SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 30 OCTOBER 1959.

CONTENTS

I. CLUB NEWS

PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE NEW H.Q. 18th OCTOBER 1959.

The long spell of dry weather really broke on Saturday and members who were up at Penwyllt were able to get a good idea of what winter in Powell Street would be like. However it soon became clear that due to the Planning Committee's foresight, once you're inside the door with a sufficient supply of food there will never be any need to go outside again. We're even hoping to sink a shaft from the old Mission Hall into O.F.D. II for the benefit of anyone who may still be interested in caving.

Washrooms, dormitories, common rooms, kitchen, dining and fuel are all under the one roof and interconnected by internal doorways (as yet, owing to shortage of funds, minus doors). With the completion of the septic tank and most of the outside drain-work, happily co-incident with the end of the summer, our efforts are now being directed towards getting the interior ship-shape and completing the plumbing. Thoughts are turning to the date when we shall be able to move in, and although naturally much will remain to be done, once the essentials are in the place will be habitable with a good deal more comfort than our present cottage. A lot will have to wait until sufficient money is available, but there is some talk of next Spring for the grand opening date, when our Chairman will perform

that little much talked-of ceremony to set things in motion.

Until then, though, we ask members for their assistance up at the new H.Q., and perhaps what is more important just at the present time, money for more materials. The Hon. Treasurer will gladly welcome donations at 4 Connaught Road, Fleet, Hants.

PANT MAWR AREA.

At the request of the manager of the Cnewr Estate, by whose kind permission we are allowed to walk in this area, members are asked to fill in or cover any excavations they may come across within its boundaries and report them to the Hon. Sec.

The Committee also asks, with respect to any S.W.C.C. dig in the Pant Mawr area, that:-(a.)it shall be supplied with a substantial and complete cover whenever it is not being worked.
(b) it shall be filled in if abandoned.
(c) its position shall be reported to the Hon. Sec. or Committee.
Failure to take these precautions might well result in the whole of this Estate, which extends from Penwyllt in the West to the Neath Valley in the East, and almost as far north as Cray, being closed to everyone, irrespective of club or denomination.

M.R.O. RESCUE APPARATUS RESEARCH FUND.

The following letter has been received from Dr. Oliver C. Lloyd, Hon. Sec. & Treasurer, Mendip Rescue Organisation, to whom donations should be sent.

"I am writing to tell you about this fund, which the Mendip Rescue Organisation has established, and to ask you for your support.

For some time now we have been concerned with the problem of rescuing an incapacitated subject from the far side of a sump, but an additional problem also presented itself with the Peak Cavern incident last March, when a caver was overcome by foul air. In April of this year, encouraged and financed by members of this Organization, Dr. Oliver C. Wells, of the Cave Diving Group, started to work on designing and making apparatus to facilitate rescue from caves with foul air and through sumps. The work he did was very useful but is incomplete. Just before leaving for America he discussed his ideas with the M.R.O. Wardens and demonstrated his apparatus. This is now the property of M.R.O. who have also undertaken to sponsor its further development.

The lines of research indicated are:

A. To discover how foul the air may be in parts of various Mendip caves, and how quickly it may get foul in given circumstances. It is estimated that this might cost about £35.

B. To design, modify and develop apparatus to facilitate the rescue of incapacitated subjects from caves with foul air or from beyond sumps. Every effort will be made to use and develop existing apparatus in such a way that the apparatus finally evolved will be interchangeable and available throughout the country. (We are closely in contact with all the principal cave rescue organizations in England and Wales.) This part of the project may eventually cost about £200.

Dr. Allan Rogers, of the Dept. of Physiology, University of Bristol, has

undertaken to direct this research on behalf of M.R.O. We are fortunate in having his help, because he has the necessary specialized knowledge and experience. Part A. of our programme is similar to the work he was doing on Dr. Fuchs' recent South Polar Expedition.

