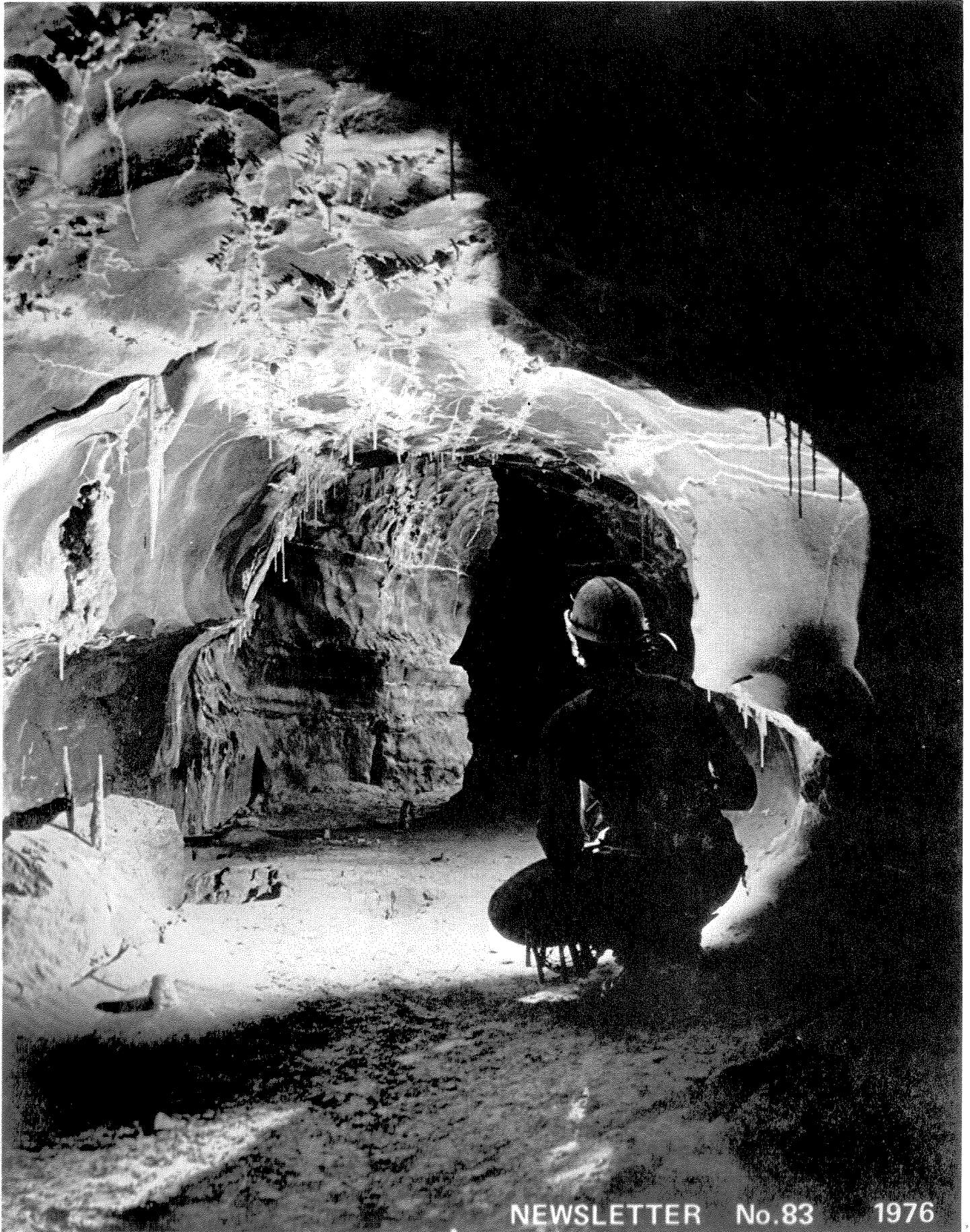


SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

NO. 83

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 1976

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Cover Photograph - Ogof Ffynnon Ddu II by C. Westlake

Editor's Address:

G.K. Jones,
37 Springfield,
Bradford on Avon,
Wiltshire.

LIST OF NEW OFFICERS & COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1976

- CHAIRMAN : J.J. Rowland,
42 Llaburnam Way,
Littleborough, Lancs, OL15 8LS
- SECRETARY : P. Tutt,
2 River Side,
Glanyllyn, Taffs Well, Glam.
- TREASURER : E.G. Inson,
42 Torrens Drive,
Lakeside, Cardiff, CF2 6DW
- EDITOR : G.K. Jones,
37 Springfield,
Bradford on Avon, Wilts.
- RECORDS
OFFICER : K.J.G. Maddocks,
Pen-Cae, Bryn Road,
Upper Brynamman, Dyfed.
- EQUIPMENT
OFFICER : P. Cardy,
111 Roedean Avenue,
Enfield, Middx.
- CAVE RESCUE
ORGANISER : R. Hall,
Flat 1, 17 High Street,
Newport, Salop.
- COTTAGE WARDEN: B. Foster,
68 Heol Tawe,
Abercrave, Swansea.
- PERMIT
SECRETARY : J. Harvey,
Clifford House,
Newnham on Severn, Glos.
- CONSERVATION
OFFICER : W.E. Clarke,
c/o D. Pascoe Clarke & Son Ltd.
Swansea Road, Pontlliw, Swansea.
- ORDINARY
MEMBERS : D.E. Samuel,
Flat 1, Greystone Court,
1A The Common, London, W.5.
- G.A. Jackson,
21 Merridene,
London, N21 1RD
- B. Jopling,
44 Carhampton Road, Falcon Lodge,
Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands.

