

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

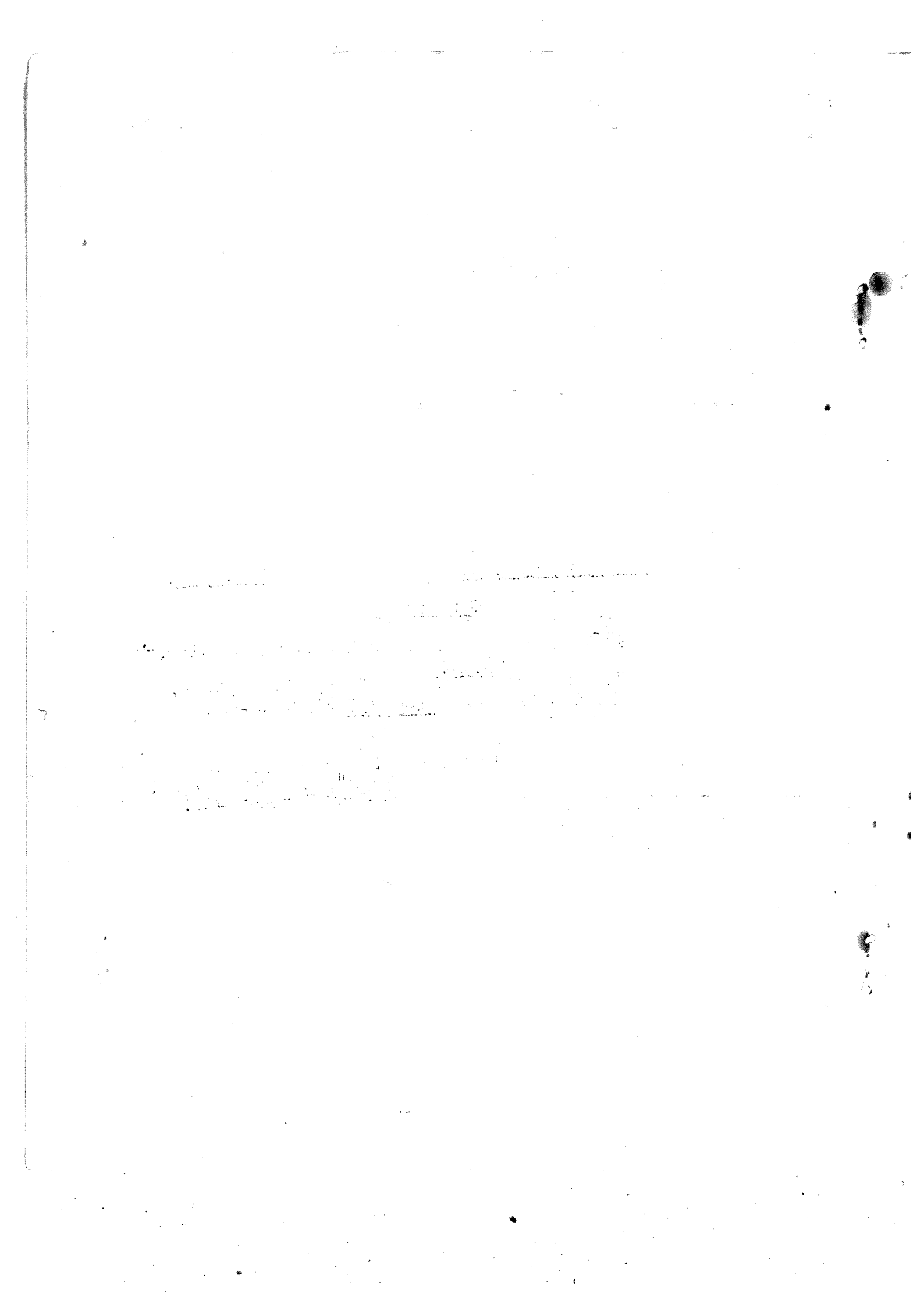
NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No.15.

May, 1956.

Contents.

Full report of the Annual General Meeting.
Club News.
"Two new caves on Gower" by the Taylors.
List of leaders for Ogef Ffynnon Ddu.



At the Annual General Meeting held at the Gwyn Arms on Easter Sunday the following officers and committee were elected:-

President. Dr. F. J. North. O.B.E., D.Sc., F.G.S., F.S.A.

Vice-Presidents: Brigadier E. A. Glennie. C.I.E., D.S.O.
A. H. Hill. Esq.