Most of the caving clubs to which I am writing this letter have already made donations from time to time to M.R.O.s general funds, but this is something special. The work will take some time, and a lot of money is needed, not only now but later. I would be grateful to you, if you could arrange to collect money for the Fund, by whatever means you consider appropriate, not only from your members but from their friends, so that the support may be as widely based as possible amongst those interested in caving."

O.C. Lloyd, M.D., Withey House, Withey Close West, Bristol, 9.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Arthur Hill (Vice-President), 32 Marine Road, Oreston, Plymouth.
J.G. Parkes, Woodcote, Wood Lane, Park Gate, Wirral, Lancs.

CORRECTED ADDRESS.

Mary Nutt, 166a (not 116a) Rookery Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21.

NEW MEMBERS.

We welcome the following new members to the Club:-
D.R. James, Gwyn Arms, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
N.B. Lloyd, Barlands Cottage, Bishopston, Swansea.
Miss B.M. Davies, 3 Lambert Terrace, Aberdare, Glam.

VISITING CLUBS.

October 24th.	3rd. Prittlewell (St.Peter's) Scouts.	Party	of	10
" "	Pinner Club.	"	"	"
Nov.7th.8th.	Mendip Nature Research Committee Leaders Seaton Phillips and B. Fenn.	"	"	9
Nov.14th.15th.	Cave and Crag Club trial rescue B. Birchenough and G. Clissold leaders.	"	"	15 approx.
" "	Farnham Youth Club (Wessex members) Leader Les. Hawes.	"	"	6
Nov.21st.22nd.	Chelsea Speleological Society. Leader J. Hartwel.	"	"	-
December 12th.	Malvern Spelaological Group. Leaders not yet chosen.	"	"	12
Jan.8th9th10th.	Mary Nutt. To be led by Birmingham members.	"	"	12

2. A VISIT TO THE GROTTA GIGANTE.

Whilst passing through the Karst area of Trieste recently, I had an opportunity to make a short trip into the Grotta Gigante, one of the most imposing caverns in an area famous for the magnitude of its caves.

The entrance to the cave is in surprisingly flat country, some eight to ten miles slightly north of west of the edge of the town of Trieste. Concrete steps lead down from a harmless-looking field and one wonders just how "gigante" this cave can possibly be. The entrance is deceiving! The stairway, easily traversable by the most delicate of old ladies leads down first through a section where there are few formations except a little dead flowstone and the occasional very ragged-looking curtain, and then as one turns a corner one is presented very suddenly with the whole enormity of the place, very efficiently illuminated in all directions.

The cavern is shaped like the cup of a bell and, roughly speaking, is thus symmetrical everywhere from roof to floor. The height of the roof above the floor is slightly more than 450 feet, whilst the lateral reaches at the furthest point might be - here I estimate - something of the order of three hundred yards. The "bell" itself has no further series as yet known. Various small passages close down swiftly and no draft is to be felt anywhere. However, in the roof there is a connection to a bedding-plane series which gives exit to the same innocent-looking field further away. This I believe is how the Grotta was first entered, and the tourist entrance was blasted later.

As one turns the corner on the descending stairway, one is, however, not only staggered by the size of the place, but by the wealth of enormous formations which hits the eye. There is very little stalactite growth to be seen on the roof or upper walls, which is presumably due to the sharp angle at which the cavern declines, but on the floor and the lower rocks reaching from the floor perhaps a hundred feet up to meet the walls there is a magnificent profusion of pillars, calcite flow, and rimstone pools. The largest pillar is about sixty feet in height, whilst many rise to over twenty feet.

A most intersting feature is the work carried out in the cave by the Physics Dept. of Trieste University. From the entrance to the bedding series in the roof down to the floor are two polythene columns, containing inside high-torsional wires. These pass through holes in the roof of a tin hut in which are horizontal arms, the whole issue acting like a pendulum. It's period is 12 minutes!!!! I was talking to the curator of this formidable device, but his broken English and my broken Italian didn't seem to meet anywhere. Anyway it was way above my head, but it seems that they measure here the rise and fall of the Earth's Crust upon the Mantle and thereby prove something terribly important to Geodesy. Maybe one of my readers can understand- I didn't! There are also some twenty yards away a very sensitive seismograph and a gravimeter.