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB 1975-76

<u>Expenditure 1-2-75 to 31-1-76</u>			<u>Income 1-2-75 to 31-1-76</u>		
<u>H.Q. Expenses</u>					
Cottages	224.17	224.17	H.Q. Fees	982.56	
			Showers Box	106.37	
Electricity	67.64		Subscriptions	504.50	
Gas	118.78		Donations	35.12	1628.55
Oil	183.12				
Warden	31.87		Grant	67.00	
Rates/Ins.	158.75	560.16	Surveys	77.25	
<u>Club Expenses</u>					
Secretary	57.32		Posters	97.60	
Records	15.60		Sales (various)	263.15	
Telephone	95.37		Telephone	42.54	
Equipment	34.87		Dinners	307.41	
Editor	151.34	354.50	E. Aslett Donation	23.00	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>					
Purchase of Rope	66.00		Miscellaneous	37.00	
Surveys	180.00		Interest	63.69	
Dinners	281.92				
Posters	35.00		<u>Conservation</u>		
E. Aslett Donation	23.00		Donations etc.	97.75	
Return of Sale	48.85		<u>Cave Rescue</u>		
Miscellaneous	24.30	656.07	Donations etc.	89.21	1165.60
<u>Conservation</u>					
	46.95	46.95			
<u>Cave Rescue</u>					
	89.10	89.10			
<hr/>			<hr/>		
Total		1933.95	Total		2794.15
			<u>Specific Donations</u>		
			Sponsored Walk		476.94
			E. Aslett Bequest		1000.00
			<hr/>		
			Total		1476.94

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB 1975-76
ACCOUNT BALANCES AND ASSETS AT 31-1-76

Monetary Assets at 31-1-75

Midland Bank	790.11	
S.W.T.S.B.	4.47	
Woolwich B. Soc.	404.45	
Cash in hand	96.40	
Debtors	10.30	
Less cheques unpaid	143.12 -	
	<u>1162.61</u>	<u>1162.61</u>

Composition

Cave Rescue fund	296.80	
Conservation fund	54.43	
H.Q. Repairs fund	300.00	
Balance	511.38	
	<u>1162.61</u>	<u>1162.61</u>

Monetary Assets at 31-1-76

Midland Current A/C	1253.87	
Midland Deposit A/C	1018.27	
Woolwich B.Soc.	949.42	
Cash in hand	299.42	
Debtors	38.90	
Less cheques unpaid	60.13 -	
	<u>3499.75</u>	<u>3499.75</u>

Composition

Cave Rescue fund	296.80	
Conservation fund	582.17	
H.Q. Repairs fund	450.00	
E. Aslett deposit	1018.27	
Balance	1152.51	
	<u>3499.75</u>	<u>3499.75</u>

Income/Expenditure Balance

Gross income excluding specific donations	2794.15	
Gross expenditure	1933.95 -	
<u>Excess of Income over Expenditure</u>	<u>860.20</u>	

Premises and Equipment

Cottages at cost	200.00
Garage at cost	15.00
Landrover at cost	80.00
Duplicators (1974 value)	51.36
Equipment (1974 value)	3603.95
Purchases 1975/76	34.87
	<u>3985.18</u>

Woolwich B.Soc.

Balance at 31-1-75	404.45
Deposit	500.00
Interest	44.97
	<u>949.42</u>

Balance at 31-1-76	<u>949.42</u>
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E. Aslett Deposit (Midland Bank)

Deposit	1000.00
Interest	18.27
	<u>1018.27</u>

Balance at 31-1-76	<u>1018.27</u>
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Cave Rescue Fund

Balance at 31-1-75	296.80
Income	89.21
Expenditure	89.10 -
	<u>296.91</u>

Balance at 31-1-76	<u>296.91</u>
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Conservation Fund

Balance at 31-1-75	54.43
Income	97.75
Sponsored Walk	476.94
Expenditure	46.95 -
	<u>582.17</u>

Balance at 31-1-76	<u>582.17</u>
--------------------	---------------

H.Q. Repairs Fund

Balance at 31-1-75	300.00
Annual provision	150.00
	<u>450.00</u>

Balance at 31-1-76	<u>450.00</u>
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E.G. Inson, Hon. Treasurer
March 1976.

CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT 1975/6

The major event this year in conservation terms, has been the designation of a large part of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu as an NNR. This took place in October 1975. It represents a milestone in the advancement of speleology as a respectable science in Great Britain. It was recognised in February of 1970 that O.F.D. could be threatened by future quarrying, and it was from that date that we as a club became militant in trying to achieve for O.F.D. recognition that it was a cave site of not only national but international importance. At the S.W.C.C. AGM in 1970 I was given full authority to do whatever was necessary to obtain a measure of protection for the cave. This mandate enabled me to do such without reference back to the Committee and oiled the wheels of progress considerably. I would like to stress that I have done little more than ensure that the right people got the right information at the right time. Without the magnificent efforts of many club members from time to time we could well have made no progress since 1970. There are a few I would like to single out particularly and to whom we owe much. There are David Jenkins and Jeff Jefferson, both of whom have served on the Brecon Beacons National Park Planning Committee. Jeff has now been retired after serving for the maximum of nine years and I would like to thank him on your behalf for the advice and assistance he has given me in dealing with some of the difficult problems with which we have been faced. David too has played an essential role and one for which we owe a debt of gratitude, and I very much hope that we may rely on his advice and experience in the years to come. It is with the deepest regret that I note he is not standing for President this year. Lastly, but by no means least, I would like to pay a tribute to Paddy O'Reilly and his co-authors for producing the O.F.D. survey at a time when we needed it most. Paddy's ready willingness to loan black and white negatives have enabled pictures to be obtained for exhibition at D.Y.O, the National Museum of Wales and also for swelling our conservation fund this year when the Western Mail used some of them. There are many others who have played their part over the past six years not the least amongst whom are officials in the Nature Conservancy Council for whom I have developed a high regard. It is to be hoped that the new management committee for O.F.D. in which S.W.C.C. members are well represented, will make every effort to establish a close working relationship with the NCC men. Such a relationship is essential if the committee is to do its job properly. It is expected that access to the Reserve will remain much the same as in the past.

