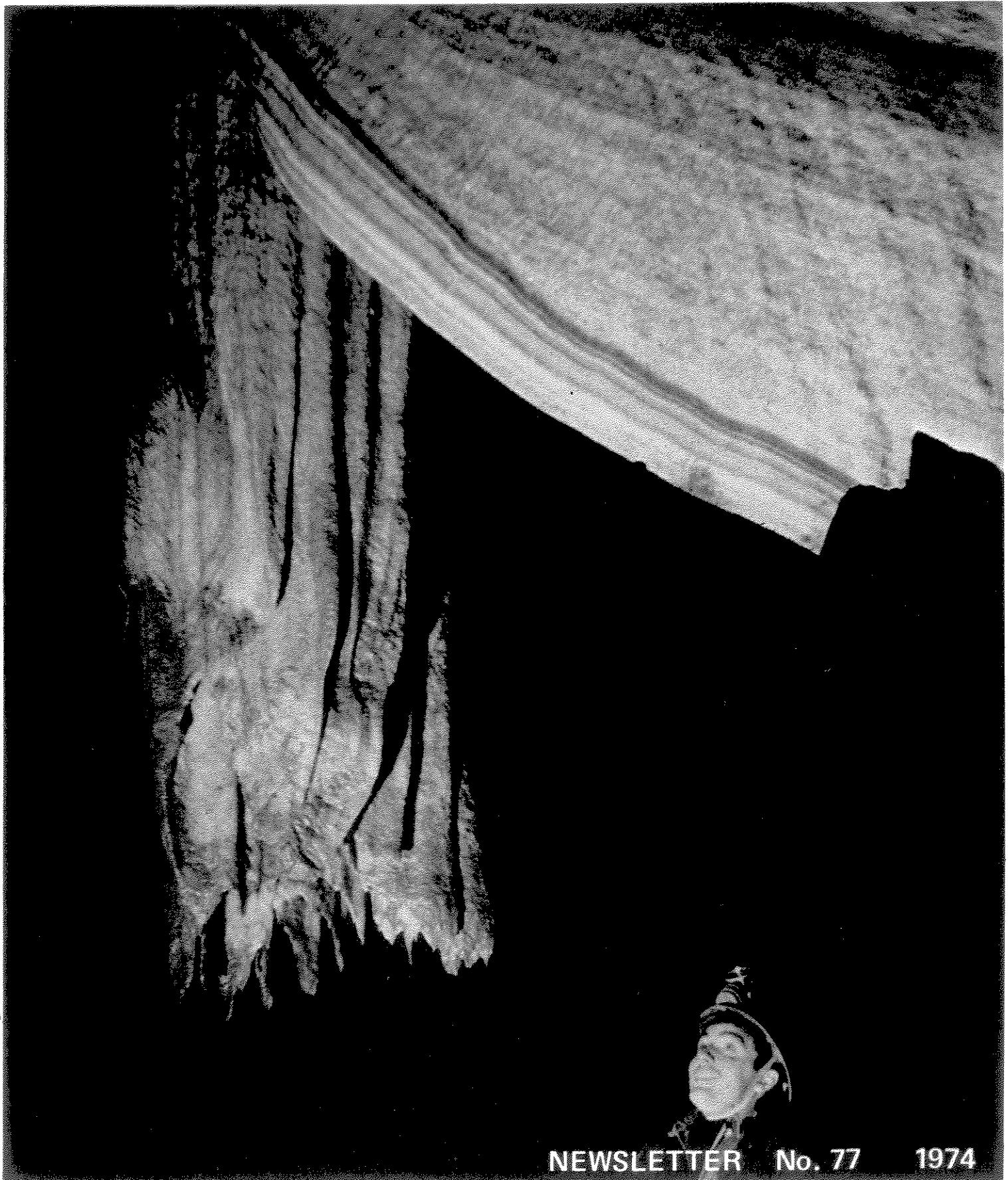


# **SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB**



**NEWSLETTER No. 77 1974**

S O U T H   W A L E S   C A V I N G   C L U B  
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NO. 77

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1974

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Cover Photograph - Great Curtain, Llethryd Swallet Cave, Gower,  
by J. Rowlands.

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Liz and Gary Jones - leaving the parish church, Streetly, Bedfordshire. Their honeymoon was spent climbing in Austria

THEY SAID !!!!!

## The Needless Exploitation Of Caves!

In past Newsletters several very interesting, although sometimes contradictory points have arisen on cave conservation. Whilst these points were good, they put forward no definite solutions or concrete ideas to reduce the problem.

I feel there is far too much needless exploitation occurring in our caves today. For example, we are reaching a situation where a young person's education is not considered complete unless he has been caving. I obviously have no objections to anyone going caving, regardless of age, colour or sex, provided that they get up off their goddamn ----- and do it themselves. One of the problems which now exists is that certain types of persons are going around schools, education authorities, youth associations etc. and are actively persuading young people to go caving. I fear that in certain circumstances a young person may choose to go caving purely because it appears to be the lesser of two evils.

It may be argued that caving is good for young people and helps to induce all sorts of wonderful qualities, but is this really true?

If one looks around the world today we can see many aspects of man's folly and more are becoming apparent daily! One assumes that the caving fraternity as a whole is generally intelligent and therefore quite concerned about conservation and the consequences of pollution. Just mingling with cavers one quite often overhears conversations expressing concern over such issues as the pollution of land, sea and air, the shortage of raw materials, population explosion etc. etc. The cause of these problems always seems to be acute lack of foresight.

ARE WE SHOWING SUFFICIENT FORESIGHT IN OUR PRESENT ATTITUDE TO CAVE CONSERVATION?

The cave conservation methods employed today were probably adequate ten or fifteen years ago but I believe they are inadequate to combat the present rapid growth of needless exploitation of caves. Education authorities, exploiters and egotists are relatively powerless at present to demand access to caves, but what will be the situation in five or ten years time? I am assured that at present these various authorities etc. are only patronizing extremely damaged caves, i.e. Eglyws Faen, Forth-yr-Ogof etc. and furthermore are only making one or two visits! Once again, what will the situation be in a few years time? When caving becomes an accepted standard feature of education, parties will undoubtedly be encouraged to go more frequently and will presumably demand access to bigger and better caves.