Altogether a very interesting visit, but I wish I had not had on my Sunday Best.

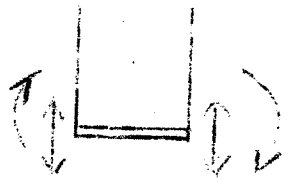
Bob Gregory.

Members may be interested to read the following additional notes supplied by Bob, with regard to this highly unusual pendulum:-

Hon. Ed.

The set-up was a <u>horizontal pendulum</u>, the purpose of which is to record the infinites mally small changes in the value of g at any one spot, and from this to calculate the amount by which the surface of the earth rises and falls with the attraction of the moon, like the tides but of course to a hugely lesser extent.

The two wires enveloped in their plastic sheets, to which I referred, are wires of very great twist modulus, which have at their ends the horizontal pendulum, so that the system looks like this -



The period of the pendulum is (or was) 12 MINUTES - this is the amazing point that I am sure of, and which makes the whole issue at all noteworthy. This is a function of the modulus of twist of the wires (very high), the length of the wires (very great), the moment of inertia of the system (great, because of the relative heavyness of the cross-piece) and the distance apart of the wires, which I really can't remember but was not inconsiderable. Also the fact there was, in the stillness of a large cave, no external damping. I presume the cross-piece was of non-magnetisable material, that the Earth's field should have no effect. I tried to find, in various books, the expression for the period of such a system in terms of the mentioned variables, but have had no luck, presumably because the set-up is unique.

3. THE CWM RHEIDOL HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME.

During July four members of the Club made an unusual trip underground in the course of which they penetrated over a mile into a mountain in Cardiganshire. Unfortunately this is not an announcement of a new caving area, improbably found in the shales of Cardiganshire. Through the good offices of Prof. Anderson of Cardiff and the courtesy of the consulting engineers, four of us, David and Margaret Jenkins, Rob and I were able to visit the tunnels being constructed for the Cwm Rheidol Hydro-Electric Scheme at Ponterwyd.

On arrival at the centre of operations we were greeted in a friendly fashion with cups of tea and while we drank them we were shown on the map the great extent of the scheme, it covers several square miles of country around Ponterwyd and necessitates the construction of two dams and three tunnels. The tunnels are 2, 3 and 4 miles long respectively, to reach them special roads have been built across the mountains and we set off up one of them with an engineer as our guide. It added to the excitement and interest of the day to find that the roads are one vehicle wide and used by extra large lorries, tankers and excavators which bound along with all the assurance of drivers who know every inch of the road and who also know that their vehicle is bigger than your car!

Before reaching the tunnel we paid a brief visit to a model of one of the dams, which had been constructed across a small stream in the middle of nowhere. The engineer who was studying the model told us that it was being used to find the most efficient way to deal with the excess water spilled over the dam. This has to be run off without causing excessive turbulence or erosion of river banks, down-stream of the dam.

Before starting up the mountain road for the tunnel I had signed some of those forms so aptly known as "blood chits", which say in effect, if not in the precise words, that if we got killed it was our fault for entering the tunnel, and I had even been told that protective clothing (boots and helmets) must be worn. On arrival at the tunnel we caused some astonishment to the engineers by producing our own, obviously much-used, protective clothing.

The tunnel we visited is still in process of excavation, it is 9 ft wide and 9 ft high and drives into the mountain-side at a slight inclination. About 1000 ft inside the tunnel we came to the lower opening of a man-made pothole connecting the hillside above us with the tunnel. an impressive sight, 7 ft. wide and 300 ft high.