Chairman. Dr. E. Aslett.

Hon. Secretary. P. I. W. Harvey.

Hon. Asst. Secretary. P. E. Harvey.

Hon. Treasurer. L. A. Hewes.

Recorder and Editor. D. W. Jenkins.

Tackle Officer. G. R. Clissold.

C. E. O. W. E. Clark.

Cottage Warden. J. M. Hartwell.

Committee Members. D. G. Hunt, W. H. Little, J. Barrows.

Hon. Auditor. J. M. Davies.

Honorary Members remain as before and are as follows:-

T. Ashwell Morgan. Esq., Cyril Powell Esq., Mrs. G. Price.,

Mr and Mrs. J. Barrows., Dr. A. J. R. Hudson.

Secretary's Report.

The South Wales Caving Club has now completed ten years caving since its formation during Easter Bank Holiday 1946. Since that date the Club has established itself as one of the leading clubs in Great Britain. Through the generosity of T. A. Morgan we have a cottage which has had continuous use by our members and also by a large number of visiting clubs and parties. Membership has risen to about ninety.

The past year has seen considerable activity by members with only moderate reward in comparison with some previous years. The most important discovery has been that of a high level system in Den-yr-ogof which has been reached by use of the Haypole. There is considerable exploration work yet to be done in this great cave and it is hoped to get permission to start a high grade survey and to lay a telephone cable between the show cave and the boulder chamber while this work is in progress. For this purpose Standard Telephone and Cable have made a gift of 400 yards of armoured telephone cable.

The Tunnel cave survey is progressing as fast as can be expected considering the difficulties of the place. Clive Jones and others have been working at the top of Cascade Aven and have made useful progress. The Pant Mawr survey should be completed in the near future.

The year has been a heavy one for the secretary. At the first committee meeting the committee appointed Mrs. Harvey to the post

of Assistant Secretary and she was of considerable help to the secretary by taking down notes at meetings, etc. Early on in the year both the Treasurer and Cave Rescue Organiser found that they had not sufficient spare time to carry out their duties adequately. The committee persuaded L.A. Hawes to take over the treasurership and W.E. Clarke to undertake Cave Rescue, from G.O. Thomas, and J. Barro who were both co-opted on to the committee. S.M. Davies agreed to audit the accounts in place of L.A. Hawes.

Mr. W.E. Clarke has shown considerable energy in forming a Rescue Organisation and I am glad to report that this is now in existence. Mr. Clarke has asked me to remind you that any rescue organisation depends for its success on the support of its members and that there are a large number who have not yet completed their C.R.O. forms.

In May soon after the A.G.M. it became apparent that a new quarry on the Penwyllt road would eventually, cur, into a major portion of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. The Committee in conjunction with our President, Dr. Norrh have acted promptly and energetically. The Cave Research Group and many other bodies have been asked for help and support. The present position is that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government have requested a check survey. The Brecon Planning Department have obtained the use of the necessary instruments from the Ordnance Survey and Club member Gordon

Clissold will undertake this work in his spare time. We hope that members will come forward and assist in this useful and important work. The Committee are confident that when a decision is made it will be to preserve the cave.

In connection with the preserving of caves I should like to point out that it is useless preserving the shell if we cannot look after the contents properly. Last year there were two acts of vandalism both of which must have been the responsibility of somebody on the leader's list. The inclusion of a name on the list is not just a privilege. A leader must see that no damage is done and also there is an obligation to help lead the Club's visitors through the cave.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held on August Sunday the Club's constitution was ratified. The new book containing the constitution and rules will be issued shortly.

We hope that the coming year will be a notable one in the Club's history and that there will be a number of new discoveries.

The 10th. Anniversary of the Club will be marked by a special publication on South Wales which will be issued free to members sometime before Christmas. It is also hoped to get enough support to hold a 10th. Anniversary dinner in the autumn.

Finally I would like to put on record the Club's thanks to all those who have made gifts to the Club cottage.

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

Statement of Income and Expenditure for
period 1st July, 1955 to 29th February, 1956.

Dr.

