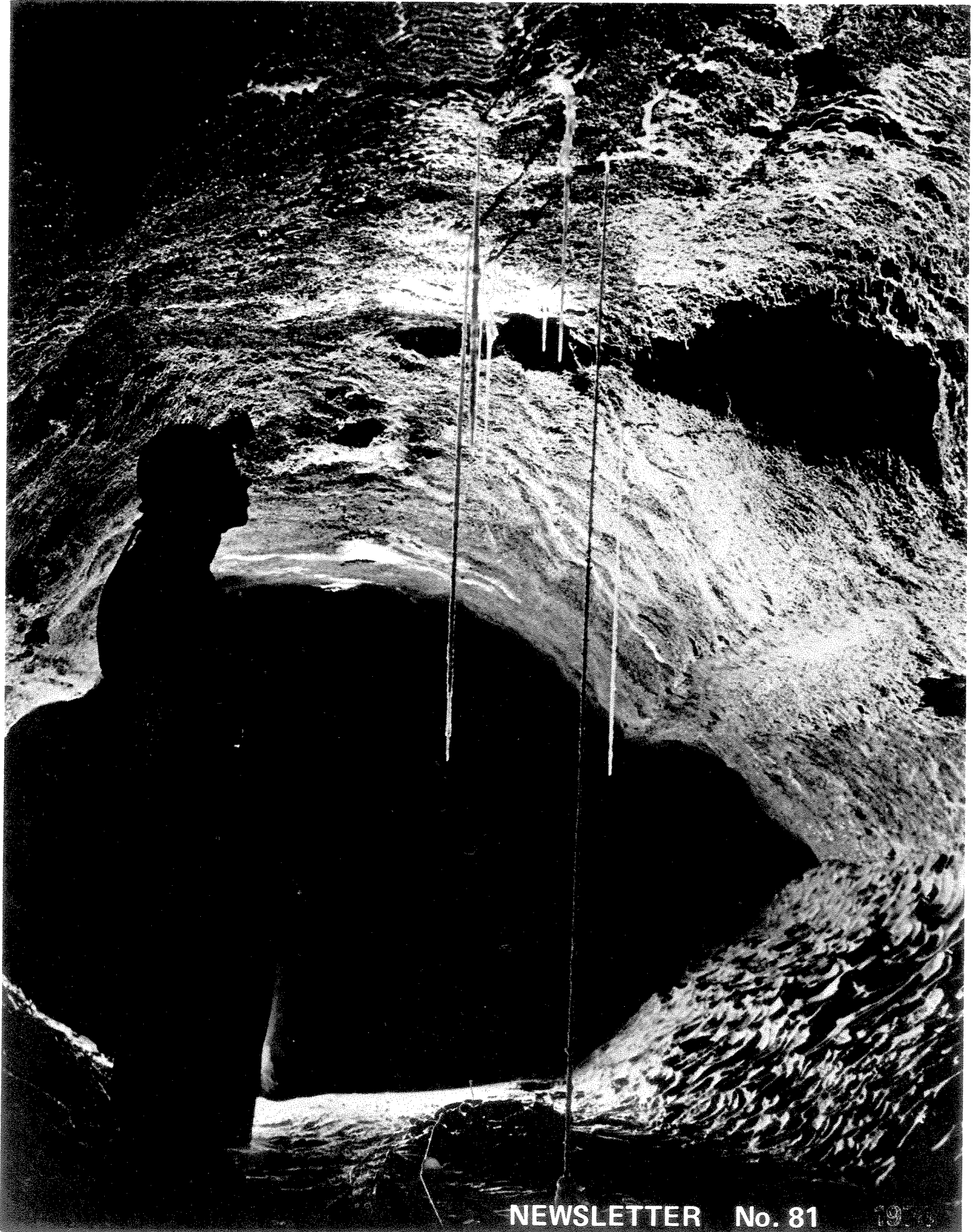


SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

NO. 81

NEWSLETTER

December 1975

	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	GREAT POTENTIAL IN SUTHERLAND (M. Farr)	1
2.	THE CAMBRIAN CAVE REGISTRY (A. Ashwell)	5
3.	OGOF FFYNNON DDU A NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE (R. Smith)	6
4.	FURTHER EXPLORATION NEEDED IN O.F.D. (R. Smith)	6
5.	EASTER '75 IN IRELAND (P. Francis)	10
6.	EXCERPT FROM A LETTER (P. Dolphin)	12
7.	A RHINOCEROS BONE FROM OGOR PANT-Y-WENNOL LLANDUDNO (M. Davies)	13
8.	OGOF TAN-Y-BRYN A NEW CAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN LLANDUDNO (M. Davies)	13
9.	BOOK REVIEWS	
	"LIMESTONES AND CAVES OF THE MENDIP HILLS" (M. Davies)	15
	"THE CAVES OF CARMARTHEN" (P. Francis)	16
10.	CLAUSTROPHOBIA (A. Ashwell)	17
11.	CLUB NOTES	18


Cover Photograph - Dan Yr Ogof by C. Westlake

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DESIDERATA

GO PLACIDLY AMID THE NOISE & HASTE, & REMEMBER WHAT PEACE THERE MAY BE IN SILENCE. AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly & clearly; and listen to others, even the dull & ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud & aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain & bitter; for always there will be greater & lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity & disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue & loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees & stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors & aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery & broken dreams it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy:



FOUND IN OLD SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH, BALTIMORE; DATED 1692:

We've sent you the DESIDERATA in hopes that you find it pleasant and relaxing reading. We couldn't afford a Pirelli Calendar but, thought this brief philosophy would help to keep us in mind.

Brian + Alan

GREAT POTENTIAL IN SUTHERLAND!

At the invitation of Bill Ritchie, Chris Howes, (B.O.A.C.) Gareth and myself made the long trek north to Scotland. It had been a long drive and time was getting on as we approached the gloomy Central Valley.

"We could always drop in on Big John", says Gareth, and Saturday night being Saturday night we needed little persuasion. A slight deviation from route and we were in Chapel-Hall, with John and Ann at home. Everyone knows that Scottish beer is far superior to that brewed down South. Little allowance was made for this fact, particularly by Gareth, and as a result, the walk back to the flat was amusing to say the least. A further burst of refreshment at the flat, a comfortable night's kip and we were ready for the last few hours to Lochinver. After a few navigational errors and frequent intervals of enforced stops, for Gareth to be ill, we eventually arrived about 9.00 p.m.