During the year, I was consulted by Speleo Rahl in my capacity as Conservation Officer of Cambrian Council over a new discovery they had made in the Swansea Valley. I was sworn to secrecy over this and then discovered that the find was in Tunnel Cave. I was given a tour of the new extensions and it was immediately apparent that because of the tight nature of the passages delicate floor formations would be put at risk by careless cavers. The finest formations are undoubtedly a group of cave pearls in a low passage at the top of an aven. After discussion it was decided that the best way in which they could be protected was by placing a grill in such a way that they could be seen but not interfered with. I felt able to make this recommendation on behalf of the club and this was subsequently made known to the Committee of S.W.C.C. On this occasion it was possible that the interests of Cambrian Council did not clash with those of S.W.C.C. because I was involved, but this sort of problem will have to be watched carefully in the future. Speleo Rahl have produced a survey of the new discoveries and are to be congratulated on the responsible attitude they have taken with their discovery.

In February this year Peter Smart of Bristol University gave assistance to us in the conducting of dye tests in the dry valley just East of Twyn Disgwylfa. The results show that drainage from that area reaches the Cwm Dwr stream within 24 hours. Cave discoveries are now required in this area as well to ensure that the quarry does not develop Eastwards eventually. We have got about 7 years to make them!

I have now held the post of Conservation Officer for 6 years and feel that the time has come to review the position. For 6 years I have immersed myself in conservation activities in order to gain as much experience as possible for the time when it was needed. That time has still not come and I hope I'm around when it does. Regretfully I find I no longer wish to spend time on conservation activities unless they relate specifically to O.F.D. Consequently, I feel that I ought to relinquish my role as Conservation Officer to someone less single minded than myself. My thanks go to those of you who must have at one time or another felt that the threat to O.F.D. was rather unreal, but were polite enough not to say so. I remain convinced that unless the quarrying situation is watched very carefully, it will arise to threaten us when we least expect it and when our defences are down. The O.F.D. National Nature Reserve is a first step in the right direction but it must be followed eventually by cessation of quarrying at Penwyllt.

ROGER SMITH.

CAVING IN THE COLONIES

Thinking to 'do it while you can' M.F. bought his cheap charter ticket, made his plans and threw in his job. The prime objectives were Castleguard, El Sotano and Golondrinas. Thus on 13th October my three and a half month sojourn commenced, leaving a well advanced autumn for pleasant summer weather in New York.

Via Albany and Niagara I headed for West Virginia, to meet up with my first caving contact. The weather was now determined to do its worse and a veritable deluge ensued. In Germany Valley we did Hell Hole, 160 feet, and the following day a pit called Elkhorn, also 160 feet.

1500 miles and two days later I was in Calgary, Alberta, ensconced in the basement flat of Mike Boon. He proposed a trip to Nakimu Caves in British Columbia; a site sporting an unexplored streamway. On arrival in Rogers Pass, Glacier National Park, we found the area bristling with rangers. Boon and the authorities just don't mix, and in fact, cavers generally are not favourably received. Consequently we spent one whole day lying low, only venturing forth with the approach of dusk. Due to the sub zero temperatures the runoff was minimal, and this meant that the streamway was not too problematical. It was however extremely cold. Another problem was the pack rats which, while we were caving, chose to construct their nests with portions of our woollen attire.

In worsening weather any trip to Castleguard was clearly out of the question, so I moved south to Montana. Here I fell in with Jim Chester from Bozeman and on the agenda was Crystal Cave. One of the main features of American caving was the long walk in and fortunately I didn't take too much of a bite first go. The round trip was twelve miles, with indescribably beautiful scenery. Once more I found the cave temperature desperately cold, while the local lads were like walking saunas. We discovered about a thousand feet of new cave, bringing the overall length to about one mile.

The next trip was to Neffs Canyon (Utah), and my hosts were again the Montana people. Neil Montgomery and Julia James, the itinerant Australians, also joined the party, for this the deepest system in the United States, at 1170 feet. The cave lies within view of Salt Lake City; in fact one actually parks in the suburbs. The trip was smoothly executed, but the cave proved a disappointment. Developed on a very steep dip, the pitches, five in total and largest 150 feet, were all against the wall; apart from the final drop, and even this was only free for sixty feet. It terminates at a choke and has no potential.

Travelling with Neil, we made our way to the Mojave Desert area of Southern California, for a trip to the classic Cave of the Winding Stair. This is 300 feet deep and sports two pitches. The cave temperature here was over 70°F; very pleasant!

Thereafter Neil joined John Parker in Corpus Christi for a light-weight expedition to Mexico. I was hooked on Montana and had arranged

to join the 'thanksgiving' expedition (last weekend of November), to Green Fork Falls Cave, in the Scapegoat Wilderness. En route north I did Carlsbad, a place that lived up to its reputation. As I arrived in the High Plains a blizzard blew up and closed the main interstate behind me. Fortunately conditions in the north west were a little better and the trip was still on. I was extremely apprehensive, not only of the weather, but also of the sixteen mile walk in, for which I had been provided with snow shoes. Thus about midday on the Friday we set foot on the eleven mile hike to a cabin which would serve as base. Heavily laden my shoeing technique left a lot to be desired and after only one and a half miles I was forced to unclip and stagger on in a normal manner. There were very dubious looks all round, and when we arrived, two hours after dark, I was utterly exhausted. Here we met up with six others, including Chris Smart, ex U.B.S.S. and Pete Thompson ex Yorks. The following morning the nine of us set off on the final, five mile, leg. Two miles later I was floundering in snow, waist deep and it was very lucky that one of the others was forced to turn back due to blisters. Persevering, I took his shoes and we reached the entrance at about 4.00 p.m. By the time we had eaten and changed we were down to six in number. The trip took nine and a half hours and we pushed on another 1000 feet up the main stream passage. This is slightly akin to Dan-yr-Ogof lower series; following the water table with occasional climbs and pitches to by-pass the all too frequent sumps. The swims were hell in water at 34 to 35°F, despite the fact that I was well clad in two jackets, trousers, hood and mitts. We were forced to stop at the inevitable sump, but there was an obvious high level passage; unfortunately impossible for us to enter. The system has the best potential of any in the States; around 1400 feet in depth, and many miles horizontally. On exit we made for the cabin, arriving just after dawn. Two hours sleep and we walked out to the road-head; to learn that temperatures had fallen to minus 26°F. I left for Tennessee.

