# SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB NEWSLETTER

NTIMBER 43	
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MARCH 1963

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# 1. A BRIEF, COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE THREE LLANDYBIE CAVES

OGOF CHI-YR-YCHEN, OGOF CRAIG DERWYDDON (OR OGOF PANT-Y-LLYN) AND OGOF DINAS

After reading "Notes from Coelion Cymru" by Derrick Webley in Newsletter No.42 it is probable that members will still be reeling from the welter of Welsh names and the plethora of probabilities concerning caves in the Llandybie area. I hope that this article will put them straight.

Ogof Cil-yr-ychen and Ogof Craig Derwyddon are two entirely separate caves in the neighbouchood of Elandybie, near Ammanford, Carmarthenshire. Of Ogof Dinas no trace now remains due to quarrying. Their histories and descriptions are as follows:

# OGOF CIL-YR-YTHEN N.G.R. 614.163.

A preliminary report on this cave appeared in N/L No.41. Since then the main passage has been surveyed and found to be 1,300 ft. in length. Among extensions made are:-

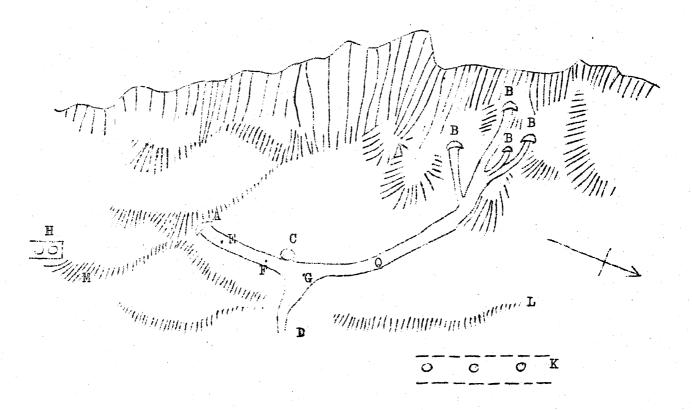
a. a side passage from Drip Chember connects with a crawl leading from Mud Stal. Passage;

b. a crawl leading from the upstream end of "Pothole Streamway" ascends

# Key to diagram opposite.

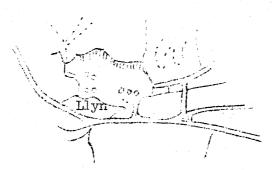
- Entrance to existing South Cave.  $\mathbf{A}_{\bullet}$ B,B,B,B. Present entrances to caves on the face of Craig Derwyddon. C. Portion of "living" rock said to have been left to mark the spot of sepulture. D. Choked up entrance in which teeth and bones of mammalia were found. Spot where some of the bones (Sept.7th 1892) are buried -E. 10 yds. North of South Cave. Position of the 2 larger skeletons (disc.1813). F. Ovate vault of sepulture with the 10 skeletons (disc 1813). G. H. Position of lime kilns built in 1823. K. Kilns existing in 1813. Plexus, or face of great "fault" in the limestone. L. Spot where some of the bones (11th August 1892) are buried Μ.
- Q. Where A.Stepney-Gulston delivered his lecture.

beneath a deep "Talas".



CRAIG DERWYDDON

LLANDYBIE, AMMANFORD, CARMARTHENSHIRE.



PANT-Y-LLYN BCNE CAVES Cambrian Archaeological Assoc. P.164 5th. series 10, 1893.

through boulders and reappears in the floor of the main passage;

c. a 30 ft. aven has been climbed and found to lead to about 150 ft. of passage going up-dip the end of which approaches the 'working' quarry floor. On the 11th August 1962 this end' was located from the outside, together with the end of "3-Column Passage," by Bill Birchenough and his caveometer.

The entrance to Ogof Cil-yr-ychen was exposed by quarrying not long before the war and the first 50 ft. or so were known to the present generation of quarry workers. Although R. Sullivan and I took 30 minutes to make a way through the boulder choke at the back of the entrance chamber, there were hobballed bootmarks by 2 men on the far side going in for about 500 ft. Questioning of the quarry workers has failed to elucidate any knowledge of this visit. Knowing that the district is traditionally rich in cave archaeological finds a careful search has been made for bones, charcoal and paintings(!), but none were seen.

# OGOF CPAIC DERWYDDON, N.G.R. 604.165

Also known as OGOF PANT-Y-LLYN(Lake Hollow Cave) after the nearby village.

References to this cave occur in many publications but the only authoritative one is by a Mr. Alan Stepney-Gulston in Archaeologia Cambrensis published in 1893. The cave originally lay in Craig Derwyddon (Druids' Crag) which was a limestone cliff a few yards West of the Dinas fault and exactly half a mile West of the present Cil-yr-ychen cave. In 1813 during quarrying operations workmen broke into the cave form above, the true entrance being 30 ft. wide but silted up (see plan). Inside was a cavern about 16 ft. long, 12 ft. wide and 4 ft. high containing the remains of 12 individuals lying with their heads brought forward by resting on 6" rock ledges. The floor consisted of fine sand and one skeleton was stalagmited. Copper utensils were supposed to have been found together with bones of elk and wild boar. A pit was dug nearby in which to re-inter the bones, but some were apparently thrown into a limekiln and one skull found its way to Oxford University Museum.