The obvious situation will arise - "Well, kids, last week you saw an example of a polluted, extremely damaged cave, this week we will show you an unspoiled virgin cave!!!" If the kids did not like the spoiled cave and have a promise of paradise on the next trip, even the most apprehensive will be eager to get their

sticky fingers on nice white stalactites, which invariably results in the habitual plaintive yell "IT CAME OFF IN MY HAND, SIR".

At this point you may be saying rubbish, it will never get like that, but take a good look round and examine man's folly up to now. It is the story of evolution and of man's natural progression.

Think to yourself, have you ever done something and said afterwards "I'll never do that again" but after the memory has dimmed or with a little encouragement from friends of the being called chicken attitude from others or the possibility of being left out of things, you soon find yourself back in a situation that you might otherwise have chosen to avoid. This type of situation is a typical example of needless exploitation when applied to caving, in other words external pressures are forcing certain individuals to become cavers. Fortunately, this type of situation does not appear to be too bad at present, but the seeds are easily sown!

Unfortunately, we as cavers, or our club for that matter, do not own our caves, the land they are in or the entrances. With more and more certificates (of various kinds), money grabbers and egotists on the loose, who are qualified to cave and lead parties!!, teachers who are cavers, some of whom can obtain extra points/money for taking kids caving (such devotion to duty), at present only a few, but on the increase quite rapidly. How can we as cavers or as a club stop it or control it in the future? The main point being that while we have the keys to certain caves what legal rights do we have? In addition, could we withstand the might of the whole education system, all the way to Government level?

It is up to us now to actively dissuade teachers, education authorities etc. in fact we must campaign and fight to keep caving out of the clockwork curriculum of schools and youth associations etc.

I personally believe that all other outdoor activities should be encouraged. I also realise that young people living in concrete jungles need to have outdoor pursuits and I believe this to be extremely good, provided they keep to riding, canoeing, rambling etc. The important point being that they cannot do too much extra damage to the environments of these sports (apart from the obvious; litter etc.) because they have suffered from basic exploitation anyway. Whereas our environment THE CAVE is a very delicately balanced equilibrium which can be easily upset and unfortunately is being upset while still lacking academic research in many fields.

As cavers we must accept that everytime we enter a cave we upset the ecological balance and invariably our presence spells ruin for some unfortunate stalactite or curtain, or perhaps a unique mud formation will gain a size 10 boot? These accidents occur on virtually every caving trip, regardless of whether the party consists of experienced cavers or comparative novices. Provided these cavers are genuine in their interest, the damage has to be tolerated, but it must be borne in mind that no damage can be replaced, which stresses the importance of a trip being necessary for genuine personal or scientific reasons and not because it is the done thing.

When a child, or anyone else for that matter, feels the irrepressible urge or habitual troglodyte instinct to explore, study or wander into subterranean caverns in order to see the wonders and delights they contain, then surely with the bureaucracy that exists in the caving world today and advertising and a little initiative, it is impossible for the individual's desire to remain suppressed for very long.

If we all adhered to WARBOYLES LAW, there would be no problem of conservation.

WARBOYLES LAW STATES - Caves are inversely proportionate to the outside environment and retain their natural environmental equilibrium, provided that CAVERS, QUARRYMEN AND ALL OTHER SUCH ABUSERS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT - KEEP AWAY!!

M. WARE

---ooOoo---

MOVE TO GUARD ROMAN MINES

Environmental Correspondent  
(Western Mail, July 1 1974)

More protection will be given to the 2,000-year-old Roman goldmining complex at Dolaucothi in West Wales.

The area is attracting increasing interest from modern mining companies who believe deposits well worth exploiting still exist there.

But the Welsh branch of the Government's Ancient Monuments Department are now drawing up proposals to schedule as an ancient monument even more of the area mined by the Romans.

Although the move by the department is not designed to thwart the gold-mining interest, it will make it doubly difficult for any new mining operation to start.

The land occupied by the Roman mine is owned by the National Trust, who have already turned down a "generous offer" by Anglo-Canadian Exploration for permission to carry out prospecting operations.

In 1968 the old opencast workings and the old mine entrances were scheduled as an ancient monument.

The department's new proposals will extend the schedule to cover the aqueducts the Romans built to bring water to the mining complex, the Roman quartz crushing areas, the water tanks and troughs and the area where the Romans had their washing tables to separate the gold from the quartz.

Scheduling means that nothing can be done to disturb the area without three months notice of intention to the department.

It would then be up to experts from the department to decide whether any work would cause damage to parts of the mining complex considered of prime interest.

If a compromise could not be reached and conflict looked inevitable, the department could impose an interim or a permanent preservation order on the site.

It is understood that the department have decided to extend the area covered by the schedule - it will embrace virtually all of the Roman site and even areas beyond the National Trust boundary to take in the extensive aqueduct system - because the mining complex is now regarded as one of the most important Roman military-industrial installations in Europe.

Recent excavations have revealed a Roman cavalry fort, a granary and a battery of furnaces used presumably to cast the gold into ingots before shipping it to the imperial mints.

Meanwhile, the National Trust are adamant that no new mining operations will take place on their land.

"Our policy is a fairly simple one", said Mr. Hugh Griffiths, the trust's agent for West Wales. "We are in business to preserve places of national beauty."

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## Cavers Versus Conservation

Over the last decade the popularity of caving, as with other outdoor sports, has grown tremendously - 1950, less than 50 caving clubs; 1970, four hundred recognised clubs with an estimated caving population of 16,000 - 17,000 people. Obviously, pressure on cave systems has grown proportionately.

The hard core cavers and caving clubs, it is hoped, are already conservation minded and careful on their trips, and I shall therefore (imprudently?) omit them from the argument. It is the tourist cavers, the fringe cavers and caving clubs that worry me.

I have noticed a large increase in their numbers over the past four years - usually recognisable by poor equipment (except wet suits) and attitudes to caving. If the size of clubs indicates anything it is disquieting to know that of the recognised clubs, more than ten have less than ten members; 45 have twenty members and 45 have thirty members. Perhaps I am drawing wrong conclusions here, but study the rescue call outs for Ogeff Ffynnon Ddu II over the last few years. How many were serious rescues involving injury? How many were because parties were lost or their lamps had failed? How many major clubs were involved? How many small ones? How many experienced student clubs?