Cr.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
<u>Cottage Expenses:</u>							
Electricity	3.	2.	2.		Cottage Fees	64.	2.
Coal	2.	3.	5.		Subscriptions and Donations	27.	2.
Paraffin	4.	14.	1.		Interest on Trustees Savings Account	3.	3.
Calor Gas	6.	-	-			94.	7.
Gas Fittings, Repairs and Other Expenses	13.	13.	7.	29.	13.	3.	11.
<u>Other Expenses:</u>							
Club Equipment	12.	18.	6.		Cash handed over by Retiring Treasurer	17.	-
C.R.G. Subs - 1954/55/56	3.	15.	-				
Stationery, Books etc.	6.	10.	5.				
Officers' Postages & Expenses.	7.	4.	2.	30.	8.	1.	
				60.	1.	4.	
Excess of Income over Expenditure				51.	6.	7.	
				<u>£111.</u>	<u>7.</u>	<u>11.</u>	
							<u>£111.</u>
							<u>7.</u>
							<u>11.</u>

Balance Sheet as at 29th February, 1956.

<u>Accumulated Funds</u>		
Balance 1st July	140.	12.
Excess of I. over E. as above	51.	6.
	<u>£191.</u>	<u>19.</u>
		<u>6.</u>
<u>Cash at Bank</u>		
Current Account	64.	14.
Trustees Savings	102.	4.
	166.	19.
<u>Sundry Debtors</u>		
Cottage Fees Outstanding	25.	-
	<u>£191.</u>	<u>19.</u>
		<u>6.</u>

L.A. Hawes. Hon. Treasurer.
22nd March, 1956.

J.M. Davies. Hon. Auditor.
31st March, 1956.

The minutes of the A.G.M. and the B.G.M. were read and adopted. The secretary's report and the treasurer's statement were also read and adopted.

Under 'Any Other Business' (there was a lengthy discussion on the financing of private projects and the financial policy of the Club. The committee is to go into these matters.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mrs Price for the use of her room.

Change of address.

The following changes of address are noted:-

Miss. S. Bowden-Lyle. 120, Wilbury Rd., Letchford, Herts.
 G. Sanders, Delfryn, Twyn-y-bedw Rd., Clydach, Swansea.

Membership.

The following are assumed to have ceased membership of the Club:-

D. Britton.
 M. J. Charles.
 Mr and Mrs. D. A. Coase.
 D. H. Davies.
 Miss. A. Ockendon.
 T. Ratcliff.
 A. Wring.

Thanks.

The committee wish to thank the following:-

Mrs. Hibbard for a chair for the cottage.
 Mr and Mrs. J. Barrows for a stove for the cottage.
 J. M. Hartwel for a lock for Tunnel Cave.

Clothing and Equipment.

At Whitsun all unclaimed kit which is not neatly boxed or parcelled will be destroyed or 'won' by those present.

J. M. Hartwel.

Day parties at the cottage.

It has been noticed that members visiting the cottage for the day are leaving without doing their washing up. It is hoped all will help to keep the cottage tidy.

Archaeological Dig.

Mr. E. J. Mason will be running an archaeological dig at Minchin Hole, Gower, during the summer and helpers will be welcomed.

Constitution and Rule Books.

These are now available and will be sent to members on payment of this years' subscription.

5.

A charge of one shilling will be made for copies of rule books supplied to members other than the first.

Congratulations and best wishes.

Congratulations to Clive Jones on passing his examinations for A.M.I.Chem.E. and we send him every good wish for the duration of his service in H.M.Forces.

Drying Room.

A drying room has been installed in the cottage which members are asked to use. This is the result of many hours of work by members but mainly by W.H.Little to whom our thanks are due.

Weighbridge Cave.

A dig has been started here which looks most promising. Those taking part are D.W.Jenkins, L.A.Hawes, C.Jones, J.Hartwel, R.Smith, and A.Howells.

Penwyllt Quarries.

Members are requested not to use the old Penwyllt quarry as a means of access to the moors. Access can be obtained by going through the village and up the old track or along the edge of the working quarry to the gate. This request has been made by the local shepherds

Three new caves at Landimore including Gower's deepest cavern.

Saturday 18th November was a lucky day for us. It was then, when we were rambling around Lessons to explore the possibilities of the resurgence there, that we encountered Mr.Woolley.

He, a young man of seventy, on hearing of our intense interest in subterranean streams, resurgences and caves in Gower and South Wales generally, became very friendly and expansive. It appeared that he, some thirty odd years ago, had owned Bovehill Farm near Landimore, and during his life there had happened on three small holes in the cliffs. Two of them were inaccessible (without equipment) and the third was extraordinarily well-hidden. He himself had not explored them at all not being interested in caves.

Of course our ears pricked up at this news and we asked if he could describe their whereabouts. To our great delight he instead immediately offered to come with us as guide (frankly I doubt that we should ever have discovered them at all without his help).

