

We welcome the following new members:-

J.M.Hartwel, 116, Maes-y-Dre, Glynneath, Glam.
J.C.Jones, Victoria House, High St., Glynneath, Glam.
J.C.Leyman, 36, Mary St., Neath, Glam.
Miss D.Medina, 7, Bryn-y-Mor Cres., Uplands, Swansea.

Change of address.

L.A.Hawes, Corner Cottage, Rounton Rd., Church Crookham,
Hants.
B.D.Price, 44, Alma Street, Brynmawr, Mon.

Boulder Chamber, Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

Since 1946, when Ogof Ffynnon Ddu was first entered, the main problem has been the boulder choke at the top end of Upper Flood Passage. It is of no mean proportions, and it is the result of a collapse of the roof, leaving a huge chamber overhead in the R.A.W.L. Series known as Starlight Chamber. The cause is apparently that the East Passage once crossed the stream at this point with a fairly thin layer of rock left between. The presence of a large shale band in the R.A.W.L. caused a major collapse, and part of the debris crashed through the roof of Upper Flood Passage.

Although the stream has since found a lower level under the floor for more than a hundred yards downstream, it should not be attributed to the passage being blocked. The same thing is happening below the traverse and to some extent between the second and first pots.

There have been several attempts to get through the choke and the first was made by John Davies and Don Coase in 1948. Running parallel with the stream is a small passage in the left hand wall. It bypasses the boulders for a hundred feet or more and ends in a muddy sump. This sump was broken by syphoning off the water, but it was found that the passage turned right just beyond and went back into the boulder choke. Operations were suspended, the main obstacle being the quantities of mud still left in the pool.

The next attempt was made in 1951. At the foot of the boulders on the right hand side is a fissure in the floor along side the wall. It is through this fissure that the stream can be heard some distance below. During Whitsun of that year an attempt was made by Peter Harvey, Peggy Hardwidge, D.W.Jenkins and Sybil Bowen-Lyke. The floor of the chamber was attacked but this was given up when Peter Harvey discovered a hole in the wall which gave access to a small passage. Efforts were made to enlarge it but only Peggy could get in. The tube sloped down steeply to a small sandy chamber.

In June of 1952 a week was spent in Boulder Chamber by Peter

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Hervey, Peggy Hardwidge, Gwyn Sanders and myself. The sump in the side passage was permanently broken by breaking up the rock in the floor and the stream can now be faintly heard up the rock on the other side. No effort was made to get through, and it was given up in favour of the dig in the floor of the chamber. The rock is well jointed and with the aid of wedges and explosives a depth of four feet was reached. At this point a tube running down dip in the wall was discovered. It was about eighteen inches across and Peggy being by far smallest was pushed in. There was a fissure in the bottom which helped to make progress rather slow. Ten or twelve feet down the passage was a pitch of about four feet, and from a very low bedding plane the stream issued. The passage proved to be too small to follow and by the quantity of water present it was judged to be only part of the stream. Richard Stanley and Les ~~Hawas~~ went down but with no more success. It would seem that at a very short distance downstream the passage is totally submerged as far as the rising.

Another problem connected with the Boulder Chamber is how and where does the flood water get through? On Sunday, November 3rd. Peter Cooke, a visiting Wessex member, Roger Smith and myself went upstream to the Railton-Wilde Series to do some photography. The water was about six inches over normal which made Stream Passage rather sporting. About an hour was spent taking pictures and then we returned to the stream to find the rising running much the same as before, but we noticed how much quieter it was. It was only after a bite to eat that we noticed that water was coming down Upper Flood Passage from the Boulder Chamber, so we hurriedly collected our gear and made for Low's Passage. The water there was already six inches deep but as this was an opportunity not to be missed we went on to Boulder Chamber, having a little difficulty in crossing the pot just beyond the Waterfall. The floor of the chamber was under four feet of water which was issuing from the base of the boulders. A few minutes were spent in taking a photograph and we made a hurried retreat to Low's Passage. Arriving back at the step via the high level route we found four feet of water coming down.