Caving seems to be about ten years behind climbing in popularity, which is again disquieting. Go to Snowdonia; you can see the footpaths on Snowden from ten miles away (on a clear day, of course). But look at the people who use them. Would you class them all, or even the majority, as climbers or serious walkers? I feel that many people now climb merely as an image/ego boosting exercise.

Some caving clubs now consider a trip to the Columns as a standard novice trip and take them en masse there. Are they doing so to foster caving or to build up prestige for their club and themselves, or again as a way to fill up a mini bus and make caving cheaper for themselves? One misguided club, to boost the image of their club, locally, took reporters to the Columns and then on a through trip - almost resulting in a rescue. The list is endless and growing.

50% of nationally important caves in Wales have suffered physical damage by cavers; 85% of regionally important caves have done so. 20% of nationally important caves have suffered from graffiti; 20% of regionally important caves! Most damage is done shortly after a new entrance is opened!



How do we stop this taking place? I think the only way is to actively discourage the fringe element, clubs as well as individuals. We could do this by limiting party numbers and the number of novices per party. Six and one seem quite suitable numbers to me. I feel the Duty Officer must take a more active part in assessing a party's ability and equipment, to see if they are capable of what they intend doing and be prepared to refuse entry to parties who are not up to standard.

The club used to have the reputation of being unfriendly to visitors; perhaps the time has come for it to be unfriendly again to certain sections of the caving fraternity. If it would help protect the local caves, I'm all for it. How can we hope to fight Hobbs when we cannot keep our own caves in order.

Even operating a leader system does not seem to protect a cave. Two bags of carbide have already been removed from Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I and there is plenty more waiting to be brought out.

Are club leaders allowing this, or guest leaders? Whoever it is, it seems to indicate that people are made leaders too easily. Perhaps they should not only know the escape route but a few rules on conservation as well. They certainly need to be scrutinized more carefully if the caves are to be protected.

The actual mechanics of all these suggestions are, of course, difficult to implement, but if we are really conservation conscious, we must find a way of affording our caves greater protection against ourselves.

P. FRANCIS

N.B. All statistics quoted are taken from the National Caving Association publication "Caves and Conservation", available to all members in club records.

---ooOoo---

(Reprinted from "Nature")

RADIOCARBON DATING FROM OGOF-YR-YCHEN, A NEW

PLEISTOCENE SITE IN WEST WALES

There has recently been renewed discussion concerning the extent of the Weichselian Irish Sea Glacier, and several authors have stressed the difficulty of determining its southern margin in Wales on the basis of geomorphological and stratigraphic criteria alone. Also, in South Wales there is no known reliable interglacial or interstadial palaeobotanical site which can be used for the dating of drift sequences. Archaeological investigations in favourable localities may assist greatly in this debate as well as extending knowledge of Pleistocene faunas and of human Palaeolithic occupation on the South Wales lowlands. Already it is suggested that substantial parts of Pembrokeshire and the Gower Peninsula were unaffected by ice during the last glaciation, allowing the possibility of more or less continuous human Palaeolithic occupation of some coastal sites. The radiocarbon age determination for the "Red Lady" of Paviland (18,460  $\pm$  340 yr BP. BM374) supports this view, indicating that there was a Proto-Solutrean occupation of cave sites in Gower close to the peak of the last glaciation. This was followed by a Creswellian occupation, probably after 15,000 yr BP. In Pembrokeshire the most promising Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic finds have been made during a series of excavations on Caldey Island since 1911.

Until 1969 these excavations had concentrated on seven caves or rock shelters and two open sites; but since 1970 detailed investigations by two of us (Br James and M.D.) in conjunction with other workers on Caldey Island and on the limestone coasts of the Castlemartin Peninsula have revealed several potentially important Upper Palaeolithic cave sites. Of these, the most intensively studied so far is Ogof-yr-Ychen (British grid ref. SS147968), an almost completely sealed cave on a vertical Carboniferous Limestone cliff at Jones' Bay on the north-east coast of Caldey Island. Here we summarize the preliminary findings from one of the main chambers in the cave and report the first radiocarbon age determination for its Pleistocene mammalian fauna.

Ogof-yr-Ychen consists of six chambers in a complex short system extending from 27 m OD to about 7 m OD. Before excavation these chambers were all partially filled with cave sediments. The mouth of a deep pit was revealed on a ledge outside the entrance of what has become known as chamber 4. The stratigraphy of both the chamber and pit is shown in Fig. 1. The pit has a roughly

rectangular mouth measuring 1.8 m by 90 cm, and near-vertical sides. It has now been excavated to a depth of 6.4 m, excluding the 2.1 m of strata above its mouth; further excavation is difficult because of lack of space.

The yellow silty layer, with clay and rockfall fragments, occupies the full excavated depth of the pit. It has no traces of stratification, and throughout it consists largely of angular limestone rubble and broken pieces of stalagmite and stalactite in a finer matrix. Between 3 and 3.6 m below the mouth of the pit were found a rhinoceros scapula, an adinole scraper of Creswellian type, two hyena molars and one flake of adinole and another of chert. For approximately 2.4 m above this group of finds there are scattered fragments (thirty-five finds) of red deer antler in an apparently identical matrix. Nearer the top of the deposit hyena and rhinoceros teeth occur in association with a large flint flake, and above this the layer gradually merges into the overlying red clay layer which contains a smaller proportion of angular limestone fragments.

Above this the bone layer (which is not so well represented elsewhere in Ogof-yr-Ychen) yielded a series of Mesolithic microliths of patinated flint, in addition to many of the bones identified in the faunal list in the following communication. The Romano-British midden was identified by its content of several types of potsherds similar to those found at nearby Nanna's Cave, and capping the whole sequence of deposits was a yellow blown sand and then modern quarry debris.

The simplest interpretation of this sequence of deposits, together with its content of faunal remains and artefacts, is as follows. The lowest yellow layer is in part a cold-climate rockfall deposit dating from the Weichselian stage. It is succeeded by a late-glacial or early postglacial colluvial horizon and a postglacial bone layer which gives way to the Romano-British midden and then the modern blown sand. This sequence can be correlated with the succession of Late Pleistocene deposits elsewhere on Caldey Island and on various clifftop sites of the south Pembrokeshire coast.