In the South East I had arranged to drop some pits and iron out my vertical techniques. Thus in Chattanooga with Buddy Lane and Rick Bridges I did many classic pits and Cumberland Caverns, for an underground Christmas party. This was an amazing affair organised by the cave's owner, who is both preacher and organ (cinema) restorer. Three hundred cavers were catered for, many of whom had travelled hundreds of miles to attend.

Via Florida and Corpus Christi I then made for Mexico, where I was to spend nearly five weeks. The first trip was with Neil, Julia and a group of Georgian cavers to a place called Tlamaga. This is about 1400 feet deep and a mile or more in length; a smaller version of the Berger. In a fourteen hour trip we bottomed and detackled, arriving back on top in dismally poor weather around 4.00 a.m. The trip entails eight damp pitches and several swims; the latter becoming quite chilly in dry gear, even if the water is 60 to 65°F.

We then moved on to Sotonito de Ahacatloa. This is a very short cave, but 1050 feet deep, including the third deepest shaft in the

Americas, at 946 feet. This pitch, number 2, is entirely underground and is quite unique. Due to its own peculiarities there is no sound or light contact possible between top and bottom of shaft; despite the fact that it is free. The bottom also has a Carbon Dioxide concentration of about 1.5% which makes for hard work on the ascent. On top of the natural difficulties we had one of our own, in that we didn't have a single length of rope long enough to do the big pit. Consequently we had to cross a knot about 550 feet down. The cave was done in pairs, so that the dangers imposed by rockfalls would be minimised, and on average it took three hours for the round trip.

The Australians then departed and the rest of us set off for El Sotano, the 'big one'. Fortunately a 1500 feet rope had arrived safely from the east, so the days of knot crossing were over. It took one and a half days to walk in, one and a half days to do the pit and one day to walk out; about eighteen people completing the exercise. Although it is possible to rig a 1345 feet drop, we did one of 1200 feet, equally as spectacular. The place is more like a great open canyon, 1400 feet long and 700 feet wide and at the bottom one lands on a jungle talus slope; watching very carefully for nasties.

The next pit was undoubtedly the most beautiful of any in Mexico, Joya de Guaguas. This has a total depth of about 1000 feet and the entrance pitch can be rigged for a 700 feet drop, completely free. The top is about 200 feet in diameter, while the bottom is vast, several hundred yards long. The pits' inhabitants include flocks of green parakeets whose flight reminds one of 'Those Magnificent Men'. Occasionally one would collide with the rope and go spinning off uncontrollably.

Colondrinas is the other famous pit and although we didn't reach the termination at 1700 feet depth we did the classic 1100 feet drop. At dusk, gathering clouds heralded the return of the cave swifts (the Golondrinas), who swept in at full speed. Like so many arrows from a bow they were immediately lost in the depths, a great contrast to the parakeets. These were forced to circle numerous times and clearly found it difficult reaching their haven of rest on the precarious ledges. At dawn the cycle would commence once more, when the birds departed.

When Gareth Davies arrived we did Sotano del Arroyo, before heading down to Mexico City. On the return I was luckily enough to meet up with a small group of Arizona cavers, including Bill Stone and Tracey Johnson. They had been pushing a system called Joya de las Conchas, not too far from El Sotano. However after ten pitches, at about 800 feet depth their explorations had been cut short by an accident. As a result they were desparately short of man power. Gareth was feeling ill and returned to the States while I set off on what was to be the climax of my whole trip.

Up before dawn three of us were underground early, well equipped for a long trip. At 800 feet we spiralled down through twenty feet of boulders and set off on pitches once more. At about 1300 to 1400 feet the ropes ran out, but we carried on by free climbing; until this became positively dangerous. At 1600 feet an exit was made, surfacing after sixteen hours and carrying an additional 500 feet of ropes apiece. With every chance of a continuation, the cave must almost certainly capture the Americas depth record.

Hurriedly I made for Chattanooga where an Ellison's trip had been arranged. This took about eight hours and gave us a really good run about on a 'through the Mountain' trip; descending and returning via 'Fantastic' a 510 feet free pitch. The following day we visited Bone Cave in Northern Tennessee to view the saltpetre relics from the War of 1812 and Civil War.

I returned to New York via Mammoth Cave and said my farewells over a four hour through trip, as a tourist. This encompassed five miles of passage and was decidedly tiring and uninteresting. Still it made a fitting end to an otherwise excellent tour.

M. FARR.

* * * * *

FROM THE LOGBOOK

The dye placed in the sink holes in the dry valley behind Hobb's right hand face was seen in the streamway. Pete Smart who supervised the dye tracing has indicated that the water sinking in the dry valley enters the known part of O.F.D. as the Cwm Dwr stream and seen in the Jama and also - in much smaller amounts - in the Splash Inlet area.

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Sam and John Lister have been digging in the upstream choke of the Cwm Dwr Jama streamway. Progress was made by blasting and stacking the deads to stabilise their passage. Unfortunately a large application of Bob Hall's banger brought the roof down and somewhat retarded work. Their heading is now well into the choke but without signs of a draught. Clive Jones has also been digging in Cwm Dwr near the first chamber - apparently he has found a draught.

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The attempt to re-open Sink-y-Giedd was foiled when the digging party arrived there to find the sink filled with sand and fine gravel. It was a nice walk though.

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Jem Rowland has been looking at the Waen Fignen Felen dig hoping to re-open the side passage which now takes much of the water. Volunteers are needed.