Walking through the tunnel bore no resemblance to any cave, not even to the main chamber of Aggie-Aggie! In no cave that I know does the leader issue a solemn warning to his party to "Mind you don't get bumped in the back by a train" nor, in caves, is one likely to fall headlong over pipes carrying water and air under pressure through the passage. To a caver used to the comfortable solidarity of water-worn limestone, the sight of shale bands supported by iron struts is not reassuring. After a walk of about a mile and a half we reached the end of the tunnel, the face where drilling and blasting was in progress. We watched the final stages of a charge being packed in and then returned with the shot-firers to the firing point. The firing point was 1,500 ft. from the face but when I considered the size of the charge it didn't seem an inch too far! For those interested in "banger", the charge was 90 lbs. of Polar Ammon packed into 30 shot holes and fired electrically using a beethoven exploder. We were kindly told we should put our fingers in our ears - which saved my dignity as I was going to anyway! After several seconds of frenzied winding the shot firers pressed the button and we were buffeted by a shock wave that had to be felt to be believed. Each explosion extends the tunnel about 7 ft. and it is the aim of the men to set off 3 charges during each 12 hour shift, (which adds up to a lot of "banger" and some very hard work).

Although this might be regarded as the climax of the day, the rest of the trip was not without excitment and interest. Halfway back along the tunnel the power supply failed and the lights all went out, the resultant pitch darkness made us feel more at home and the engineers feel a little worried in case we were nervous.

Following this walk under a mountain, we were taken further up the mountain to visit the site of one of the dams. My main impression was of machinery which seemed twice the size of any normal machinery, (concrete mixers which delivered tons of concrete, not cwts., or shovel-fuls, lorries with more gear-sticks than many cars have gears and so on) and of complete chaos at first sight. Yet when the engineer in charge explained we realised that he knew just what was going on, why it was being done and what had to be done afterwards. To the considerable relief of our party who all feel strongly on the subject of dams, reservoirs and water-schemes, we were told that when the dams are completed the countryside will be returned to as near its original state as is possible, using landscape experts to ensure that this is carried out efficiently and that access would not be restricted, in fact the new roads might even improve access. It was on this very happy note that our visit ended.

Ann Williams.

4. FRANCE 1958 (Part I)

Extract from a two-week visit to the Dordogne area of France in the summer of 1958 by Seaton Phillips, Ann Ockenden, Colin Ford, Melvyn Davies and Agnes Davies, with a Hillman Minx Tourer and a Matchless 500 c.c. Twin. The objects being to look at French caves, French cavers and France; French caves were found to be numerous and varied, French cavers enthusiastic and welcoming, and France French.

MONDAY JULY 28th.

We arrived in Perigueux the largest town in the Dordogne, which surprised us by its size, a good two miles from the outskirts to the town centre. We made straight for the town centre first, hoping to find a Post Office which could tell us where to find our friend Robert de Faccio, President of the Speleo-Club de Perigueux. This contact, made through the Cave Research Group of Great Britain, was the reason we were in Perigueux at all. I had written to de Faccio and he had seemed only too pleased to welcome us on our arrival, so we hoped that now he would be all ready to receive us.

We had to buy a street map before we could find his address, but when we called there we found that he had left weeks before and no one knew where he was now living. So I asked about the only other name I knew in Perigueux, M. Francois a former president of the Speleo Club to whom I had written first. Luckily he lived only a few doors away, so we called, and met his mother. He himself was working, but she gave us long and detailed instructions how to find him. He seemed quite pleased to see me and was able to tell us where de Faccio now lived, so we felt that this time we were really on to something. He lived in a tiny narrow street in the shadow of the Cathedral, and, of course, was not in. We were able to leave a message that we would return at 8.30 and meanwhile we paid a visit to the Cathedral. We then set about looking for a permanent camp site as we expected to be here for several days. No sooner had we pitched camp and made ourselves at home, than it was time to go back into Perigueux to meet de Faccio. We all 5 got in or on the car, and this was our usual mode of transport for short trips in future.