Bill Ritchie, the manager of the local fishing concern, had arranged for the Monday off, and having introduced us to the area, he took us to see what was considered to be one of the most promising caves in the North. Uamh an Claonite is a swallet collapse cave, situated at the head of Allt Nan Uamh valley on the easterly side of Beinn an Fhuarain. It consists of a streamway about 350 feet long, leading to a sump. The altitude, approximately 1150 feet and presumed rising at 650 feet give every indication of something reasonable, especially as sink to resurgence distance is around one and a quarter miles. Unfortunately the geology of the area is chaotic with faults, thrusts and overthrows in never ending profusion.

The 'walk in' was something akin to Pant Mawr from Penwyllt; uphill, carrying wetsuits, full diving and photographic equipment, it proved a real slog. Luckily the weather was favourable, dry, cool and windy. In the hollow of the entrance collapse we encountered that irritating menace, accursed throughout Scotland, the midge. Consequently it was a pleasure to slide into the shadows to escape the itching.

No water actually sinks at the entrance, but this is found just inside, gurgling rapidly from under the boulders that one has to descend through. This is rather an airy manoeuvre for the blocks are clearly far from being stable, necessitating great caution during the fifteen feet near vertical drop. This and the nearing prospect of a dive served to upset Martyn's bowels and the rest of the party, who were forced to travel through the affected area. Mission accomplished M.F. was now prepared for the cave to do its worst.

About 100 feet down the cave the passage increased in size suddenly from a hitherto stooping size to a very spacious walking streamway. Herald-ing the change was a ten feet sporting cascade. The passage retained ample proportions all the way to the sump, lowering temporarily at a waist deep pool. The submerged way on gave the impression of being a low bedding plane, dipping away gradually in the peaty water. Most important, it had never been examined, with equipment, before.

Having kitted up and posed for a few snaps, the diver disappeared into the foam strewn pool. The sump was indeed low, about two feet or less in height. At 100 feet from base an airbell, eight feet in diameter, was reached in deep water. A few feet further led to a tight squeeze which required digging to pass. Eventually a short but tight eight inch slot led steeply up to air and the end of the sump.

Beyond lay some very inviting abandoned passages, so the line was belayed and the single bottle deposited safely on a gravel bank. The dry passages soon choked off, but the stream 'went' pleasantly low. Several hundred feet and three cascades later, led one to the First Water Shoot, where the water utilized the very steep dip in its descent of 20 feet. In rift passage a neck deep wade led a couple of feet to the Second Water Shoot. This gave a vertical descent of 25 feet and would clearly be very tricky in above normal conditions. The impressive accumulation of foam at the bottom was instantly diagnosed as Sump 2. The immediate feeling was that of dismay. Then the draught was noted, blowing distinctly over the pool via a high level development along the strike. A 25 feet easy climb led to a large, stooping sized by-pass with the stream audible way down on the left. It had obviously resurged comparatively rapidly from the sump. Within 200 feet of Sump 2, Sump 3 blocked the path. This was clearly connected with the mainstream even though flowing water had not been seen since Sump 2.

En route back, one attempt was made to descend to the stream, but the quest revealed little, apart from sore knees. A ten minute dig in an up-dip direction yielded over 100 feet of passage trending back towards the entrance, but this soon choked off with boulders. A free diving attempt was made on Sump 2, but despite 8 feet depth being reached it was not a question of a quick duck through. Abandoning the lower section of the cave completely, all the side passages were examined. Some strange hydrological connections were looked at but not pushed. Eventually after a two hour separation the somewhat cool, but loyal sherpas were rejoined. Deciding on a return to dive Sump 3 some of the gear was left in. About 1000 feet of new passage had been explored.

During the night there was a deterioration in the weather and the following day was grasped to continue the exploration in case of severe flooding. Chris, having exhausted the photographic potential the previous day, opted for digging at the rising. Gareth, noble as ever, supplied the assistance, in full anticipation of a long wait around.

On this occasion a spare cell and a pair of boots were also taken, through the sump. The self-portering beyond, proved fairly arduous, especially with a large 45 cubic feet cylinder. This gave an extravagant source of air; forty five minutes in shallow water, but unfortunately there was no smaller bottle to be had. Two trips had to be made to get all the gear down the Second Water Shoot and into the by-pass. There was nearly twice the volume of water of the previous day and the Shoot would have been utterly impossible in wet suit socks.

Sump 3 went easily and large, but at fifteen feet depth. About 90 feet led to air and the largest chamber so far in the new extension. Unfortunately, hopes of it going really big were soon dashed when all high level ways were found to be choked. By squeezing through the white limestone blocks the way on was quickly located at stream level. Here a difference in the structure, or rather the divers' orientation to it, was noted. Prior to Sump 3 the dip had been very

steeply (70 degrees approximately) inclined from the right. Now it inclined steeply from the left. Dip reversed and slightly confused, it expired that I had completely doubled back on myself. Passing beneath an area of very loose suspended boulders, Sump 4 was easily by-passed. If dived this would only be about four feet in length. Beyond, a few feet of passage led to the Water Slide and Sump 5. Searching for another by-pass proved fruitless, so the kit was dragged to Sump 5 and it was dived.