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Speleo Rahl Caving Club have found a passage at the top end of Tunnel Cave which contains a fine collection of cave pearls. A booklet giving the whereabouts of these pearls (now gated) is available at 25p from Speleo Rahl.

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Alan Jackson and Gary Jones have been digging in the high Oxbow series and in the area near Swamp Creek. The Swamp Creek dig broke into about 80 yards of sandy tubeway which, after further digging came out into known ground.



"HUBBLE BUBBLE TOILET TROUBLE"

Colin Fairburn working it out at Llygad Lluchwr.
Colin denies his dirty habit shrank in the wash.
AND NO, HE HASN'T TAKEN HOLY ORDERS!

Photo: B.T. JORGENSEN

CLUB NOTES

Welcome to the following new members, certain of whom seem to be oddly familiar figures:

- J.V. Osborne - 34 Haygate Road, Wellington, Salop.
- R. Crace - 12 Conway Gardens, Enfield, Middx.
- W.E. Clarke - c/o D. Pascoe Clarke & Son Ltd. Swansea Road, Pontlliw, Swansea
- M. Holder - address unknown - or of no fixed abode?

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- Frank Honey, 207 Berrow Road, Burnham on Sea, Somerset
- John Hutchinson, 22 Sycamore Avenue, The Triangle, Chepstow, Mon.
- John Lister, c/o Little Foxes, Polperro, St. Agnes, Cornwall
- Barry & Joan Mawson, 38 Heol Erwin, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF4 6QR
- Dave Mullins (temporarily), c/o 206 Brixton Road, London, S.W.7.
- Bob & Angela Radcliffe, 3 Brynccerdin Road, Newton, Mumbles, Swansea.
- John & Viv Stevens, Longford Farmhouse, Spithurst Road, Barcombe, Lewes.
- John Harvey, Clifford House, Newnham on Severn, Glos.

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* * DON'T FORGET THAT SUBS. ARE NOW DUE! * *

Rumour has it that the entrances to Tooth and Llethrid are going to be re-gated. Norman Lloyd will probably still keep the keys for emergency but members should ensure that club keys are taken in future. The way into Llethrid via the boulders is to be blocked.

Access to O.F.D. I entrance has caused a bit of fuss lately - the wire fence crossed by those using the short-cut has now been almost flattened - please use the path past Y Grithig only.

Also 'the Stump' has been the subject of vandalism recently. It is in the interest of the Club to make sure that the fabric of Penwyllt's only surviving pub (sadly unused) will not deteriorate any further. (Part of the 'keep Penwyllt NICE campaign')

Kitty Hall and Mr. C. Brewster have been elected to the O.F.D. I leaders list.

After the grumble at the A.G.M. about duty officer's lists it now seems that some re-organisation is to take place and the feasibility of having two duty officers on each weekend is to be chewed over at the next Committee meeting.

After wishing the club a very happy 30th Birthday the A.G.M. expressed its full appreciation of those who were on the Committee last year - particular thanks went to Mick Day who has been Chairman for some years and to Roger Smith who, as Conservation Officer, has piloted O.F.D. into an almost safe harbour.

Still on the subject of the A.G.M. weekend, it was a pleasure to see such a full house for the meeting itself and for the kidney punishing

events of Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings (although realising that quite a few personalities were missing because they were actually caving!). Many thanks to Judson for the barrel of Home Brew which was such a wonderful emetic, (halitosis too!) As Mr. Rod Stewart remarked, members who decide to 'decorate' the dormitories late at night should ensure it all lands in one pile. Mr. Judson rather disgraced himself in this matter.

It is perhaps a moot point that David Judson is also organising the Club Dinner to be held sometime in the autumn. Maybe we'll have escargots especially for Bob Hall!

Don't forget the 1976 B.C.R.A. Conference 10-12 September at the Renold Building, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.

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PROSPECT TERRACE SHAFT, GREAT ORME, LLANDUDNO

This shaft had been located by Keith Griffiths and Billy Davies of Llandudno in 1975. It is situated about 6 yards east of the corner of No. 1 Prospect Terrace at an altitude of approximately 300 ft., the NGR being SH. 7773.8288. They opened a small hole in the centre of the capping and plumbed the shaft with rope. It was well over 200 feet deep with some water at the bottom. They did not have access to that much ladder at the time and with the aid of Allan Davies, proprietor of the King's Head Hotel, they persuaded that well-known climber Joe Brown and a friend to come along and descend it.

Saturday 24th January 1976 dawned bright but very cold with patches of snow on the ground. By 11.30 the Llandudno group, Joe Brown and his friend had all met at the King's Head. 2 pints later the small hole in the shaft cap, fortunately only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away, was being opened. Joe's friend donned a plethora of climbing gear including various slings, figure of 8 descendeur, hammer, pitons etc., and someone quickly gave him a lamp as well. On shiny new rope he slid gently into the depths, lifelined by Joe. In a few seconds the life-line stopped moving. What was this? Our visiting expert having trouble? It seemed that Joe's friend was spinning on one rope (a kermantle-type costing £30 we had been told) and getting his prussicks in a twist. He shouted up to say that he would soon sort this out. Many minutes later he reported that his light had gone out. Enquiry revealed that the lamp was brand-new but the giver had not charged it! Many more minutes later our peak-lover seemed to have ascended to a mere 50 feet and had become absolutely static. 20 minutes trickled by and the watchers were becoming tired of kicking at the snow. Eventually Duncan James offered to lower 50 feet of ladder to the master of the Matterhorn. There seemed to be some delay about the acceptance of his offer, but the ladder was finally fed down through the hole. Within minutes our climbing expert appeared and declared that ladder-climbing was much easier than S.R.T. We all then looked at Joe Brown but Joe was taking a sudden interest in the flora of the Great Orme.

At that stage certain potholers decided that training in the Himalayas was probably not essential to make a descent of this shaft, and Duncan stepped forward with more ladder. Altogether 125 feet was lowered, Duncan donned a full-charged Oldham, quickly bow-lined on to a life-line, and disappeared almost before I could produce a notebook to record his findings. Later I taped his detailed comments and the following is a resumé.