In February of this year we again had the chance to see the flood water rising only this time we watched it from the beginning. It was raining quite heavily outside and with stream six inches over normal again. John Truman and myself went straight up Stream Passage to Boulder Chamber, hoping for a high flood. We were not to be disappointed. As has already been pointed out there are several points where the stream can be heard along the southern wall, the main one being in the floor near the boulder fall. This, however, was quiet, the passage below being already full. The other places are fissures between there and the top end of the Waterfall Traverse, but the usual drain like noise was replaced by curious bell-like noises which gave way to rumblings and bangings gradually dying down to nothing leaving just the noise of the waterfall and the distant rising downstream. This rather ominous silence found us wandering up and down the wall wondering just where the flood would

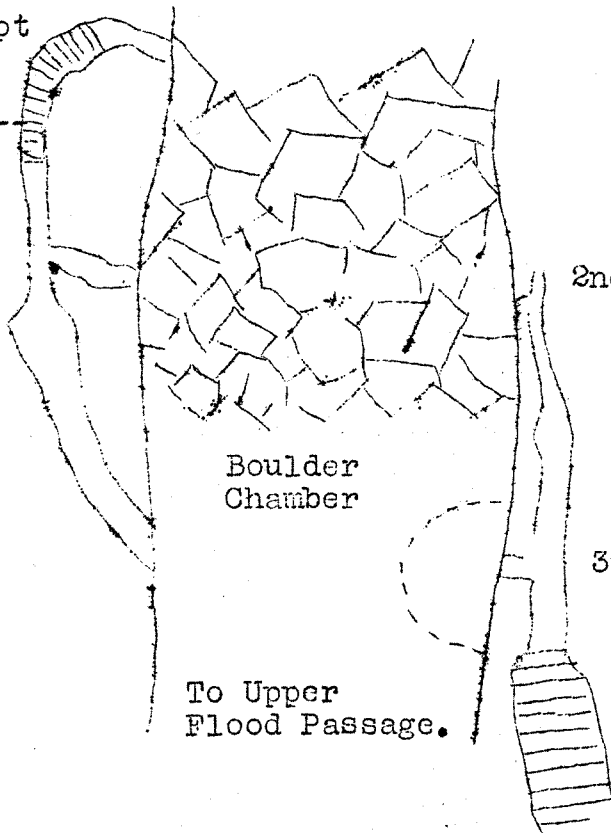
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break through. But no, it just crept up on us, just the smallest trickle of water at the furthest fissure downstream, gradually creeping across the chamber. Then another fissure started leaking, and the depression in the floor started to fill up. The silence was broken by the water pouring into the topmost pool and so into Upper Flood Passage. The dig of June last year filled up very slowly, with no visible current which shows that the passage under the floor takes but a fraction of the total flow. The noise increased to a roar and soon that water started to come straight through the boulders. As the water was approaching waist deep another picture was hurriedly taken and we made our way to the safety of Low's Passage.

It appears that Upper Flood Passage begins to take water at between twelve and eighteen inches over normal as measured at the 'Step'. Altogether we spent three quarters of an hour in Boulder Chamber, this time being not the least exciting of many hours we have spent in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

1st Attempt
1948.

Sump-----



2nd. Attempt. 1951

3rd. Attempt. 1952

To Upper
Flood Passage.

To Rising.

Dai Hunt.

June 1953.

The First Ascent of Bat Aven in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

"Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The live-long day, with patient expectation."

(Julius Caesar. Act. 1. Sc. 1.)

During the summer Noel Willy and I decided to look at the aven in Whistle Passage in the Railton - Wild Series in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Choosing a good 100ft rope, a bag of pegs and girded with slings and karabiners, hammers, drill and Rawl bolts we set out to get up where a year ago I had failed.

1st. Pitch. 65ft. Running belay on right 30ft up but no stance. Chimneying up further to 'stal' wall offers only friction holds. The top of the pitch overhangs but it is blessed with a stalagmite hold of the "Thank God" variety. There is a good belay on three cemented blocks in a pool. A comfortable stance.

2nd. Pitch. 10ft. More chimneying. There is an indifferent stal belay on a limestone block. A good stance. Here there is a passage going south. There are some lovely little stalactites and we crawled under these expectantly.

3rd. Pitch. 18ft. Chimneying again after an awkward start. There is a good stance but no belay.

4th. Pitch. 15ft. As before but there is a good thread belay.

5th. Pitch. 20ft. Climb left and then traverse right above the stalagmite halfway up. Chimney up another 6ft. and climb into the passage going west. There is no belay in sight of the pitch but there is a good stance jammed across the passage with your feet on the wall. Alternatively there is a good thread belay 15ft. along the passage above the far side of a small pool. There is no apparent livestock in the pool. The passage carries on in a westerly direction and it is estimated to be along the strike. The floor is of dry mud on 'stal' and in places it is covered with 'stal'. There are a number of fine columns.