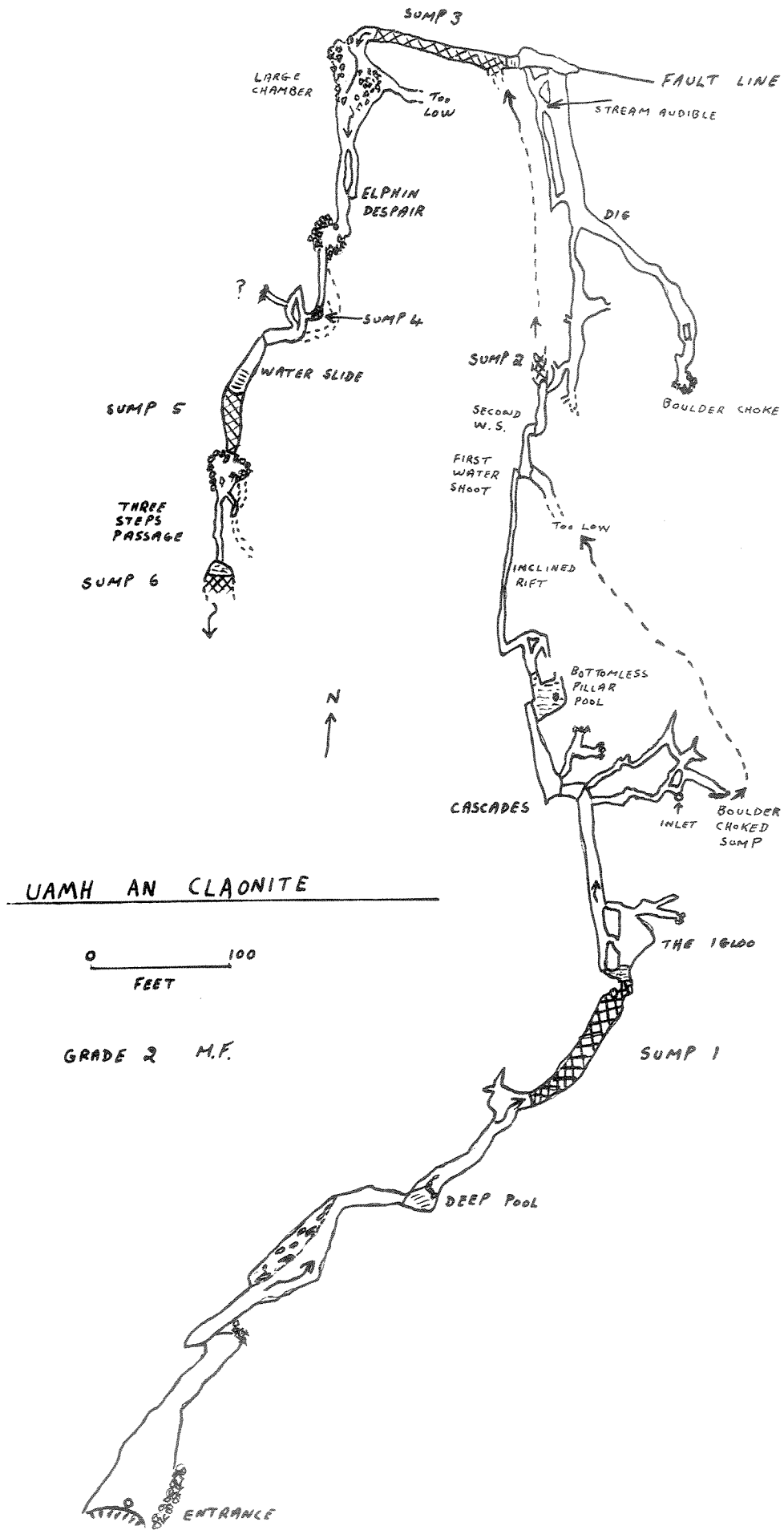
A 50 feet long bedding passage, two feet or less in height, quickly led to air, resurging into a small boulder chamber. The stream now occupied the smallest passage so far and led via three small steps down to Sump 6. This looked uncomfortably small, but nevertheless diveable. Here the diver decided he had done enough and began to worry about the state of the weather outside. Several bearings were taken on the return journey and sherpa Gareth was greeted by an abominable foam man spouting survey figures. The trip had taken just over three hours and gave a total of 1500 feet beyond the sump; the longest passage in Scotland! At the furthest point reached; Sump 6, the cave must have dropped by 130 feet.

For the remaining days which we spent in Sutherland one had been scheduled for canoeing. The following day therefore we headed for the Kylesku Ferry and an entertaining day commenced by Gareth capsizing in full view of the waiting tourists on either side of the crossing. He then enjoyed the ignominious privilege of a 'piggy-back' ride to the landing stage where he was reinstated in his canoe. Paddling, carefully now, into the serenity of Loch Glencoul was a sensation far removed from the bustle of the South. The water was green and clear and curious seals plopped around us discreetly maintaining their distance.

Thereafter the weather really broke, flooding nearly everything in sight and ruling out several promising sites. Cnoc Nan Uamh or "Knockers", in the Traligill Valley was high on the agenda, but the resurging water was really intimidating and we left it in peace. A dive was undertaken at Glenbain Hole. This was a couple of hundred feet deep, aligned on an incredibly steep pseudo-bedding. The sump only comparatively recently discovered, was previously undived and it was surmised to link up with Firehose resurgence cave down in the gorge. Underwater the dip, almost vertical, and nature of the cave were maintained. Descending feet first in nil visibility 35 feet depth was reached before re-emerging. Several awkward sections of less than ten inches had to be negotiated. Not a very pleasant spot!

Down in the valley an unrecorded sump rising was located, but this could only be penetrated for 5 feet before more digging was needed. The weather continued poorly and we were glad to return to the refreshments of Glasgow. The trip had clearly been worthwhile with a fair bit of potential for the future.

M. FARR



THE CAMBRIAN CAVE REGISTRY

Somehow, over the years, a list of Welsh sites has been compiled. This has been done largely at the expense of the many individuals directly involved and with occasional, valuable (even necessary) help from the Cambrian Caving Council. Some members will know that there are four Registers; at Nat. Museum of Wales; Brecon County Library; Shropshire County Library (the one by Lord Hill's Column) and with the Secretary at Church Stretton. A good deal of updating is currently in progress and recently we have typed out a supplement to our list, this latest one being in alphabetical order. Eventually, the two lists will be on sale at a price that will reflect the work which has gone into it.

Now this is not a plea for money and this article is intended as information and opinion only, and my own at that. I have understood that caving is about extending the knowledge of caves and RECORDING it. Over the years, the Club has made a point of doing both exceedingly well, although inevitably some members may end up doing one or the other. So it is not surprising to find occasional murmurs questioning the need for a Registry.

Even more so in today's context of caving technocrats!!, Funds from Sports Council etc. I would have thought that a central registry of British cave sites was, next to rescue, a priority that one could take for granted. But perhaps we are not after all so concerned, seeing caves more and more as underground gymnasia, which attitude certainly seems to attract the money, as do exotic caving holidays (sorry, expeditions), although to be fair, some of these do provide valuable experience in technique.