So at last we actually met Robert de Faccio, and Pierre a friend of his, the most important first impression being that neither spoke a word of English. Anyhow we managed to introduce ourselves and they conducted us to their 'locale'; this was not a pub as we half expected but the Speleo Club meeting room. We were led through numerous dark alleyways and somewhere in the middle of the maze we found ourselves in a bare, half-decorated basement room and here we learnt all about Dordogne caves. de Faccio went off to find someone who could speak a little English and meanwhile Pierre produced ropes and ladders and carbide lamps for us to compare with our own, and a map of Dordogne, and somehow we managed to gather a lot of information about French caving. de Faccio's English-speaking friend seemed to be able to speak less English than we could French but was a help occasionally, and we spent some time finding out details of several caves worth visiting, and also which of all the hundreds of show caves on the map were worth selecting. Finally we arranged to meet them again at their weekly meetin on Thursday evening to plan some expeditions with them.

TUESDAY JULY 29th.

The first cave on our list was unanimously LASCAUX, and, as this was our first opportunity, there was no question about where we wouldgo today. All five in the car, we chose the most direct route, which led along a rough unmetalled road up the Auvezere for a couple of miles, up to the tiny hill top village of Blis-et-Born, and down to join the Perigueux - Brive main road at Thenon - the countryside hilly, but no sign of mountains, a lot of woods about and little valleys with no streams (perhaps they all run underground). We had as yet seen almost no sign of the high rugged limestone cliffs which we had been led to expect. So on to the Vezere valley, over the river at Montignac and up the far side of the valley to the Grotte de Lascaux.

A winding road leads up to a car park, a foot-path leads through a pinewood passing en route displays of not very prehistoric pottery and other 'relics' for sale, and, in the middle of the wood, a box office, waiting room and turnstiles and a flight of steps leading down to an armour-plated door in the side of the hill.

When we arrived the place was shut - lunchtime. Nevertheless we thought we had better wait in order to be in on the first afternoon party, so we postponed our own lunch and joined the queue. The only other queuers were a family who turned out to be Dutch, but by the time the first house was due to start, Americans, English, Belgian and French arrivals had added to the crowd - which I suppose is typical of Lascaux.

Finally, in a party of at least 30, we were let in, and immediately found ourselves in the most incredible cave we had ever seen. On either side was a mass of machinery, switchgear, pumps and tanks, through the middle of which was a flight of steps leading down to a second armour-plated door. This is the lighting and air-conditioning plant, the double-doors being necessary so that the whole party could come through the first before the second was opened, the idea being to exclude the outside air and to preserve the paintings in the atmosphere that they are used to.

At last, after passing the second door, we were there, looking at the Lascaux paintings, objective No. 1 of the whole expedition.

The paintings are black, reddish brown and dirty yellow on a back-ground of whitish calcite. From a height of 6 feet above the floor, the walls and most of the roof are covered with paintings; in fact, there was not enough room for all that Neanderthal man wanted to do, as, in parts, older paintings are half obliterated by later additions.

They are all between 15,000 and 20,000 years old, and were discovered by accident in 1942. They were clearer than I had expected, in colour, outline and shape. They looked as if they had been done with distemper, but were actually done with Manganese Oxide for the blacks, and ochres (iron oxides) for the reds and yellows.

Why were they so far above the floor? Some levelling has been done to make easy path-ways but the natural floor is well below the lowest paintings. They must have used scaffolding.

The paintings are mostly on calcite. This has helped to preserve them. The calcite was formed during a period when the cave was damp, the paintings were done after the cave had become dry, and it has been dry ever since.

The painters did not live in the caves, they merely used the caves as places of worship and black magic practices. The idea of painting was to prove man's superiority over the animals they hunted. There is only one painting of a human being and that is a dead one, probably either an event that did actually happen or someone the painter wished to be killed. Bulls, cows, bison, stags and horses are the main features. the horses are rather like Shetland ponies, which was the size of all horses in those days.

As well as paintings there are also a few engravings - out-lines, not very deeply cut, which are often difficult to see unless a light is shone on them at a certain angle. These are all in a lower side passage, where the walls are not calcited

The cave consists of a main chamber about 20 ft. high with two passages off at right angles to each other. These are followed for a few yards only and then narrow down beyond reach of tourists. As a spectacular cave it is nothing, but the paintings would have been worth going to see even if we never saw another cave on our whole trip.