In order to test this interpretation of events the scapula of Coelodonta antiquitatis from the pit (Fig 1) was submitted to the Birmingham University Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory for radiocarbon dating. The age determination on the collagen fraction only, was reported as  $22,350 \pm 620$  yr BP (Birm 340). This was unexpectedly old, but confirms that the yellow silty layer is of Weichselian age and that Late Pleistocene mammals were present on the South Wales coast during the waxing phase of the last glaciation. It is not known how much time elapsed between the death of the animal and the deposition of the bone in the pit. The adinole artefact only 30 cm above the bone apparently indicates the presence of a still later Creswellian human culture at Ogof-yr-Ychen; it is unlikely to be separated from the deposition of the rhinoceros scapula by a wide interval of time, and it may demonstrate the arrival of the Creswellian culture in South Wales at a time of extreme periglacial conditions well before 10,000 yr BP.

Apart from the age determinations for the Ogof-yr-Ychen rhinoceros and the "Red Lady" of Faviland, there is one other reported radiocarbon date from a Welsh

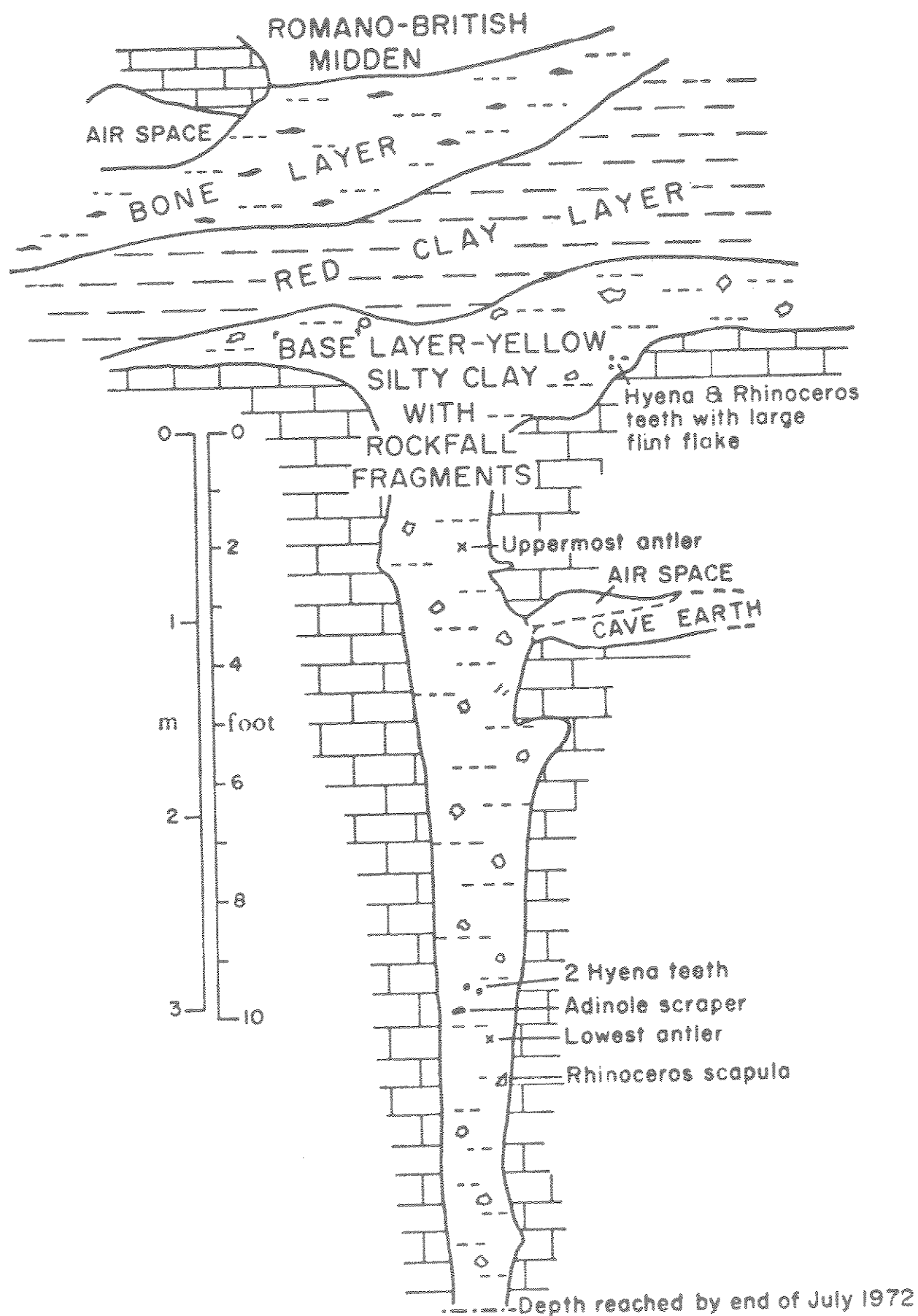


Fig. 1 Ogof-yr-Ychen, Caldey Island. Section of chamber 4 entrance and pit.

cave. This is a date of  $18,000 \pm 1,400/1,200$  yr BP (Birm 146) obtained by Rowlands for a mammoth carpal from Ffynnon Beuno, Flintshire. Although this cave is a Fréte-Zolutrean site the archaeological importance of the radiocarbon date is limited since the precise situation of the bone is not known; it came from a collection held locally since 1885. The cave is, however, sealed by glacial and fluvioglacial deposits laid down by the last Irish Sea glacier. If the date is reliable it demonstrates that the Irish Sea glacier did not reach the North Wales coast until after 18,000 yr BP. It follows that it must have been even later in reaching South Wales and the weight of evidence now suggests that it may not have crossed the South Pembrokeshire coast at all.

There are clearly many problems associated with the work at Ogof-yr-Ychen. Some of these may be resolved by the analysis and radiocarbon dating of human remains found in chamber 3, which promises to yield even more exciting results than those from chamber 4 reported here. Chamber 3 contains a wolf skull in a stratigraphic position, closely similar to that of the rhinoceros scapula in chamber 4, but of greater importance are the remains of three individual humans (including skull fragments) from another "bone layer". These human remains are being analysed at the University of London Institute of Archaeology, and further work is being carried out at Durham University on the pollen content and sedimentological characteristics of the strata. The data from chamber 3 may form the subject of another brief report on the completion of further radiocarbon age determinations. The archaeological evidence from Ogof-yr-Ychen will be analysed in detail by Professor W. F. Grimes.