We would like to see every club with a copy of its own updated register. For this we would need, say, an electric typewriter, a dry copier and lots of stationery. £200 would probably do. However, the service is for everyone and not only cavers and yet attempts through various bodies have failed to get a single donation except those mentioned above.

So the purpose of this note is to drum up moral support for the continuation of the Registry and its expansion, perhaps to try to get support for an approach to NCA or some such body which will in turn approach!!!

Finally, could I ask any retired cavers who would like to keep in touch to help out with the paper work from time to time. For instance we badly need someone to take over Noel Christopher's job of maintaining the Data Filing System.

ALAN ASHWELL

---ooOoo---

OGOF FFYNNON DDU A NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

In March this year the Nature Conservancy Council completed the purchase of over 1,000 acres of land overlying parts of OFD 2 and OFD 3. The land was purchased from the Forestry Commission and was declared as a National Nature Reserve on October 7th, 1975. This is the first time that such a Reserve has been created in Great Britain entirely as a result of the existence of a cave system. The Nature Conservancy Council hope to eventually extend the Reserve over as much of the cave as possible. The accompanying plan indicates the extent of the present purchase (bounded by the heavy line) and interest in the Reserve extends to plants and surface features. A management committee is to be formed with SWCC playing a prominent part. Wardening of the cave will be carried out with the assistance of Club members, and whilst there will undoubtedly be some changes, it is not anticipated that access by bona fide cavers will be significantly altered. Certain parts of the cave may be set aside because of their scientific interest, and visitors will be expected to conform to any regulations imposed by the management committee. In addition to SWCC representation, it is expected that representatives from Cambrian Caving Council, BCRA and South Wales Cave Rescue will be invited on to the management committee.

The establishment of this Reserve firmly establishes OFD as a cave site of prime importance in Britain. This has been achieved through the efforts of many Club members in such fields as cave diving, cave photography, cave surveying, exploration and many aspects of cave science. There have been others who, whilst not such active cavers, have been able to use their influence where it has been most needed. Lastly, without a high degree of cooperation from officials within the Forestry Commission and the Nature Conservancy, nothing would have been possible, and their valuable assistance is acknowledged.