The shaft is probably 15 feet in diameter and circular all the way down. The cap has no girders in it, but consists of stone and concrete with straws up to 4 feet long hanging underneath. The underside is cracked some being 4" wide. The shaft walls are of stone, now with a veneer of stalagmite and the lining goes all the way down. 15 feet from the top there is an adit heading east, 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, flat-floored, but run in at 15 feet although there is no evidence of this on the surface. At 30 feet intervals there is a slot in the wall 1 foot wide and about 2 feet high, containing the ends of large beams, protruding no more than 3 or 4 inches. These beams had been sawn off, obviously during dismantling of the shaft. Duncan concludes there was staging every 30 feet with ladders, but half the shaft was clear for hauling up and down. At just over 120 feet depth Duncan hung around for a while; he could see a patch of light from our entrance reflected from the water at the bottom. Depth of water unknown, but it was fresh (I licked the rope afterwards). He calculated that he was half way down at this point, then he climbed back out. There were no other adits that could be seen. Chris Williams (Asst. County Archivist, Clwyd, member of N.W.C.C.), reports that there was once a shaft drilled to reach the Ty Gwyn mine, but it never got there. The draught at the entrance was rapidly responding to wind pressure, so the shaft/mine volume is small and closed. The entrance was then resealed with a huge boulder, and earth and stones packed around it.

Reference: 'The Llandudno Copper Mines' by C.J. Williams,
Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society
1972, pp. 211-32.

M. DAVIES.

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O T T E R C A V E

Otter Cave is situated on the West (Welsh) bank of the river Wye a mile south of Tintern Abbey on the Chepstow road. It can be reached by parking at the Wyncliff crag car park and walking down the slope towards the river for half a mile downstream.

It was discovered eighteen months ago by the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club after a tip off by some locals of otters living in a cave on the river bank. The entrance was then dug - the first six hundred feet flooding in part at high tide and being extremely dangerous to a person non-conversant with the state of the tide. A copy of the current tide tables is essential to the caver interested in visiting this system.

The 1975 finds were reported fully in the B.C.R.A. meeting in Manchester, September 1975 and at that time it had been explored up to sump three.

Sump one is tidal and this determines whether you can get in (or out) of the system. After this, and the low crawling entrance series

before it, the main stream is encountered running in a rift passage and can be followed easily upstream, through two boulder chokes, to sump two. The second boulder choke needs a twenty five foot ladder for the upstream end and the hanging boulders there are an unknown quantity so should be watched. Sump two was dived by Martyn Farr revealing a larger, more mature passage than below the sump, and ending in sump three.

The cave so far, though interesting because of it's tidal nature, did not provide inspiring caving and certainly did not merit people travelling large distances to visit. But the Forest club then dug a low crawl at the end of an inlet passage just below sump two and eventually broke into a large, extremely well decorated fossil series. This series was initially explored for about a mile revealing a profuse array of formations making it probably the best decorated cave in Britain. Realising the danger cavers presented to these formations exploration was then halted until adequate taping and photographing could take place. A locked gate has also been placed at the start of the extension to help in conserving these formations by limiting the number of people entering the system.

Care must be taken in finding one's way through the formations as damage can be done very easily. There are some magnificent column bosses followed by the 'hall of the thirty'. Crystal pools also adorn many of the floors of the chambers though they often go unnoticed amongst all the larger formations. The wealth and variety of these formations make this a very attractive trip and therefore render them vulnerable to damage. Luckily the length and nature of the trip must put a lot of less determined souls off. Because of the tides long trips would seem to be the norm - a twelve hour one being average. Again depending on the tides awkwardly timed trips - often at night - will be called for. On high tides sump one will be closed for longer than usual and local information on the subject is needed. Also in wet weather, due to the increased volume of water in the Wye, the cave can be closed for long periods - last winter entry was impossible for three months.

There is a small food dump in the extension but only for emergency use and parties are advised to take their own reserves, space blankets etc. in with them in case of a long wait (these can be left just beyond the tidal section). The cave in the further reaches changes into a bore phreatic type though still full of interest. A sump(4) is to be found at the end but carrying only half the volume of water of the main stream. This was dived by Martyn on May 1st for two hundred feet to an air bell.

An interesting speculation (no surveying work being done so far) is that the extension seems to bend away from the main fault line and sinks of the area, and if so, a much larger system might be waiting to be found. Certainly there are still plenty of leads to be followed and the potential is there. It is rumoured, at the time of writing, that the Forest lads are onto a really good draught again and are busily searching for the next mile.

The problems of a rescue occurring in the cave are obviously complicated by the tidal entrance series. The boulder chokes would have to be enlarged, and though there is, as yet, no technically difficult part to the cave, the caving does tend to be strenuous for some undefined reason. However the logistics of mounting a full scale rescue, with many separate parties entering and leaving the system, the

communications problem and supply problem need thinking about soon as it could well turn out into a very lengthy business if not well organised.

People wanting the key to the extension should contact:

John Elliot,
Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club,
The Cottage,
Upper Lydbrook,
Forest of Dean.

It is at present freely available on demand to all members of bona fide caving clubs.

PETER FRANCIS

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SHOW CAVES IN FRANCE

For those club members who will be (so to speak) in-continent this Summer, the following is a list of show-caves which the French Tourist authorities consider worth leaving your route to visit. Prices are not included in the list although there are reductions in some for speleo-clubs! More information (unfortunately only in French) may be obtained by writing to:

'Association Nationale des Exploitants de Cavernes Amenagees pour le Tourism' - A.N.E.C.A.T. - 12 Rue Lamande, 75017 Paris.