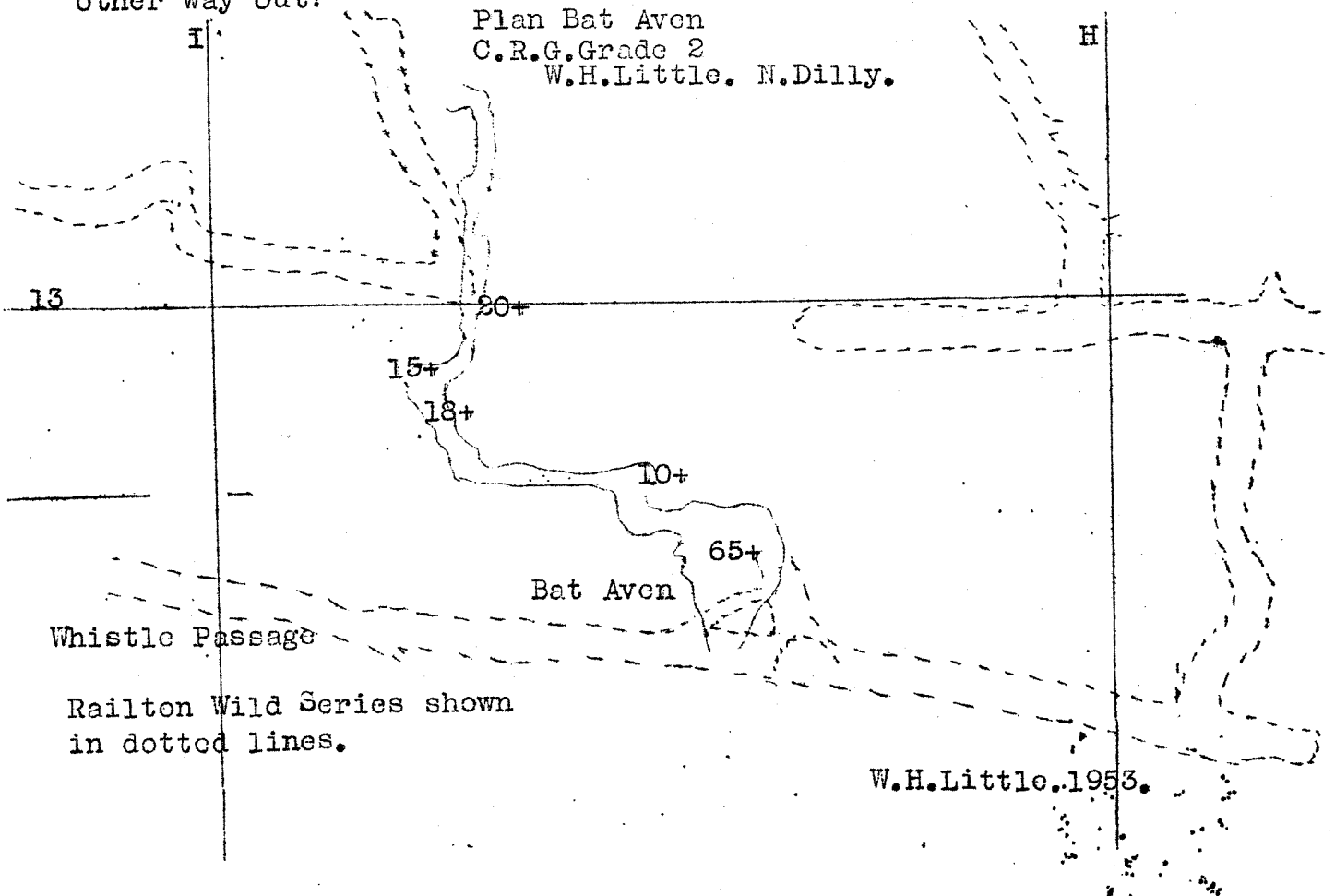
The mud and the glistening white columns halted us as further progress could only be made by digging. Our usual bag of pitons was not much help for this job but I was pleased that for once it had been a straight fight and a sporting climb. We climbed down all the pitches except the bottom. Here we fixed the rope around the three cemented boulders and abseiled down to Whistle Passage. Although the rest of the climb was strenuous and would have been difficult in daylight the first pitch is a 'Very Difficult' standard as an ascent and later I found it to be a severe pot when I climbed down after retrieving the

rope. A headlamp always seems so inadequate when trying to find a foothold underneath an overhang. It is a climb for nailed boots only as the upper pitches have some very slimy patches where rubber, rope, or 'Vibram' soles would be suicidal.