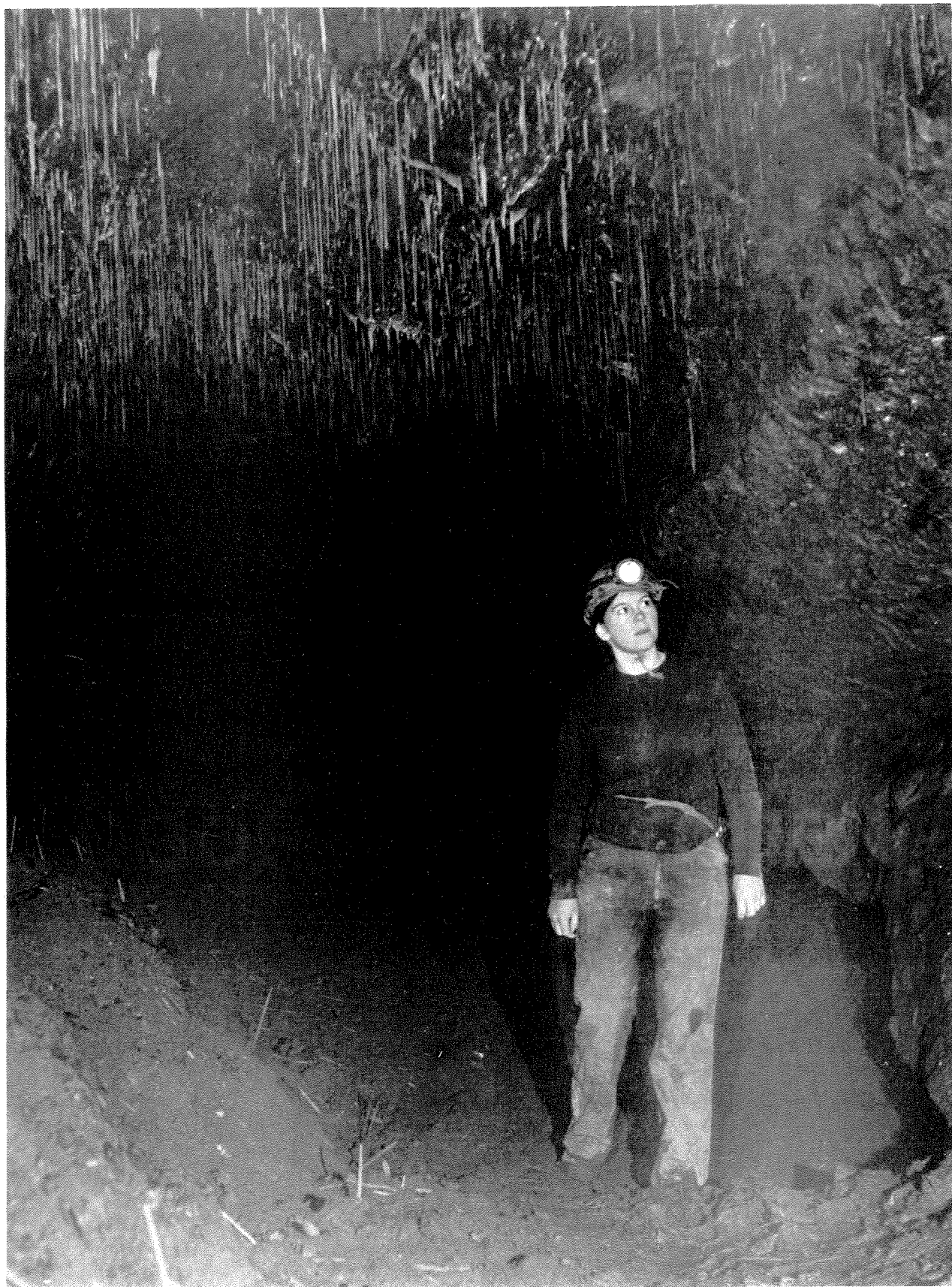
FURTHER EXPLORATION NEEDED IN OFD

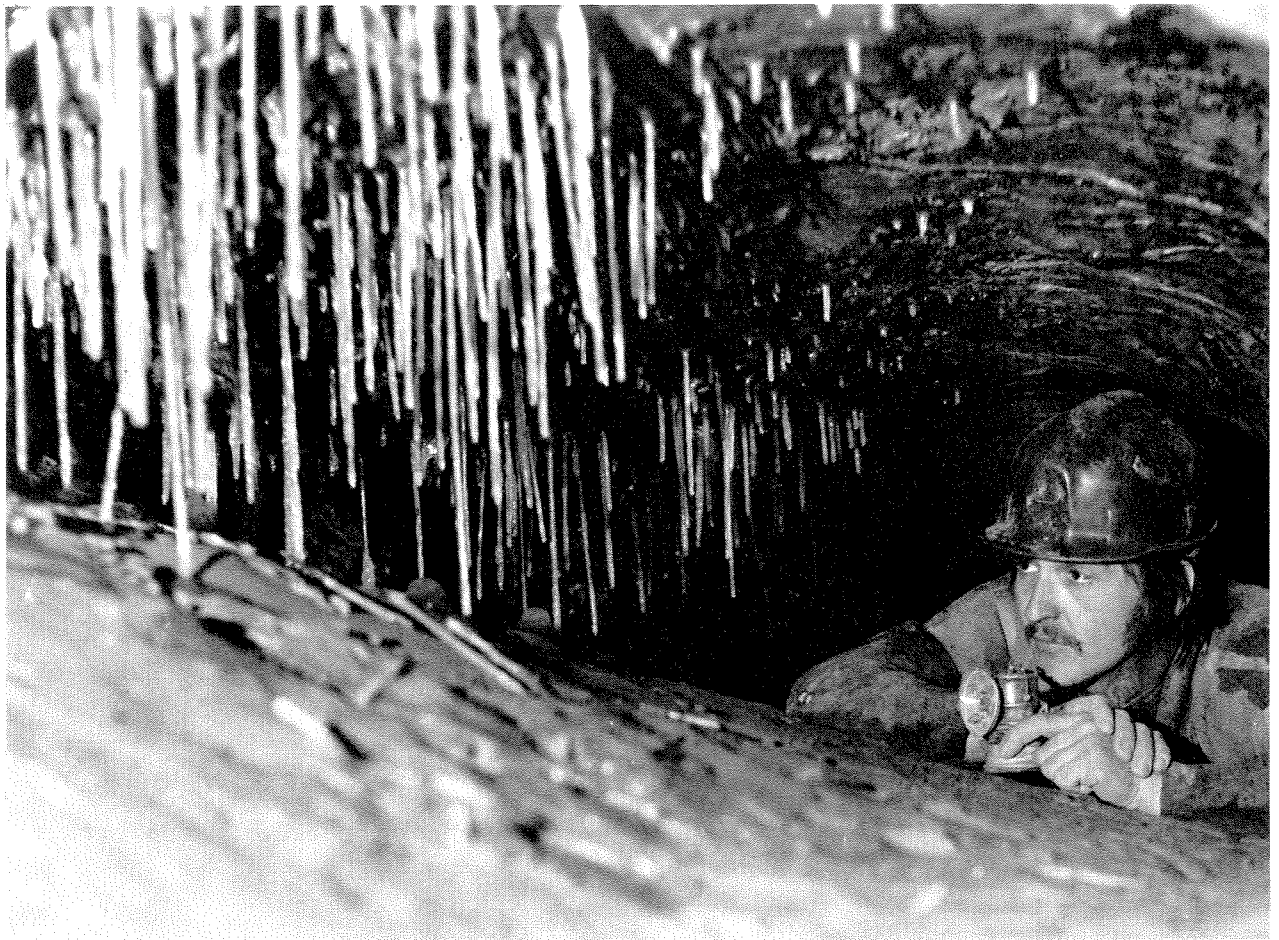
The attainment of National Nature Reserve status for OFD does not mean that the Club can be complacent about further threats to the system by quarrying. In particular, there is concern that if there are caves just North of the Reserve, then we must find them within the next 7 years. The County Planning Officer has told me that the quarry company are not pressing an application in this area for the time being but may do so after that time. It is inevitable that such an application will eventually be put forward again and may receive favourable treatment unless we can show the existence of caves in that area.

ROGER SMITH

----ooOoo----

" OGOF CIL YR YCHEN "





Photographs by B. T. Jorgensen

EASTER '75 IN IRELAND

After the October '74 trip to Fermanagh, Dave Morris, Martin and I needed no urging to return at the earliest possible opportunity to continue our explorations. This proved to be during the Easter holidays and due to our voluble descriptions of Irish caving plus some discreet slide shows we had persuaded Geof. Billington and Dave (Butterscotch) Viggers (Swindon C.C.) to join us. So it was with a tightly packed Landrover that we drove there, this time sampling the delights of the Fishguard-Rosslare ferry and the eccentricities of Eire main roads. Despite getting confused during a "through trip" of Dublin, we managed to reach Thornhill cottage, Blacklion by 3.0 a.m. to find a big caving meet already in progress.

The following morning, we were woken to ecstatic reports of a major find in Noon's Hole - already the scene of large extensions by Martyn and the late Roger Solari on previous visits. Paddy O'Reilly, Hywel Ball and Pete Lord had, a few days previously, followed a draught in the afternoon series through a tight rocky crawl to find a mile of new passageway including a new streamway. The series had already been given the title of the Highnoon series. The enthusiasm of the Irish cavers was tinged by the disappointment of the Cave Projects Group members there, who were not allowed down the abseil rope because of their lack of 'racks'.

However, Martyn and Dave brushed formalities away in their usual affable way and quickly joined the Irish speleos in pushing the extension. The other three of us doing a more leisurely trip in Marble Arch to help recuperate from the rigours of the journey.

The next day saw us driving westward to the Truskmore range for a diving trip in Tempol Shetric. The main pitch waterfalls were not as spectacular as on the previous visit, and Martyn was soon diving the static sump. This was found only to lead into the active sump; scene of his last dive there, so we turned our attention to the high rift leading to it. Due to very brittle chert bands covered with a thick layer of mud, we had to resort to the human pyramid method of climbing, but although a little progress was made, it was only to see a rawl bolt hole above our heads and out of reach. Unless the rift has been climbed to its full height there is a good chance for a way over the sump here (the rawl bolt was only a quarter of the way up it, with no other signs of previous climbs visible above it). It seems probable from the large deposits of mud that the water could back up to a considerable height here in wet weather. Any attempt however would require artificial aid in the form of either maypoles (50 foot) or bolts, though the mud coating and brittle chert bands would make bolting even more slow than usual.