M. DAVIES (ER JAMES VAN NEDERVELDE)  
(B. S. JOHN)

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## FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION IN THE

### PEMBROKESHIRE COAST CAVES

Since the last report was published in February 1973 (N/L 72), work has continued in the caves near Castlemartin and on Caldey Island. The following is a summary dealing with each site in turn.

OGOF GARREG HIR. Excavation for a distance of 1.50 m up to a stalagmite obstruction took place in December 1972. In addition to sheep or goat, bones of pig were found and a fine flint blade, 86 mm long and 14 mm wide. A bone awl, polished by use and 10 cm long, was recovered from the bone layer. There are parallels from the Aurignacian in France, but none in Wales. On 16th April 1974 the stalagmite was blasted out and digging can now continue. A small chamber which has not yet been entered lies beyond the stalagmite and the bone layer appears to run into it.

OGOF MORFAN. As reported in N/L 63 of May 1969 this cave contained Samian ware, a fine red pottery made in the second century A.D. Excavation took place in that year, but winter storms caused the walls of the trench to collapse. Unbelievably waves had reached the cave and washed around our timbers from the trench. The entrance is about 40 ft. above high water mark. Finds included 2 Roman coins, part of a 'fibula' brooch, and shards of a black, burnished cooking-pot, all from the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. There were also a few sherds of a coarse, Late Bronze Age vessel. The trench had not been completed so this year I returned to the cave with Peter Wilkins of Cardiff, and photographs of the trench. Using these we were able to re-open the trench in the former position, and complete the excavation down to the sterile clay. Many large animal bones were found including ox, red deer and pig, all the remains of meals, although whether left by inhabitants or by occasional visitors involved in some sort of ritual, is in doubt. Of equal interest were further pottery fragments dating to either Late Bronze Age or possibly early Neolithic. Further cleaning up and comparison with sherds from burial chambers is expected to clear up this problem. One of our sherds is 11 cm long and carried a series of holes around a thickened rim. The trench is completed, but only 8% of the area of the cave floor has been excavated. Thus there is plenty left for the archaeologists of the next generation, and we have been careful not to disturb the undug surface. Several hundredweights of timber were hauled up from a beach nearby with a Landrover and the trench timbered for its 15 ft length. It was then covered over and large blocks placed on top.

OGOF-YR-YCHEN. This dig, last reported in June 1971 (N/L 69) has now been completed. A radiocarbon dating on rhinoceros bone was published in "Nature" with a summary in this N/L. It has been the most comprehensive cave dig carried out in Wales since the antiquarians of the last century employed a dozen labourers on the job. About 14 ft of bone-bearing, clayey rubble was found to rest on sterile red clay. Strangely enough under about 3 ft of this clay there was a gap sealed by a slab. When this was lifted an inclined passage led downwards to a well-decorated chamber. There were 4 ft straws and 2 ft stalactites. The way on was blocked by stalagmited boulders, the blasting of which would destroy the formations. The chamber contained no bones or cave 'earth'.

POTTER'S CAVE, CALDEY ISLAND. Early excavations here were described by Grimes (Arch. Camb. 1955 and 1961) but work has now been resumed as it was realised that parts of the cave remained undug. I have blasted off quick-growing stalagmite and parts of the walls, and human bones have been found underneath a stalagmite floor. Occupation debris extends well outside the cave for a distance of 90 ft down the slope. A most remarkable find was made by the chief excavator, Brother James, one of the members of the Cistercian community in the Abbey, only on 31st March last. This was a necklace of 49 blue beads, dateable to the Roman period or a little earlier. Fragments of at least 2 beakers dating to the Early Bronze Age times, and possibly Neolithic pottery as well have been found. At deeper levels there were teeth of hyena. On 19th April Professor Grimes, now retired from his post as Director of the Institute of Archaeology, returned to examine his old haunts. He was immediately able to identify new finds of pottery and flint, and place them in the context of the occupation sequences in the cave.

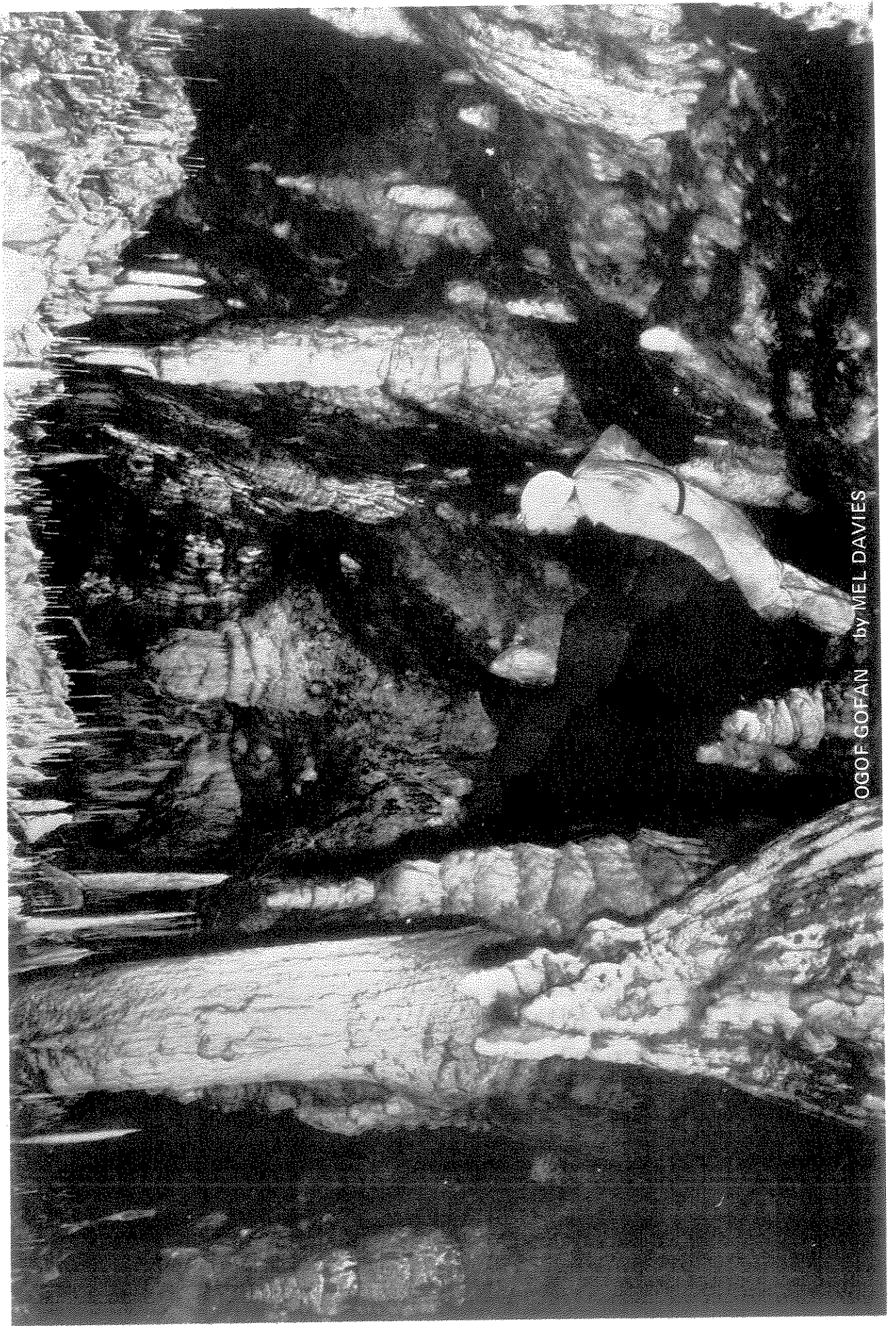
STALACTITE CAVE, CALDEY ISLAND. This well-known cave, explored by W. Boyd Dawkins, failed to yield any archaeological remains when a trial trench was put through the entrance deposits.