The remnants of the cave are still to be seen on the now abandoned quarry face which has inherited the name Craig Derwyddon. The main passage is some 5 ft. high, 7 ft. wide and 20 ft. long with a clay choke at the back. A slight draught has been detected here and the clay floor of the whole passage has obviously been excavated to a depth of about 3 ft. The south cave "L" (see plan) also remains as a steeply descending crawl 30 ft. long with another excavation at its end.

# OGOF DIMAS (OP OGOF-Y-DITMAS)

This cave is believed to have existed on the East side of DINAS hill and is sometimes associated with OWAIN LLAW-GOCH (Owen of the Red-hand), and King Arthur. It cannot now be identified but the Cil-yr-ychen quarry

system is itidled with holes large and small and one of these may be a remnant of this cave.

#### REFERENCES.

- 1. Archaeologia Cambrensis, Fifth Series, 10, 1893 page 163 "The Pant-yllyn bone caves" by Alan Stepney-Gulston.
- 2. Hanes Plwyf Llandwide gam Gomer M. Roberts, Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd, 1979. (The History of Llandybie Parish, published by Welsh University Press, Gardiff).
- 3. Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, Carmarthen, Volume 17, 1923 page 57 "Craig Derwyddon Caves".
- 4. South Wales Caving Club Newsletters Numbers 41 and 42, 1962.

# ACINOVLEDGEMENTO.

Thanks are due to the Librarian and staff of the Geology Department, National Museum of Wales, for help in tracing references 1 and 3, and to Mr. D.L. Evans, General Manager, Lime Firms Ltd., for permission to explore in the Cil-yr-ychen quarries.

Melvyn Davies.

# 2. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB EXPEDITION TO THE PINDUS MOUNTAINS, NORTHERN GRIECE, 1962.

We were first attracted to the Pindus Mountains of north-west Greece by the graphic accounts of limestone massifs and gorges given by a recent botanical expedition to the area. It was hoped that in this region of limestone peaks rising on average to 6,000ft. we would find cave systems comparable with those in Yugoslavia.

There were nine of us altogether, one from Oxford, one from Manchester and the rest from Cambridge. The first van (an A.40) left England and drove down through Switzerland and Italy. The last part of the journey was pretty hectic. We were somewhat behind schedule on account of one or two mechanical faults, such as the partial loss of the exhaust pipe in France. I joined the expedition at Lugano (Switzerland) where I had been working during the summer. We entered Italy at about 3.0 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21st and drove continuously throughout that country, some 1,040 Km, until we reached Brindisi at 11.00 p.m. on August 22nd.

We had a day to recuperate and set the van in order before embarking at 9.30p.m., yet we had a puncture barely 100yds from the ship. We made it, however, and sailed for Greece at 10.30 that night.

The lummy of the Greek ship 'Egnatia' was very welcome after our gruelling journey. Early the next morning we were sailing past the desolate coast of Albania and at about 8.30 (Greek time) we called at Corfu. Cur voyage ended at Igoumenitsa where we disembarked at 9.00a.m. From Igoumenitsa to Ioannina, the administrative centre of Epirus, is some 60 miles with two fairly high passes. At one time we thought this journey, during which the radiator boiled several times, was very hard, but this road was excellent compared with some we encountered later. Still the scenery was magnificent - barren limestone scenery, bleached in the intense sunlight, with planty of clints and lappees. We eventually arrived at Ioannina at 5.15 and as arranged, met the other members of the expedition outside the Post-office at 6.00p.m.

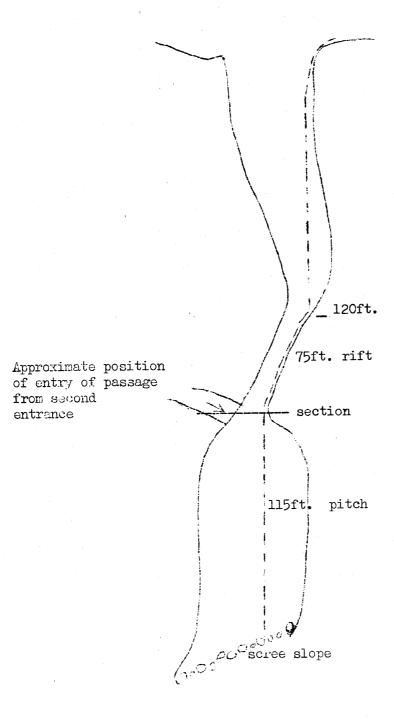
Christian risings against the Turks. Now it is the centre for the military zone northwards to the Albanian border. The town is spectacularly situated on the shores of a lake beneath the foothills of the Pindus Mountains. These mountains formed of a succession of Cretaceous and Jurassic limestones, form the main watershed between the rivers flowing to the Adriatic and those flowing to the Aegean.