Saturday saw Martyn at the downstream sump of Prod's Pot yet again, to push sump four. This was passed to find the inevitable sump five.

After photographing the, not to be missed, upstream formations, an uneventful exit led to a lively evening in the Bush bar where Noon's and the Berger seemed the main topics of conversation.

Having heard so much of the new High Noon extension, Sunday saw all our party following Hywel and Maurice Neill (Reyfad Group) down Noon's. After being duly impressed with the entrance pitch we split up, Martyn, Dave and another diver, diving through to Arch II on a photographic survey trip while the rest of us pushed upstream in the new streamway. Unfortunately, despite interesting route finding in the first two boulder chokes, the third one seemed to mark the end of the cave, the passage changing greatly in character and the stream issuing from a small inlet passage.

Despite frequent driving snow storms and after a rest day visit to Arch cave, Tuesday saw us heading to the extreme westerly extent of the limestone, to walk the surface in the hope of finding new caves. We chose Kesh Corann as it exhibited interesting features on the map - dry valleys and parallel cliff sided valleys. But despite the excitement of seeing over a dozen large cave entrances on the western extremity of the mountain, they turned out to be the openings of a shallow system running parallel with the cliff face - we found little else of great promise. The parallel valleys turned out to be the remains of glacial spillways from the Irish Sea ice and though there were a few shake holes and one swallet in them, there was nothing of great note. Perhaps the southern flanks of the mountain might have yielded something, but the frequent snow storms discouraged us from any further walking.

Tallyhona was on the agenda for the next day. Due to Hywel finding a bypass (Fennian Terror Bypass) to the sump Martyn had previously dived, we were able to photograph beyond it and had an enjoyable trip in that interesting if constricting cave. We made sure we were back in the Bush bar in time to see our favourite stars of film and screen risk life and limb in the dark damp underworld of a little known Welsh hillside.

As Martyn had on our previous visit pushed Pollarafttra to within 1500 feet of its resurgence - Legland Rising - we decided to examine that, as it might prove an easier undertaking than the long sump dives. But after finally locating it in a steep forested hillside it proved to need a major dig requiring timbering and winches (plus bang) as the water rose from the base of a small cliff that had slumped forward over a considerable distance. Added to that, the fact that only twenty five feet difference in height exists between it and Martyn's last diving point makes digging there a still less attractive proposition in a land where the easy digs have not been dug yet.

In the same area another good site for future finds was Pollnaffryn which is presumed to link with Noon's. Martyn had already passed a two metre duck and now intended diving the sump beyond. Due to the constricted nature of the cave and the fact that it sumps completely in wet weather, we let him and Dave get on with it while we sat comfortably in the Landrover fingering our rosaries, as we watched the rain and sleet buffet the Refad area, where the Roogah, which feeds the cave, has its head water. It was with interest therefore that we watched its dry bed quickly fill with water as the flood pulse headed down the valley. Just as we had decided to brave the elements, however, and take a look at the entrance pitch, they both emerged with sheepish grins. Martyn had passed the sump to reach a chamber ending in an unstable boulder choke full of black holes. With another diver for support he felt sure it would go, joining up another long arm of the increasingly complex Noon's system. This must be high list of priorities for the next trip.

Nothing more remained except to take one more Guinness in the Bush bar, burn the last of the logs we had smuggled over the border on our nocturnal woodrunning expeditions, and drive unsteadily back with the smell of a half dead ram's horn in our nostrils and the strains of Elton John's music in our ears. Even as we drove home we knew that Easter '76 is bound to see our return yet again.

P. FRANCIS

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S.W.C.C. Newsletter No. 79, Feb '75 "Ireland - October '74".
The Caves of Fermanagh and Cavan
Gareth Llwyd Jones.

---ooOoo---

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER

I follow the Club's activities with the greatest interest, but am very sorry to note that no-one has yet made the through trip from WFF to DYD. Shame on you!

Someone really should spare a few week-ends for a dig in the first snake-hole behind the WFF cliff-face. Before I potted there and "spoilt it", there was a very strong draught blowing through a small open hole.

I was only able to spend a few hours there, but it looked very promising. So do lots of others - I should know!

But it obviously connects with the WFF-DYD system, and obviates the perils of the digs at the bottom of the main swallet. If I could get at it, I would.

PAUL DOLPHIN

---ooOoo---

A RHINOCEROS BONE FROM OGOF PANT-Y-WENNOL, LLANDUDNO

Excavations at Ogor Pant-y-Wennol, started in June 1974, have now reached a depth of 1.9 metres in the main trench. On 6th July, 1975, a bone was discovered at 166cm in the clay and angular stones of a cold climate deposit which has now been identified as an astragalus of rhinoceros. In view of its context it must be from a Woolly Rhinoceros (Coelodonta antiquitatis) and the bone is probably from the left leg.

It has been examined by Dr. R.M.C. Eager, Keeper of Geology at Manchester University Museum, and his colleague Dr. D. Yaldon, a vertebrate specialist, and both agree that the bone is from a rhinoceros. A week after the discovery further excavation revealed what seems to be a fragment of rhinoceros tooth. In addition to these discoveries of extinct mammal remains, over 100 scraps of comminuted bone and shattered teeth of horse and ox have been found in the same layer, obviously the work of hyena, and identical with remains found by A.L. Armstrong in Pin Hole Cave, Creswell Crags, (Ref. 1)

It is not possible yet to assign a date to these glacial finds, but the rhinoceros bone found in 1972 in Ogor-yr-Ychen, Caldey Island, South Wales, was radiocarbon dated to 22,350 yrs. B.P. (Birm.340), and the stratification suggests something approaching this age for the North Wales astragalus, (Ref. 2).

This find is important because its provenance is known precisely. No other rhinoceros bones have been found in any North Wales cave since the primitive excavations of the last century.