EEL POINT FISSURE, CALDEY ISLAND. The old records show that this cave once yielded a great variety of animal bones. Part of the fissure still remains and it has been dug and blasted to widen it. No deposits of any kind, except for thin stalagmite on the walls, was found. Obviously the quarrying of the last century has removed all archaeological material.

OGOF GOFAN. There has been no excavation in this cave near Bosherton since my last report in November 1968 (N/L 62). Neolithic 'B' pottery dated to about 2,000 yrs B.C. was then described, and the cave has great potential. Visits are made periodically to check that the large stalagmites in the inner chamber are undamaged. This chamber is still the best decorated chamber in Wales (see photograph). Access to the Castlemartin caves is still controlled by the Army who consult with the County Curator before issuing permits to visit.

MELVYN DAVIES





OGOF GOFAN by MEL DAVIES



## Roger Andrew Solari

On 15th June, Roger Solari disappeared whilst diving in the Terminal Sump, Agen Allwedd.

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### OBITUARY

Roger Solari was undoubtedly one of Britain's most talented cavers and was well known in Yorkshire, Mendip, South Wales and Ireland. His dedication was wholehearted, exhibiting a rugged tenacity with a determination that was rarely equalled.

By nature an introvert, he was yet popular and commanded respect in every quarter. Above all he was a free thinking individual, accepting realities, but always quick to shed new light on a situation and construct anew. No task was too humble, no job too hard and no matter how demanding, he applied his whole self until fruition. There was no vestige of arrogance in his character, but an irrefutable and genuine modesty.

There are few truly adventurous spirits, yet Roger was one. The lure of the cave began when he was about twelve; in his homeground, the Forest of Dean. Over the years he was to become intimately acquainted with its structural secrets and geology, leading to his search for the hypothetical 'Forest Mastersystem'. In this quest he was unrelenting and his ultimate ambition was to produce a book on the caves and mines of the area. Had he lived, there is no doubt that this would have become a widely acknowledged work, incorporating many high grade surveys of the various networks.

After school, he entered Birmingham University, gaining a good honours degree in physics. Here he became president of the Speleological Society and initiated the Cave Projects Group. In his management of these and in his association with the 'Forest' rescue organisation he was always extremely conscientious.

Birmingham was the ideal nodal point for the limestone areas and it was here that his interest was actively aroused in Ireland. Midweek trips were often destined for South Wales and several places such as Shakespeare's Cave (Clydach Gorge) were appreciably extended. In Yorkshire too, his interest was keen and

several digs were started that were to yield, following truly incredible efforts, years later, e.g. Dead Dobbin on Leck Fell.

I first met Roger while in my first year at Swansea. We had both just commenced diving; both under the auspices of our respective friends and outside the sphere of the Cave Diving Group. However, our activities were increasingly channelled in this direction and it was not long before we joined the Welsh Section of the group. The ingredients of a partnership were plain. From that point on our combined efforts led to mutual understanding, respect and more important, a bettering of standards beneficial to us both.

No friend was ever so reliable and each felt his life secure in the hands of the other. Several times he sat around for hours on end, often enduring extremely uncomfortable conditions, while I was away exploring. Together, many notable extensions were found, often necessitating a survey. Here Roger was clearly the motivating force and for this he will best be remembered. Apart from his 'Forest' surveys, others included Mazeways II in Dan-yr-Ogof; parts of Ogof Fach and Agen Allwedd, and countless works of the caves of Northern Ireland.

Though diving was tragically to claim his life, I feel he died as he would have wished to have died, living life to the full. In twenty-four years he achieved what many strive for and fail to attain in a lifetime. I feel proud to have been with him at the last; a better friend I could not desire.

MARTYN J. FARR

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MR. AND MRS SOLARI SENT THE FOLLOWING LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO THE CAMBRIAN

CAVING COUNCIL

Dear Cavers,

There are no words adequate to express our appreciation for the way so many rallied round to try to help our son Roger on June 15th. We know that every human endeavour was made and feel with you the deep disappointment that it was without success. We are well aware of the effort made and the exhaustive work done by so many who came from far and wide and we thank also all those who were standing by and willing to come when called. There were two hundred and fifty volunteers on the Sunday and to pick out a few names is not to under-rate

the others. It will be agreed by all however that John Parker must be mentioned. To make the dives he did, at a moment's notice and unprepared was an almost super-human achievement and he has earned the admiration of all and our own deep gratitude. To have been thwarted by the lack of visibility and to make a second attempt on the Thursday was tremendous. This time he made the fourth dive and swam in nil visibility in a desperate effort to find Roger. Colin Edmunds also must have a special mention and equally our gratitude for supporting John. To Bill Wilkes, Frank Baguley, the ladies in the kitchen, the boys who carried the gear, the cavers who set up the equipment underground, to all of you our sincere thanks. This support and the support at the Memorial Service has helped us bear what is of course almost unbearable. To all of you for the future, we wish happy and exciting caving, but please, oh please do be careful and not too venturesome. If any of you are ever at Wigpool, you will always be welcome.