After a courtesy call on Mr.Owen (the present owner of Bovehill Farm) we set off along the high cliffs. Soon Mr Woolley stiffened

6.

like a pointer and announced that he thought he was in the vicinity of the first hole. There followed a concerted scramble by all of us up, down and around the steep rocky and grass-covered slopes of the cliffs. To no avail. The entrance just couldn't be located. After all, it was more than thirty years since he had last seen it so this wasn't altogether surprising.

Farther along the cliffs we went and soon (in line with a long, straight dyke which runs seaward) he pointed to a place where the cliff ran very steeply down to the marshes below. There some forty feet below was an elder bush and there, too, should be the second cave.

I went down on a rope and, true enough, there was an easy opening to a passage, waterworn and about seven feet high at first. To the left was another low arched entrance which was blocked most completely by another elder.

The third hole was only a short way farther along the cliff but this time the entrance (quite invisible from above or below) was some forty feet or more from the base of the cliff which itself was too smooth and slippery after continual wet weather to climb. However anyone spelcologically-minded could discern the waterworn lip of an obviously small hole and immediately below at ground level was a further blocked exit. This cave has not been explored up to the time of starting this article.

We thanked our friend effusively for his kindness in letting us into his secrets and then drove him home - telling him we should christen the second cave "WOOLEY'S HOLE" in his honour!

Since that date we have worked many weekends in Woolley's Hole. Access has been made easy by the use of thirty-five feet of rope ladder. On our first visit we found that the passage curved about for thirty-five feet at which point it terminated in a slightly larger chamber which was filled to within a foot or so of the roof with what was apparently sifted earth (we still can find no explanation of the presence of this fine soil...) But to our joy there was a small crevice through which pebbles could be dropped. We decided to work there.

Carrying equipment was a problem at first but later we felt that it would be safe to cache all our gear in the cave for access is through private ground and since our first going there the farmer had continued a fence right to the cliff edge and this prevented strangers walking along.

When we started excavations we had hopes of reaching our objective by digging down and hoping to come across a widening fissure which would give access to the drop (whatever this might be). But to our surprise it gradually became obvious that instead of this the passage itself dropped vertically and made a acute S-bend.

On successive occasions we carried out hundreds of buckets of earth and rocks and finally twenty-five feet of additional passage became accessible. Unfortunately, though, it had tightened considerably as it wound deeper and this made further exploration very difficult. The tunnel still continues to go down at an acute angle.

But on the last occasion we were there we had another go at the original blocked fissure and to our great delight, after working head downwards in a hole for some hours our crowbar shifted a wedged rock; it slowly tilted; fell with a resounding crash some distance. This proved to be the turning point. Once this rock had fallen the others could be pushed down too. And the masses of loose earth.

What was exciting was the fact that one could now actually see beyond the aperture and there was clearly enough space beyond to move about - provided one could get through the incredibly awkward constriction. Also we could see the edge of (we hope) a vertical pot.

This then is the extent of our exploration on Woolley's Hole to date.

However, in early March we had a letter from our friend to announce that he had rediscovered his lost cave and would be delighted to show us. Which he did on Saturday 29th. March 1956. Again, how lucky for us for one would never find the place from directions for there are no landmarks at all.

The entrance was very small - as was to be expected - a low slot three feet by just over a foot, and true enough, there was an intriguing black space below where falling stones re-echoed. A careful note was made of its position for we were not intending to explore it that day.

On Sunday we made an early start and arrived back at Landismore laden with masses of ropes and ladders and a surveyor's tape.

This is what we found: the entrance gave immediately on to a pitch of thirteen feet where one made a landing on wedged rocks forming the false floor of the upper half of quite a large chamber twenty-nine feet long. On the right was another pitch of thirteen feet to the floor of the chamber. In the upper portion an obvious tunnel led upwards from the left but it was filled rubble and rocks and will probably be completely chocked.

At the bottom of the chamber a scramble down of six feet showed that there was a continuation to the left. This was partially blocked when found but was enlarged with no great difficulty to permit of a climb down - very tight - for ten feet. Here one emerged into a spacious chamber some fifteen feet or more wide and sloping downwards at an angle of forty-five degrees. The

floor was littered with massive blocks which had, however, not fallen from the roof. There are few stalactite formations save for two groups with knobs on.