Hard concentration was needed to pick out any useful information from what the guide was saying, which also had to be relayed to Ann, Mel and Agnes. The tour took about ¾ hr., but we wished we could stay and look round without the crowd; in each section we were nearly left behind, but unfortunately the guide made sure that no-one was.

It is not worth trying to describe the paintings in any detail - there are plenty of books on the subject. One of the prides of Lascaux is the 'Unicorn' - a painting of an unrecognisable animal with two straight, nearly horizontal horns. (Hence the name Unicorn?). It is also the largest animal in the place. The other pride of the cave is unfortunately not shown to the public. This is the drawing of the man being attacked by a bison, which is at the bottom of the 'well', which would mean descending a 40 ft. pitch into a lower passage. It seems a strange place to want to draw anything anyway, unless it was done purposely, so that no one would see it and start asking awkward questions. The most lifelike of all were various stags heads and the 'Shetland Ponies'. Some of the cows seemed to be a bit shapeless and their legs too short. One black bull looks as if he is jumping over the moon; his back legs are tucked up to avoid another painting of a frieze of horses done at an earlier date. Most of the later paintings have not bothered to avoid the earlier ones.

We were very impressed by the lighting - everything well lit but all lights hidden. Nevertheless it was worth taking in a torch for poking into odd corners.

Before we had absorbed everything, we were shepherded out and immediately bought up supplies of books and post-cards, but drew the line at prehistoric ashtrays. Ann thought she could do better prehistoric paintings herself anyway.

Then back to the car and down the hill to a viewpoint overlooking the Vezere valley for a 3 o'clock lunch.

(to be continued) Seaton Phillips.

5. SOME MENDIP SQUEEZES

On the 26th September, two prospective members, Bob Stubbings and Alan Jones, a very reluctant officer and I, set out from R.A.F Halton in an extremely old Wolseley belonging to the officer who is in charge of the Natural History Society on the camp, and who also arranged our weekend passes, food etc. We finally arrived at Burrington Combe at 3 o'clock on the Saturday afternoon, set up camp and got ready to go caving. At the sight of this horrible transformation the officer lost his nerve and hurridly drove off, promising to pick us up on the Sunday. I think he was sure he would never see us again.

We looked for Goatchurch Cavern first (map-ref 476583 sheet 165). We could not find this, but did notice large numbers of extremely small cavers heading for a low over hanging rock on the right hand side of a little valley, branching off

the right-hand side of the Combe. This, or so the notice at the entrance said, was Sidcot Swallet. I had heard rumours about the size of the cave (map ref. 475595 sheet 165), but my uninitiated friends were eager to go, so with a a sigh of despair I slid through the narrow entrance, which led vertically downwards, followed by a twenty foot slide down a muddy boulder slope. At the bottom were two narrow passages; the right-hand one looked too narrow, so we went through the left, which is called "Paradise". A short passage after this led to another slope at the bottom of which was a horrible oblong slot, the "Letter-box". My 'friends' pushed me through this, saying that if I could get through anyone could. Once through, there was a small chamber, full of dead formations with the walls heavily encrusted with large smoked comments. At the end of this chamber was a neat little sign saying "The Tie Press!" I did not like the look of it at all; a narrow slot sloping down at 45°, highly polished by the passage of many bodies. Once in it there was no stopping! After about twenty feet it ended in a small grotto with some once fine curtains. The way on was a thirty foot drop, but as I could not get my boots into the opening we gave up. By this time we had been joined by two army blokes dressed in regulation uniform complete with webbing belts and berets, carrying only cycle lamps! I was first out of the "Tie Press" after much groaning, and all went well until the second army chap got himself stuck, leaving Bob below. After much arm pulling and demands for him to 'relax' we liberated poor Bob. Subsequently all went well and we were soon eating R.A.F "K" rations at camp. My two companions were well and truly hooked and could not wait to go down again, so we went to look at Arline's Hole a short cave which was once the site of an archaeological dig. That evening we walked to the nearest Pub (2 miles) and sampled Somerset Scrumpy, and after muchargument about the homeward path we arrived back at our camp site, to find our army friends in possession with the news that they had found Goatchurch Cavern.