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1. Armstrong, A.L., Brit. Assoc. Rpt., 1956, pp.90 ff.
2. Van Nederveelde, Br. J., Davies, M., John, B.S., Radiocarbon Dating from Ogor-yr-Ychen, a new Pleistocene Site in West Wales, Nature, 245, 453-4, October 1973.

OGOF TAN-Y-BRYN

A NEW CAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN LLANDUDNO

This cave, situated in a rock face at the south-eastern edge of the town, has long been known to local boys, and I first examined it in June 1974. I was accompanied by Mr. Duncan James, but we had no time to assess the site as we were excavating in another cave nearby.

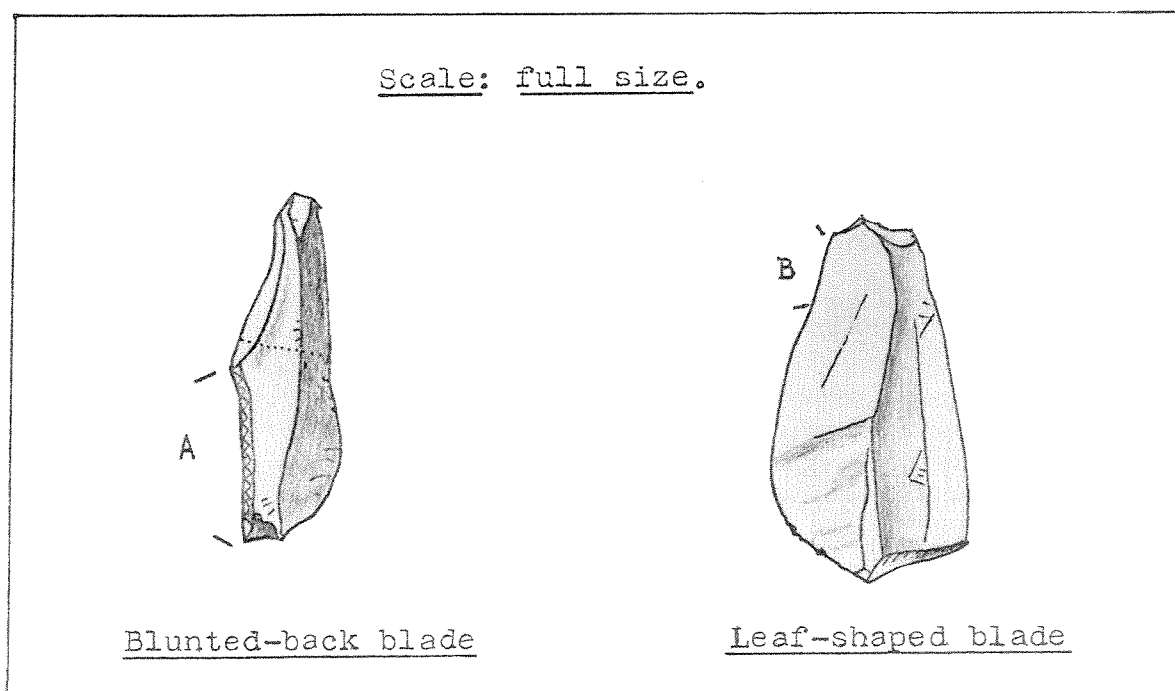
The entrance faces north-west and is 3.4m wide, 3m high in the middle, and the passage is lofty for 5.5m. On May 29th, 1975 Mr. James decided to examine the cave in detail, and, in clearing some of the rubbish, leaf litter and cave earth found several flints, two of which were recognizable tools, (see figure). On 1st June I visited the cave with him to excavate a trial

1m square which we did to a depth of about 20cm. Four flint waste flakes were found together with hacked bone fragments, one identifiable as part of the scapula of an animal intermediate in size between sheep and ox, and another from a bone 15mm thick indicating at least an ox or horse-sized animal. The stratification was simple - 10 to 20cm of disturbed, brown earth underneath the leaf litter, lying directly on an undisturbed, stony, yellowish-brown, silty clay containing the flint and bone. The flint is completely patinated and the blunted-back blade is of Upper Palaeolithic origin (blunted at A in the figure). The leaf-shaped blade shows signs of wear at B, and the point was probably broken off during use.

Clearly such ancient signs of occupation should not be found within 20cm of a modern surface. Slight deposits remaining attached to the wall of the cave confirm our belief that over 2m of clay and earth, some stalagmited, have been removed, but fortunately this drastic disturbance only extends for a distance of 5.5m into the cave. Beyond this point there is a rising floor of red clay running 4m into a chamber which is about 4m high. At the apex of the roof there is a blockage of earth and tree roots, and it is our opinion that there was once an open shaft here down which animals and debris would have fallen. The clay floor is a talus cone which probably conceals both a rich, undisturbed archaeological deposit, and a possible way on into a continuation of the cave. The site is thus structurally comparable with the Ffynnon Beuno cave which yielded a wealth of Late Glacial animal bones when excavated in the last century.

Another cave of similar type, but smaller, is Longbury Bank Cave, near Tenby, Pembrokeshire.

At present the owner is not allowing any further excavation in the cave.



MELVYN DAVIES

BOOK REVIEWS

"LIMESTONES AND CAVES OF THE MENDIP HILLS"

Compiled and edited by D.I. Smith, assisted by D.P. Drew. Publ. David and Charles for B.C.R.A. (£7.50)

This volume has four contributors. Dr. D.I. Smith in his introduction to the Caves of Mendip describes briefly the history of cave exploration. He goes on to describe the Rocks of Mendip, their structure and succession, starting at an elementary level so that a caver without geological knowledge can follow the Mendip pattern. Dr. Smith follows with the Geomorphology of Mendip - 'the sculpting of the landscape'. He deals with erosion surfaces, the Pleistocene - the time of the Ice Ages - and dry valleys. He concludes his section with the Erosion of limestones on Mendip and deals with the chemistry of limestone solution and the effect of lithology and climate.

Dr. D.P. Drew then plunges into the hydrology of the Mendip Hills, drawing upon his earlier experiences as a diver with C.D.G. He deals with hydrometeorology and water balance, he assesses water budgets for the major Mendip catchments, studying sinks and 25 risings, and records trace time for most of them. Outflow from risings comprised only some 67% of the effective precipitation input. He proves, as he did in papers over recent years, that the majority of the precipitation entering groundwater is via direct percolation, and only a small percentage is from discrete sinking points at the surface. All in all we are convinced that what goes in need not necessarily come out, at least not from resurgences around the foot of the Mendip Hills.