At the foot of the 2nd chamber came the most unexpected find - the "Black Hole". Shining our lamps to the left found us gazing not at a rock face but into a deep inky void. Our large acetylene light was called into action and by its beam we could see the floor lying some thirty feet below.

One of us went down on a rope. The chamber was up to fifteen feet wide and thirty feet long and seen from below, the entrance wall appeared to consist of cyclopean boulders piled on top of each other - quite a hair-raising sight.

Making a cautious scramble down to the bottom it was found that this chamber was not the end of the system but that below a false floor of wedged boulders was a further pitch of more than twenty feet. A sort of double pot.

On Saturday April 14th. we continued exploration. We had in the interim secured one twenty-foot ladder and lifeline down the Black Hole so it was only necessary to cart one other twenty-foot ladder through the cave to the final pitch. This proved to be a double pot.

A wedged rock proved very useful and the ladder hung vertically down the beautifully smooth wall below. About thirteen feet down were two enormous blocks of rock held up apparently by faith alone but it was found possible to pass these without contact. Below here the pot, although obviously continuing down some way was completely filled with large rocks except in one corner where a further seven feet was added to the original twenty-two feet. The task of moving any of these boulders appeared to be both dangerous and difficult.

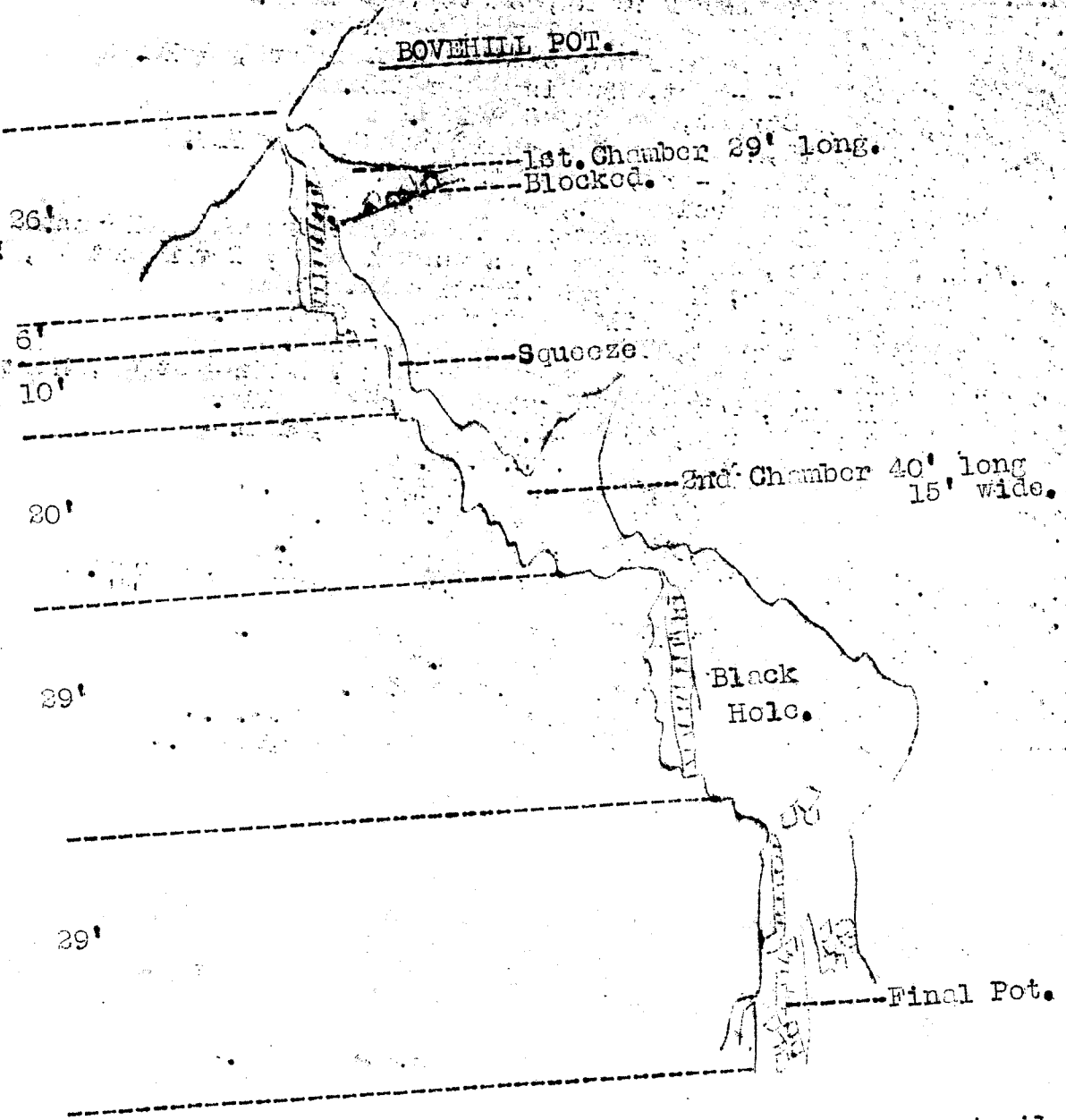
In the opposite wall a narrow fissure showed a further small pot but as it was inaccessible there was no means of ascertaining the depth.