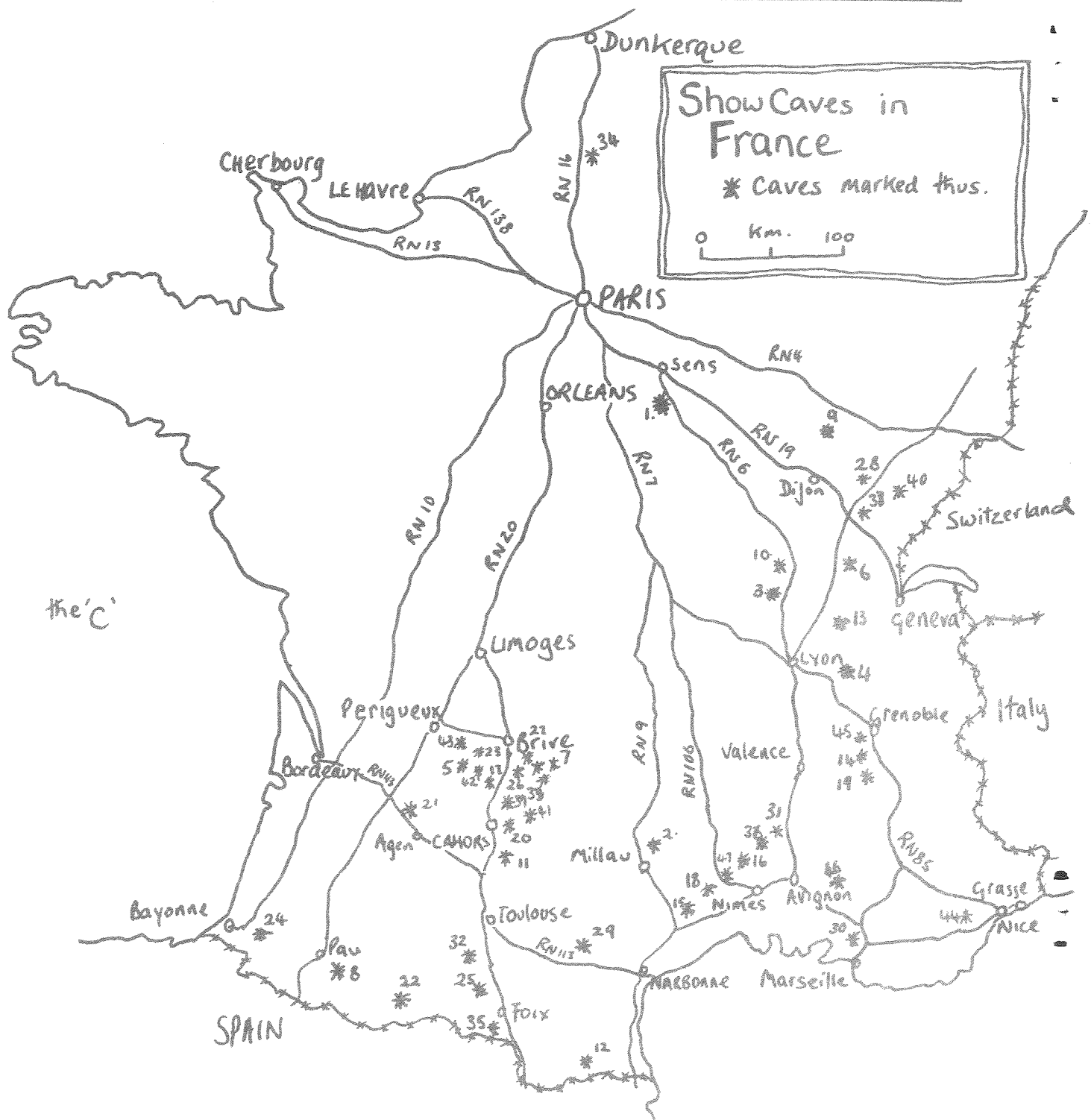
P.S!

Don't forget our palls at the Han-Sur-Lesse show caves (Belgium) who are just off the top right-hand corner of the map! Province of Namur, open all day in Summer.

1. Arcy (Grottes d') at Arcy-sur-Cure route RN6. open 9-12h + 14-18h.
2. Aven Armand 52 km from Millau. open 8-12h + 13.30-19h.
3. Aze (Grottes d') prehistoric site 10 km from RN6. 9-12h + 14-19h.
4. Balme (Grottes de la) 40 km from Lyon. open 9-12h + 14-19h.
5. Bara-Bahau (Caverne Ornée de) near Brive. 8.30-12h + 13.30-18h.
6. Baume (Grottes & Cascades de) 10 km off RN83. 9-12h + 14-18h.
7. Bellevue (Grotte) near Brive. 9-12h + 14-19h.
8. Bétharram (Grottes de) 15 km from Lourdes, RN 637. open all day.
9. Beze (Rivière souterraine de) 26 km NE of Dijon. open 10-19h.
10. Blanot (Grottes-Gouffre de) off RN6. open 9-12h + 14-19h.
11. Bosc (Grotte du) June & August all day. Sept onwards afternoons only.
12. Canalettes (Grottes des) July to Sept. open all day.
13. Cerdon (Grottes du) on the RN84. open all day May-Sept.
14. Choranche (Grotte de) in the Bourne gorge RN531. open all day.