Dr. Drew then discusses the major caves of Mendip; plans are given for the well-known sites like G.B., Longwood, Goatchurch and, of course, Swildon's Hole. The sequence of development is explained for some of them and here Drew relies heavily on earlier work by Dr. D.C. Ford. The Wookey story is very much up-to-date and includes discoveries resulting from recent diving activities.

Mary Hazelton deals with the Biology of the Mendip caves and the species found are clearly presented by phylum and class.

Finally Professor Tratman deals with the Archaeology and Palaeontology of Mendip. This chapter too is very modern and it mentions the Middle Pleistocene finds from Westbury-sub-Mendip suggesting the presence of Early Acheulian man in Britain perhaps one-third million years ago. A paper on this topic only appeared in "Nature" in January of this year. Generally the Upper Palaeolithic and Post-Glacial sequence are the same as in South and North Wales, although certain Boreal deposits are apparently less well-represented on Mendip. What is puzzling is the lack of an Ipswichian (Warm-climate) Interglacial mammalian fauna compared with, say, Gower just across the channel. A pity that Professor Tratman was not allowed space to include at least one typical Mendip cave archaeological section. The other chapters are plentifully illustrated with sections.

The book is liberally supplied with clear diagrams although one needs a magnifier to make out fine detail in Fig. 83. The archaeological photos are better than one sees in many specialized journals; the aerial photos are particularly good - what a sight the Cheddar Gorge must be from the air. Some of the ordinary cave photographs either have obtrusive human figures (these are essentially for scale, but they should not blot out the scenery) or do not fully show the features they purport to illustrate. This could be due, however, to edge-trimming of prints at the printers. Other cave photos are excellent.

It remains to be said, although the price is £7.50, no club library can afford to be without this book. A study in depth of the relevant chapter will help every speleologist researching the caves of his own area.

MELVYN DAVIES

---ooOoo---

"THE CAVES OF CARMARTHEN"

BY TONY OLDHAM £1.50

The title of this book is slightly misleading, not because Carmarthenshire has now ceased to exist, becoming part of Dyfed, but because all the cave sites mentioned are in Eastern Carmarthenshire, none of the western sites being acknowledged.

The advertising blurb claims that the book lists over sixty sites of speleological interest with fifteen surveys, compared with only thirteen in "Caves of Wales and the Marches", and this is indeed true. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these surveys are of rather short caves, e.g. Craig Llygad cave length ten feet! The standard of the surveys fluctuates also, from the copied five B survey of Pwll Swnd; an ungraded 1939 Llygad Llchwyr; a minus one Foel Fawr to an ungraded Hereford caving club dig!

The cave sites are listed at the beginning of the publication in order of National Grid Reference, but unfortunately are listed with their descriptions in alphabetical order, confusing the reader and breaking up continuity. Nevertheless, Mr. Oldham must be accredited with great determination in doing a task that most cavers would not be bothered with, if only he had spent less time looking down ten foot long solution tubes and more in caves like Green Bridge, Pendine, surveying them, or recording the archaeological interest of such caves as Coygan Cave - destroyed, like so many in his book, by quarrying. Indeed after reading the guide I had to wonder what Mr. Oldham's criteria were, as while allowing Llygad Llchwyr a survey, two pages of description plus one page of references and Pwll Swnd one and a half pages of description, a copied tackle list and survey, he gives Twm Shon Catti's cave (length twenty five feet unroofed) a garbled one page description based on Western Mail cuttings and a Guide to Tenby. Worse, he takes six

pages to describe the legends of Owain Llawgoch refering in detail to two caves last located six hundred and fifty years ago!

The guide does not confine itself to caves but also describes mines on the western edge of the Northern Outcrop, but here again why list trial adits when by simply picking up G.W. Hall's "Metal Mines of Southern Wales" or "Lead Mining in Wales" he could have got first class information on the mines around Carmarthen, Llandeilo, Llandovery, Rhandirmwyn and Whitland, or was it that the authors of these books wisely would not allow him to reprint their articles.

To sum up, the guide is poorly presented, overpriced, not comprehensive in its coverage of Carmarthenshire and like the recently published guide by the same author covering Scotland, merely repeating ground already covered adequately elsewhere.

However, if my observations have put the reader off, I should point out, as Mr. Oldham will undoubtedly be doing in the near future, get your copies now as it will soon be a collector's piece and worth its weight in gold - or was that what was intended?

P. FRANCIS

P.S. The "cavers unknown" at present digging Ogof Isel at Carmel are R. Flaherty, C. Fairbairn and P. Francis.

---ooOoo---

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

Has this ever been discussed in any caving journal? To some, it may be just a joke or an opportunity for cynicism, but how many of us have witnessed or experienced it?

Significantly perhaps, active cavers are unlikely to suffer although I have heard that the risk increases with age as much as with inactivity.

I was once with a friend and his fiancée down Gaping Ghyl, just off the Main Chamber and on the way to Bar Pot when she became hysterical and very distressed. To our surprise, the proverbial slap actually did the trick or at least calmed her down and an hour later she seemed all right.

More recently, down a Derbyshire cave (almost a home from home), I found difficulty in breathing that almost induced a panic, notwithstanding the familiarity of the place and the solid competence of my colleagues. Curiously I could take a

detached view and one of astonishment. Lighting the pipe didn't help much, but perhaps a job such as a dig would have been better. I was very relieved to get out.

This was put down to a long period of inactivity and it would be interesting to know if any other cave exiles have experienced the same. Cave claustrophobia is something "which can never happen to me" but its most sinister aspect is that when it does, the fear of it recurring in the future is probably difficult to dispel.

Some may find all this funny and it does invite Bob Hall-type remarks about inaction, but I didn't find it funny at all.

ALAN ASHWELL

Editor's comment Is it now his ex-fiancee!!

----ooOoo----

CLUB NOTES

Amendments to members address list.

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New Members.

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WILLIAMS T.L.H.	? ?

Please remember to keep the Club informed of any new address changes.

In order to reduce postage costs, acknowledgement of articles will not be sent unless specifically requested.

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