The righthand pot was only half the depth of the other and was of quite a different character - the sides being eroded into sharp edges by the action of a constant and fairly heavy drip.

The total depth of the cave proved to be one hundred and twenty feet. A surprising depth for a Gower Cave.

Nothing further of interest was discovered in the cave whose lower regions should be treated very circumspectly - particularly the pitch down Black Hole, save for some most interesting formations in the 2nd. chamber. In one place the roof suddenly rises to a height of fifteen feet and several square yards of wall here are covered with thousands of tiny needle-like transparent crystals

about 1/5th" to 1/4" long. These all grow at right angles to the surface and, when viewed from below or along, look like white fur.



The Taylors. April 1956.

Details of the location of these caves will be given at a later date
Editor.

List of leaders for Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, 1956.

Dr. E. Aslett. T.B. Clinic, Merthyr Tydfil, Glam.
 J. Barrows. Y Grithig, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
 R.L.B. Bennett. 13, Glanmor Park Rd, Sketty, Swansea.
 W.E. Clarke, 23, Beechwood Rd, Uplands, Swansea.
 G.L. Clissold, Caravan Park Farm, Cwmdarem, Aberdare, Glam.
 J.M. Davies. 47, Heol-y-bont, Rhwbina, Cardiff.
 N. Dilly, 79, Arran Street, Roath, Cardiff.
 Miss P. Hardwidge, 15, Heol Wernlas, Whitechurch, Cardiff.
 J.M. Hartwel, 116, Maes-y-dre, Glynneath, Glam.
 P.I.W. Harvey, 157, Commercial Rd., Newport, Mon.
 L.A. Hawes, Corner Cottage, Rounton Rd., Church Crookham, Hants.
 Miss A.M.A. Hazelton, Seaton House, Shrublands Rd, Berkhamstead, Herts
 H. Hill Hawley Manor, Hawley, Nr. Dartford, Kent.
 Dr. A.J.R. Hudson, Mackworth Villa, St. Thomas, Swansea.
 D. Hunt, 19, Spring Street, Cadoxton, Barry, Glam.
 Brig. E.A. Glennie. Seaton House, Shrublands Rd, Berkhamstead, Herts
 D.W. Jenkins, Dinmore, Dyffryn Rd., Llandrindod Wells.
 J.C. Jones. Victoria House, High St., Glynneath, Glam.
 D. Kemp. 17, Beemead Av., London. S.W.16.
 W.H. Little 29, Wrekin Rd, Sutton Coldfield, Wares.
 D.C. Moore, 1, Glyn Crescent, Blackpill, Swansea.
 W. Ashford Price, Ynyswen, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
 C.L. Raiton. 12, Chester Road North, Sutton Coldfield, Wares.
 Mrs. M.E. Raiton. " " " " " "
 G. Sanders. Delfryn, Twyn-y-bodw, Clydach, Swansea.
 R. Smith. 98, Stanwell Rd., Penarth, Glam.
 G.O. Thomas, 5, Farnville Rd., Splott, Cardiff.
 J. Truman, 103, Little Ealing Lane, Ealing, London. W.5.
 T.A. Underwood. 12, Harris Terrace, Penrhiwceiber, Glam.

Will members please notify the editor of any change of address at once. Also the editor is short of material for your newsletter and it is felt that some members might make an effort to send in at least one contribution instead of leaving it to the same few members all the time.

D.W. Jenkins.

Hon. Secretary. P.I.W. Harvey. 157, Commercial Rd., Newport, Mon.
 Hon. Treasurer. L.A. Hawes. Corner Cottage, Rounton Rd,
 Church Crookham, Hants.
 Hon. Editor, D.W. Jenkins. Dinmore, Dyffryn Rd., Llandrindod Wells
 Rads.