Kathleen and Andy Solari

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## Club Notes

Congratulations to Neil and Edith Jones on their recent marriage.  
Also Gary Jones and Liz on theirs.

### New Members

Edith Jones, Cwm Farm, Blackbrook, Caerphilly, Glam.  
Charlie Brewster, Maesycrug, Penwyllt, Pen y Cae, Swansea.  
Mike Cowlshaw, Hilston, Cleveland Walk, Bath.  
David Mullin, 41 Blaker Street, Brighton.  
Haydn Rees, 3 Dynevor Road, Garnant, Swansea.

We welcome the return to the club of:

John Dryden, Little Copse, New Road, Yealmpton, Devon.

### Address Changes

John Gillett, 34 Church Lane, Gawsorth, Nr. Macclesfield, Cheshire.  
John Lister, The Anchorage, Hugus Road, Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall.  
Fred Midgley, Dept. of Photography, Swansea College of Art, Alexandra Road, Swansea.  
John C. Stevens, Longridge Barn, Wivelsfield Road, North Chailey, Lewes, Sussex.  
Trefor Woodford, 9 Albany Terrace, Dundee, DD3 6HQ.

### NEW CAVE IN BISHOPSTON VALLEY

A report has been received about the discovery of 400 feet of cave passage near Guzzle Hole, Bishopston Valley, Gower. It is reported to be 10 - 20 feet wide, 4 - 5 feet high. The passage branches into two, finishing with what appears to be a diveable sump in each branch.

---ooOoo---

### THE LIMESTONES AND CAVES OF NORTH-WEST ENGLAND

Compiled and edited by A. C. Waltham,  
assisted by M. M. Sweeting

Although this book is priced at £6.95, its 477 pages and 54 plates certainly provide good value for the speleologist seriously interested in the caves of NW England. Most of the plates are excellent and informative, but a few are of the 'caver's snap-shot' variety, e.g. one does not expect to see the figure - almost always essential for scale in cave photographs - grinning at the camera in a scene purporting to show roof pendants.

The various chapters are written by different authors or groups of authors, and naturally the General Editor, A. C. Waltham, takes a major part being involved in 6 of the chapters. Chapters 1 to 4 cover the general ground of the origin of caves, and this is done so well by Waltham and Dr. Sweeting between them that many of the conclusions are clearly applicable in other parts of Britain.

I am not qualified to deal with the chapters describing specific regions such as Alum Pot area, Morecambe Bay area, Ribblesdale, etc., since I do not know the regions concerned, but there were two specialist chapters in which I was particularly interested.

A review of work on Biospeleology in NW England is written by J. M. Dixon. This seems so comprehensive that any outsider coming to the area and wishing to start research in this particular subject would know exactly what has been done before after reading it. Mr. Dixon laments the lack of work carried out in this field, and his comments are unfortunately only too applicable to other regions of Britain. Original research on moths, microfauna, and spiders in a mine level in which an underground research station has been established since 1967 is summarized.

A review of archaeological work in the caves of NW England is written by A. King. Most of the excavations described date to the haphazard work of the last century, but Mr. King has been able to tie these together with more recent work. He comes up with the theory that the use of caves developed from habitations in the Old Stone Age to sepulchres in the Neolithic, and to ritual sites in the Romano-British period. I must admit that there is good evidence from some of my own excavations in South Wales to support this theory, and the time is now ripe for old finds to be re-evaluated with this theory in mind.

If the standard is as high as in this volume, I look forward to other volumes in the series "The Limestone and Caves of Britain", edited by Dr. T. D. Ford, and published by David and Charles of Newton Abbot for the British Cave Research Association.

Reviewed by  
MELVYN DAVIES

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Closing Date for the next Newsletter is October 26th.

## Caving News From North Wales

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### OGOF PANT-Y-WENNOL - A NEW CAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE NEAR LLANDUDNO

This cave, with an entrance 12 ft wide and 6 ft high, is so well hidden in the woods near Llandudno that no one knew of its existence until D. James and D. Jones stumbled across it last year. They told me about it but their descriptions of the rubbish tipped in the entrance put me off seeing it until 9th June this year.

The cave goes on as a low crawl for about 15 ft, and the continuation from there is a tunnel now almost filled with gravel or clay. This can be dug out, but an approach to it must be excavated first, and the trouble is the entrance chamber is archaeological!

The cottage owner had built a wall across the cave and then tipped his domestic rubbish over the wall. We have hauled out, among indescribable things, a car back-axle, a cast-iron stove, a tea-pot, a set of cake tins and, of course, some fine human bones. No, we don't think the owner was a cannibal. Our discovery happened like this:

On the first visit in crawling over the rubbish we could see bone scraps. Not all were food remains. We dug lightly into clay and found two bone fragments of considerable antiquity. A week later I went back with cameras to record the site, and decided to take down part of the wall to get a better view of the interior. I quickly found that the wall was constructed of blocks of local limestone, pieces of tufaceous stalagmite that could only have come from inside the cave, and "cave earth". The latter had been scraped up from the cave floor as a binding material and I was able to identify in it the following human bones:

Right mandible with three molars, skull fragment, Patella from a right knee, pelvis fragment, a metatarsus from a right foot, and three metacarpus bones from a right hand. Finally two phalangea from a foot.

Whoever he was he was quite old, his teeth had caries, and he was well distributed. Because of the disturbance to the deposit one cannot be certain about the age of the skeleton, but many of the bones were covered with patches of stalagmite, and one lump of tufaceous stal., when dissolved in hydrochloric acid, disgorged a rib and part of a human tibia. My guess is that the skeleton was partly embedded in the stal., and the owner dug it up without knowing what it was, and got it built into his wall. On the other hand, it might have been the landlord.