15. Clamouse (Grotte de) n the 1^{er} Hérault gorge. open 9-17h.
16. Cocaliere (Grotte de la) off RN104. 9-17h + 14-19h.
17. Cougnac (Grottes préhistoriques de) off RN20. 9.30-11h + 14-17h.
18. Demoiselles (Grotte des) RN58C. open all day.
19. Draye Blanche (solalet grotte) open June-Sept. 9-18.30h.
20. Foissac (Grottes de) 3 km off RN122. open 10-12h + 14-18h.
21. Fontirou (Grottes de) off RN21. open all day.
22. Gargas (Grottes de) prehistoric site off RN117. open 9-19h.
23. Grand Roc (Grottes du) open 9-12h + 14-18.30h.
24. Isturitz et Oxocelhaya (Grottes d') 40 km Biarritz. open all day.
25. Labouiche (Rivière souterraine de) from Pentecost(?) to October
open all day.
26. Lacave (Grotte de) open 8.30-12h + 14-19h.
27. Lafage (Goffre de) open 8-19h.
28. Les Planches-près-Arbois (Grottes) 6 km off RN83. open all day.
29. Limousis (Grotte de) open all day in summer.
30. Loubiere (Grottes de) at Château Combert. open all day.
31. Marzal (Aven Grotte de) Ardèche gorge. speleological museum. all day.
32. Mas D'Azil (Grotte préhistorique du) 71 km from Toulouse. open all day.
33. Merveilles (Grottes des) open all year, all day.
34. Naours (Grottes refuges de) off N16 near Amiens. visits 1 hr. all year.
35. Niaux (Grotte préhistorique de) open all day in the summer.
36. Orgnac (Aven d') March-November. 8-12h + 14-18h.
37. Osselle (Grottes d') on N73. open all day.
38. Padirac (Gouffre de) open all day.
39. Pech-merle (Grotte préhistorique de). open all day.
40. Poudrey (Gouffre de) open 8-30-19.30h.
41. Presque (Grotte de) open all day.
42. Proumeyssac (Gouffre de) 8.30-12h + 14-18h.
43. Rouffignac (Grotte préhistorique de) open all day in summer.
44. Saint-Cezaire (Grottes de) 10-12h + 14-18h.
45. Sassenage (Curves de) 6 km from Grenoble. 8-12h + 14-18h.
46. Thouzon (Grottes de) 16 km from Avignon. open all year.
47. Trabuc (Grottes de) in Cévennes National Park. open all day in summer.
48. Principaute De Monaco (Grottes de l'Observatoire) open all day.

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REVIEW

Key to British Freshwater CRUSTACEA: MALACOSTRACA.

By T. Gledhill, D.W. Sutcliffe and W.D. Williams.

Scientific publication No. 32 by Freshwater Biological Association 1976. Price £1.00.

71 pages, 48 figures and 6 pages of references including many cave references.

Now that Ogof Ffynnon Ddu has been declared a National Nature Reserve partly on account of its microfauna, there could well be an upsurge of interest in the denizens of its pools and streams. Many cavers emerge from the depths with tales of having seen 'things walking about on the water'. Some will have turned to the bible - 'British Caving' - for enlightenment; few will have received it and fewer still will go back to collect samples of the 'things' for identification. British caving, good as it is, was never intended as a handbook for identifying creatures seen in caves.

This small book therefore fills a need felt by the caver who has more than a passing interest in caves. After the first flush of sporting enthusiasm, some cavers go on to surveying, others to dig, and yet others to collect.

This slim volume is small enough to fit into the boiler-suit pocket. Its pages show detailed drawings; from the Order Amphipoda it pictures Niphargus glenniei now known by its new name of Niphargellus glenniei (Spooner), recorded from subterranean waters including caves in Devon. Also we have Niphargus kochianus kochianus (Bate) which is from the caves of southern England. Then Niphargus aquilex (Schiodte), widely distributed in underground waters in England and Wales, and its fellow Niphargus fontanus (Bate) which is well-distributed in South Wales. From the order Isopoda only one genus, Asellus, is a true inhabitant of British fresh waters.

Asellus cavaticus (Schiodte) has been collected from a number of wells and caves in southern England and South Wales. A. aquaticus and A. meridianus are well-distributed in the British Isles and their identifying features are drawn.

This key is a useful and reasonably-priced book for the collector of cave microfauna. However the collector is reminded that a permit is required for collection of any specimens from a Nature Reserve. He would also be well-advised to follow the established practice of working in conjunction with the British Cave Research Association.

Who knows what bug could be lurking in some remote Welsh cave? And any information gathered would be ammunition in the battle for the conservation of our caves.

MELVYN DAVIES.

BAT RINGING EXPERIMENT IN SOUTH WALES -

WARNING AND APPEAL

MR. R. E. STEBBINGS IS UNDER CONTRACT TO NCC TO ASSESS THE PRESENT NUMBER OF GREATER HORSESHOE BATS IN CAVES, MINES, TUNNELS ETC., IN DYFED, AND ELSEWHERE IN S. WALES. THIS IS IN ORDER TO ASSESS WHETHER CHANGES ARE OCCURRING SO THAT A CONSERVATION POLICY MAY BE FORMULATED. ANY BAT RINGER MUST HAVE A PERMIT FROM NCC UNDER THE "CONSERVATION OF WILD CREATURES AND WILD PLANTS ACT 1975", AND MR. STEBBINGS NATURALLY HAS SUCH A PERMIT.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT BAT RINGING AND COUNTING IN THE PAST HAS BEEN A CAUSE OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BATS FROM CERTAIN SITES (Hooper, 1964). BECAUSE OF THIS MR. STEBBINGS INTENDS TO CHECK THE RINGS ONLY ONCE PER YEAR. CONSEQUENTLY THIS NOTE IS AN APPEAL TO CAVERS NOT TO TOUCH ANY GREATER HORSESHOE BAT THEY MAY SEE BEARING A RING. THERE IS NO NEED TO RECORD THE NUMBER OR HANDLE THE BAT, INDEED IT IS NOW ILLEGAL TO TAKE A GREATER HORSESHOE BAT WITHOUT A LICENCE UNDER SECTION 8 (d) OF THE 1975 ACT. IF ANY CAVER SEES A GREATER HORSESHOE BAT IN A CAVE, MINE OR TUNNEL ETC., IN DYFED, WEST, MID, OR SOUTH GLAMORGAN, OR GWENT, HE SHOULD INFORM ME, AND I WILL CHECK WHETHER THAT SITE HAS BEEN RECORDED PREVIOUSLY AS CONTAINING THE BAT.

Reference: "Bats and the Amateur Naturalist" by J.H.D. Hooper, Studies in Speleology. Vol.1., part 1. July 1964.

Melvyn Davies,
Nature Conservancy Council,
Ffordd Penrhos,
Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2LQ.

16 March 1976