The dig in Bat Aven.

A week later we were joined by D.A.Coase and Dr.E.Aslett. Before we reached the top you can imagine the tangle that two ropes and four 'bods' were in when trying to sort themselves out at the top of the first pitch. We could not spread out so we spread up and reached the top as a well-disciplined party. The decorative obstructions yielded to the crowbar and digging commenced in the almost dry mud which is of similar texture to that around Pillar Chamber in the R.A.W.L. Series, to which height we had climbed. The draught was nil and the air became foul but we pressed on and dug our way for 10ft. Hopes faded with the space for the passage ahead was entirely filled.

Well that is Bat Aven. Did you say what BAT aven? In the top passage was a little skeleton which Aslett identified as that of a bat. We had no suitable container to bring it out with us without damaging the bones so Bat Aven will have to be climbed again to retrieve this earlier explorer. In the meantime we ponder as to where the bat was going. Was it to the R.A.W.L. or to some other way out?



Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we record the death on July 31st. of Mr. M. Downey late of Rhongyr Isaf Farm, Penycae.

His name will always be linked with Ogof Ffynnon Ddu for it was Mr. Downey who supplied the vital information which led to the discovery of the cave. Cavers will remember his generosity in allowing them to use his outbuildings as changing rooms and at all times he was ready to help in any way he could.

Mr. Downey was an honorary member of the South Wales Caving Club from its earliest days.

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Rules of entry.

Will leaders and members please note the following amendments to the existing rules.

Rule 5.a. The Escape Route must be only used in case of emergency.

This rule is withdrawn.

Rule 5.b. The Upper Toast Rack Series will be closed to all parties.

This is amended to read - Attic Passage will be closed to all parties.

Vandalism.

It is reported that the walls in Pwll Swnd have been marked with arrows and in other ways defaced. It is up to all members to see that our caves are protected from such vandalism and to set a good example to those who come after us.

List of members.

Included with this newsletter is a list of members. It will greatly assist the editor if members will notify any correction or change of address at once.

New Publications.

"Caves of Adventure" by Haroun Tazieff. Published by Hamish Hamilton at 12/6d.

The author gives us a vivid account of the explorations of

the Caverns of Pierre Saint-Martin. Members will remember the tragic results of this expedition when Marcel Loubens fell to his death. In this book all the circumstances which led to this accident are given. The descriptions of the caverns are all too short and it is hoped that in view of recent explorations we may have a more detailed account in the not too distant future.

"Britain Underground." N.Thornber, J.O.Myers, Stride Brothers.
Published by Dalesman Publishing Co., & Blandford Press at 7/6d.

The publisher's description of the book on the dust cover says, "This new edition is an annotated alphabetical guide to all the caves of England..." It is hoped that Welsh and Scottish cavers and clubs will not take exception to this deplorable piece of bad taste.

The book is divided into regions of which the section on South Wales written by the Stride brothers mainly concerns us. Some sixty caves are listed and this includes nearly all the larger caves in the area. Since, however, the authors have listed some of the smaller caves e.g. Careg-yr-Ogof and Deborah's Hole it is a pity they did not complete the job for there over one hundred and fifty caves in South Wales. The short descriptions of the caves are generally fairly accurate. This is not the case in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu where names are given which are not used; the distance given is 7,000ft which is hopelessly inaccurate as the distance is now $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

In the beginning of the book a list of clubs is given and use is made of this list in providing historical data in the Northern and Scottish sections of the book. No such data is given in the Welsh section although this is readily available in records and in the various volumes of the "British Caver."

In spite of the adverse criticism of the South Wales section the book is a 'must' for anyone visiting the northern caving areas. The book, which, fits easily into the pocket, contains a wealth of information and an excellent map section.

D.W.Jenkins.

Pant Canol.

On August 2nd. John Truman broke through into Pant Canol from the Upper Toast Rack in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. The question is, has 500ft been added to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu or has 3.6 miles been added to Pant Canol???? A full description of this operation will be given in the next circular together with a plan.

Circulars.

This is your circular so if you have anything for the editor please send it along.