The next morning after a hurried breakfast we headed for Goatchurch, which used to be a Victorian show cave, though all the stals. in the old show cave were removed and placed in Gough's cave at Chedder. At the end of the short show cave , a small, high passage leads steeply downwards. This we discovered was the "Giants Steps", which led to the alternative entrance. Before this there were two steep holes leading downwards. We went down the first one and found ourselves in a fair sized chamber with a steep passage leading to another small passage ending in a steep slippery slope, at the bottom of which was another drop into a fairly large chamber with a few passages leading from it; one of these was labelled "The Drain Pipe". This was a narrow tube which was about ninety feet long but which seemed like as many miles. It ended in a small chamber, which was the end of the cave. I made Bob lead us out, which hed did without a fault, which, considering that it was only the second cave he had been in, was very good.

By ten o'clock on Sunday evening we were back at R.A.F. Halton, after one of the tightest caving trips of all my caving trips, and with two dead keen prospective members too....!

Chris.Timberlake.

Hon. Secretary.....D.W. Jenkins, Dinmore, Dyffryn Road, Llandrindod Wells, Rads.
Hon. Treasurer.....L.A. Hawes, 4, Connaught Road, Fleet, Hants.
Hon. Editor.....B. de Graaf, 5, Tai-north, Pennorth Brecon.
...R.O. & Tackle.....G. Clissold, The Meend, Staunton, Nr. Coleford, Glos.
Officer.

6. AROUND AND ABOUT.

Ogof Gwr.

One day last winter, Bill Birchenough, Bill Harris and myself had been for a walk in the snow. We had been to Pant Mawr, and from there to the top of Van Gihirych, and were making our way back when we discovered a small cave about one mile north of Penwyllt, Map. Reference 2286451810.

The cave consists of just one passage, which is rather reminiscent of the passage leading to "Dip Sump" in the Boulder Series, O.F.D. A small stream flows through the cave, flowing down dip (about 15°) and ending in a 15 ft. waterfall as it leaves the cave. There are not many formations, but the cave is decorated with a number of fine straws about 12 inches long. There is not much hope that the cave will "go", as there appears to be little except the main stream passage.

Eric Inson.

Y Gwal (The Burrow)

The area between the rivers Mellte and Neath has always been one of much interest, particularly to the little band of cavers from Glynneath, who have for many years searched the area without any success.

On August the 10th when walking about 200 yards north of 'Hole In The Wall Cave', I chased a rabbit into a small swallet where it disappeared. The southern end of the swallow hole revealed a fairly recent collapse and a small dark hole.

The following week-end, B. Kenny, T Davies, D, Coombes and I decided to try and enlarge the hole, but found that the hole, although easily disposing of the mud, was blocked by a small boulder . After about an hour's hard labouring the boulder hadn't moved, so we decided to dig the northern end of the collapse and after a few hours, much to our surprise a fairly large rifty hole appeared. We descended an awkward 10ft pitch and were amazed to find ourselves in a very large passage with good limestone walls and roof. Although ending after only about 70 ft. (the total length of cave is just over 100 ft.) the cave was far above our expectations. The height of passage in places measured as much as 20 ft. whilst the width of passage increased towards roof level and was about 15 ft. The roof seems to run fairly parallel to the surface, whilst the floor of the cave (mud filled) seems to fall away quite steeply and infact disappears into the muddy boulder slope that blocks any possible way on. Attempts to dig this boulder slope have so far failed. The cave contains some small formations in both calcite and mud. There are a few side passages which like the main passage run in a north-south direction and terminate in mud chokes.

For anyone interested in the Neath Valley the cave is well worth a visit. The possibilities of extension are good, but it means the inevitable 'dig'.

Arnold Jones.