Only 160 cm of the 4 m wall has been dismantled so far, but it is planned to take down the rest in the near future in order to determine the archaeological potential of the cave. We can see about 20 square metres of undisturbed floor, but some of the deposits on this are very thin. In other places, stal. covers the floor and there are little columns joining floor to roof.

Bats use the cave as a roosting site in the summer - one Lesser Horseshoe has been seen. Remnants of a stony-clay in avens indicate that the cave was once filled with this material, possibly glacial drifts. It was later almost entirely washed out. It will be interesting to see how the bones fit into these events.

The various archaeological authorities have been informed of the discovery.

#### WALES'S DEEPEST NATURAL SHAFT BOTTOMED!

Our group of cavers from the Llandudno area are slowly crossing off the new caves I listed in N/L No. 17 of the North Wales Caving Club (May '74). The main site so far is the great pothole on the Little Orme. This was finally bottomed on 26th May by D. James, D. Jones, K. Griffiths, and guest P. Wilkins, up from Cardiff.

The pot is at SH/8164.8276 and may be reached as follows:

Locate the ruined brick tower on the northern extremity of the Little Orme. In front of it, facing the Isle of Man(!), are two gullies and the pot is in the vertical, western one, about half way down. Access is only feasible via the eastern gully. There is a short vertical stretch on this descent for which 25 ft of ladder can be used. Then traverse out of the gully using a lifeline for 40 ft into the other gully, arriving at the lip of the pot. There is just standing room for party and tackle at the edge; belay from pitons.

125 ft of ladder was lowered into the pot, free-hanging all the way after the initial 15 ft. Duncan James said there was a ledge at the bottom and there was room for three men. Being high tide, sea level was about 12 ft lower, so at low tide 150 ft of ladder is required to reach the shingle beach of the sea cave below. It was found impossible to reach anything in the great blackness on the inland side of the pitch and about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way down. The presence of glacial drift (overlain in places by stalgmite) on the far side of the mouth of the pot, suggests that this hole is pre-glacial, it got filled with drift sometime in the Weichselian, and the sea has now opened it up again from beneath. It may be possible to climb up by step-cutting in clay and using pitons, starting from the sea cave. Boat access is only possible at approximately  $\pm 1$  hour of low tide.

The pot mouth, although measuring 8 ft by 5 ft, is very hard to find and we were only successful because I had previously been into the sea cave in a rubber dinghy, and had photographed the cliffs on emerging for reference purposes. Another word of warning: I found when lifelining that communication with the man

on the ladder is very difficult because of the noise of the waves below and the echoes in the cavern which forms the south wall of the pot.

Exploration is not advised in June and July because of disturbance to sea-birds which are nesting on the famous Little Orme cliffs nearby. These cliffs are scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

For the record, I described a new pot I discovered in Pembrokeshire in 1966 (Newsletter No. 54, South Wales Caving Club) and claimed it as a Welsh record at 105 ft. Nobody disputed my claim, so this one at 150 ft must now be the deepest natural shaft in Wales.

MELVYN DAVIES

---ooOoo---

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT:-

## The Calcite Saga

Dawn rose in the small Smokeless Zone carved in the limestone hills by Sunday morning seconds blasting, years ago when even Llanelli school teachers were young. Birds twittered in the doctored blossom trees, but the community slumbered heavily on in old musty damp unopened rooms, while large ornamental Wardens in very smart dinner jackets and bow ties kept guard. It was the strange superstition of some that the entirely fibreglass and peaceful Wardens were given to throwing large knives at the sleeping inhabitants, or even chewing their legs and feet when the moon was full, but the Wardens weren't.

As the day broke a hovercraft arrived powered entirely by the wrath of gamekeepers and navigated all the way from Belgium on Flight 107, the 9.30



from Newcastle to Trinidad-no-she-went-of-her-own-accord (think about it) by Taff the RAF, a well known and well loved pilot impersonator. It disgorged itself upon arriving, a typically unpleasant Frog habit, of some distasteful unmentionables and a drunk Admiral on his way to alcoholism on a magic carpet, which he found, of course, very stimulating - sexually?

Aided only by a giant size Inflatamate, Cementation and the Club Records, a daring attempt was made to paint the entire countryside green (with envy of the Seis?). On the failure of this escapade our courageous hero auctioned his rights to keep geese and most of the North Sea in O.F.D. and invested the proceeds in the Economic Forestry Group in accordance with a peculiar political conviction and an entirely vegetable diet.

Time progressed. Someone fused the light in the Ladies Lavatory so the entire building of course had to be evacuated, revealing to all and sundry and Auntie Mary an entire Women's Institute Monthly Outing hiding, disguised cleverly as streakers, in downstairs No. 10. With great gnashing of teeth and much wailing they were cemented into the new Luxury High Rise Roman Bath Complex by a friendly little gnome in a peculiar green garment which frightened small children and kicked dogs. There they passed many a day producing Serviceable Shirts for Samoans at a rate unrivalled in the West Country and unparalleled in the history of Samoa.

It is ancient history in the area that besides surviving traditional local pastimes such as Sheep Seducing and Pig Whipping there had been a time when a few local inhabitants and a lot of fierce marauding foreigners with mainly false teeth, had indulged in a different kind of sport. It is told in the inns and ale houses of the valley that these people would assemble very early in the mornings dressed in tight fitting black rubber clothing, chew a vast quantity of grit and mud, sabotage their illuminatory devices and run and hide underground for six or seven hours. Apparently they derived a great deal of satisfaction from this procedure. Sometimes they even played hide-and-seek - some people were so good at hiding, they weren't found for days!

Quite when the custom died out no-one knows. It is said that even now a red-headed beekeeper appears every full moon and disappears underground with a vast quantity of luggage to book new and extended accommodation for himself and friends.

The sun sets on our small settlement, oasis of intellectual activity and philosophical thought. Perhaps one day the assembled populace will once again return under the earth in a flurry of Aelatex, empassioned enthusiasm and cooking beer.

Mr. G. K. Jones is 59!

ANON.

Please note:- The management would like to point out that NO MENTION WHATSOEVER has been made of the Harlot of Jerusalem.