South Wales Caving Club.List of Members 1953 - 1954.

PRESIDENT. F.J.North. O.B.E., D.Sc., F.G.S., F.S.A.
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

VICE-PRESIDENTS. E.A.Glennie, C.I.E., D.S.O.
Seaton House, Shrublands Rd., Berkhamstead, Herts.

A.H.Hill.
West Winds. Hunts Bay, Pennard, Swansea.

Honary Members.

J.L.Morgan. Tynawr, Abercrave, Swansea Valley.
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C.Powell. Rhongyr-Uchaf Farm, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
David Price. The Gwyn Arms, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
Mrs. David Price. The Gwyn Arms, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
John Barrows. Y Grithig, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
Mrs. John Barrows. Y Grithig, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
A.J.R.Hudson. Dr., Mackworth Villa, St.Thomas, Swansea.

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C'arke. W.E. 23, Beechwood Rd., Uplands, Swansea.
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Coase Mrs.D.A. Batsford, Lower Leland, Bristol.8.
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Davies.Mrs.J.E. 4, Erw Wen, Rhwbina, Nr.Cardiff.
Davies.J.M. 32, Heol-y-Deri, Rhwbina, Nr.Cardiff.
Davies.Mrs.J.M. 32, Heol-y-Deri, Rhwbina, Nr.Cardiff.
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Devenish. C.L. Chapel Cottage, Priddy, Nr.Wells. Soms.
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 Hill. Mrs. C. 597, Chepstow Rd., Newport, Mon.
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 Hunt. D. 19, Spring St., Cadocston, Barry, Glam.

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 Jenkins. Mrs. D. W. Dinmore, Dyffryn Rd., Llandrindod Wells, Rads.
 Jones. J. C. Victoria House, High Street, Glynneath, Glam.

Kerr. H. J. 46, Barlow Rd., Levenshulme, Manchester 19.
 Kirk. A. 28, Bradley Green Rd., Hyde, Cheshire.

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 Leyman. J. C. 36, Mary Street, Neath, Glam.
 Little. W. H. 20, Cae Mawr Rd., Rhwbina, Nr. Cardiff.

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 Mason. Mrs. E. J. Ditto. Bristol.
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 Moomie. Dr. J. F. W. Department of Chemistry, The University, Bristol.
 Mills. W. B. Hathaway, Victoria Rd., Llandrindod Wells, Rads.
 Moore. D. C. Sudbury, Cwmdwr, Clydach, Swansea.
 Myers. J. O. 11, Thorn Lane, Haworth Rd., Bradford. 9.

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 Pearce. Dr. R. A. J. Lindisfarne, 11, Stalford St., Trowbridge, Wilts.,
 Price. A. The Gwyn Arms, Penycac, Swansea Valley.
 Price. Dr. A. C. Brockley Grove, Crofton Park, London. S. E. 4.
 Price. W. Ashford. Ynyswen, Penycac, Swansea Valley.
 Price. B. D. 44, Alma Street, Brynmawr, Mon.,

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 Scymour. D. 118, Pantbach Rd., Whitchurch, Nr. Cardiff.
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 Taylor. Miss. E. Ballaclague, Ael-y-Bryn Rd., Cockett, Swansea.
 Taylor. Miss. M. Ballaclague, Ael-y-Bryn Rd., Cockett, Swansea.
 Thomas. G. 5, Farmville Rd., Splott, Cardiff.
 Thompson. D. Aylmer House, 4, St. Joseph Rd., Weston-super-Marc.
 Tratman. Prof. E. K. Penrose Cottage, Burrington, Nr. Bristol.
 Truman. J. 5, Neath Rd., Crynnant, Neath.
 Turner. D. 76, Nelson St., Patricroft, Eccles, Manchester.

Wild.T.H.L. 83, Furzedown Rd., Belmont, Surrey.
Willis.D.A. 18, Church Rd., Hanham, Bristol.
Wood.R.G. 2, Penylan, Terrace, Roath, Cardiff.
Worthington.K.W.L. 41, Greenwood House, Longsight, Manchester.
Wring.A. 76, Kensington Park Rd., Bridlington. Bristol.4.

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Hon. Treasurer. Miss.P.Hardwidge, 15, Heol Wernlas, Whitchurch, Cardiff.
Hon. Editor. D.W.Jenkins. Dinmore, Dyffryn Rd., Llandrindod Wells,
Rads.

Since this list was typed the following address has come in:-

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