To the north-west of Ioannina Lake is a small hillock, an isolated erosional remnant, and in this hillock is the Perama show-cave. The hill is covered with weathered limestone scree and the entrance to the cave was not discovered until 1940. The cave is filled with magnificant limestone formations between which the path takes an arbitrary course. There is no sign of a stream and the system is very likely a very ancient one.

We investigated a similar hillock on a small island in the centre of the lake. This was pushed upstream for about 300 feet. opened into a vertical rift ending with a boulder choke in a higher passage close to the surface. The cave was a veritable haven for bats which provided a quite new hazard to any we had encountered in British caving. Also interesting from the biological side were the very fine cavernicolous Orthoptera. One member was investigatin part of the stream not far from the entrance when he spotted a frog sitting on a stone at water level. A moment later he was rushing to the entrance and, to our astonishment shook the frog from his trouser leg! There were some interesting calcite curtains and stalactites on the cliffs on the southern shore of the island, but it is uncertain whether they had ever developed in a cave. for five months in the year the area is covered with snow and it is difficult to see how such formations, some of them quite large, could develop in these weathering conditions.

Before we arrived in Greece the first party had investigated the possibilities of caves around Konitsa to the north near the Albanian border.

Hypothetical section (after D. Heap) (Based on the timing of falling stones) PROVATINA <u>;</u> ...  $S = wt + \frac{1}{2} ft^2$ S = 16 \* 50= 800 4 secs. 700ft.+ Rattling 4-5 secs. Free fall



Sketch section

/passage

pitch

--rift

This area is now a military zone, but passes may be obtained from the Army authorities in Ioannina. The road to Konitsa climbs into the foothills of the Pindus Mountains and then descends to the course of the Vikos River where it debouches from a gorge onto a wide flood plain. In the Vikos Gorge the limestone looked promising and entrances to what looked like caves could be seen. These, however, rarely went in further than 10 feet and represent scour hollows as the river cut down through successive beds. They are found at different levels, including the present river level where they are forming today.

To the north of Konitsa the rock was of flysch (impermeable sedimentary rock) rather than limestone, so the party left for Papingon, a village higher up the Vikos Gorge, near Mt. Astraka (nearly 8,000 ft.) It was on this mountain that our deepest pothole, Provatina, was discovered. An English-speaking Greek in the village described this hole which he had found whilst hunting wild goats. The only way to reach it was by an hour's clamb up one of the gulleys on the north face. The hole lay at the foot of a small cliff and had no water course leading into it. The surface dimensions were about the same as Alum Pot but the depth was much greater. We reckoned the first pitch to be of the order of 600 to 800 ft. stones finished rattling after 20 seconds, some after 30. free for about 5 seconds. One stone fell free for 8 seconds. for the speed of sound returning and for air resistance, this gives an approximate depth of 800 ft. The vertical walls of the shaft were well fluted, but it is more likely that water action here has only a modifying action, the pot having been formed by faulting. This is suggested also by the fact that Provatina is the only deep pothole in the area.

Our last expedition was to the village of Monodhendri, further still up the Vikos River and some 20 miles north of Ioannina. there was quite bad, in places it was cut out of the bed rock and at one point all except the driver had to get out and push the Morris van - in first gear! Even so an ancient bus managed to visit Monodhendri every other day. When we reached the village we were taken to the village president, an old white-haired man who had picked up a working knowledge of English as a wireless operator for the partisans in the War. We explained, with the aid of suitable gestures that we had come to discover and descend "katavothrai". Eventually the old man began to understand and indeed to take an interestin our purpose. There were caves and holes in the district, he told us, but they were so deep that he feared lest there should be no air down there. He told a story about a cow that had fallen down the deepest of the holes, which since I do not know its Greek name, I shall call "Cow's Eye Pot". Some time later, it was claimed, the eyes of this same cow were found at the bottom of the Vikos Gorge, about 1,500 ft. below.

The village President got a man to show us the position of "Cow's Eye Pot", about I hours' walk from the village. The scenery here was magnificent. The village was not far from the Gorge which in this region was between 1,500 and 2,000 ft. deep. This suggested that the village

wells were tapping water from a perched water-table on flysch or flint within the limestone. The limestone beds were very thin and eroded into fantastic shapes that stood out above the surrounding doline country. Incidently, it was very easy to get lost in this sort of area, because when you were standing amongst these erosional remnants everythinglooked much the same. For this reason, it was some time before we could go straight to "Cow's Eye Pot". The dolines here varied from a few yards to half-a-mile in width. Many of the depressions had potholes associated with them, and as these were often in the lowest part of the doline, it is likely that drainage went down them in the past. Some, however, are not likely to have been the main drainage outlets and this is in accordance with other evidence that suggest faulting is the main mechanism responsible for the Pindus potholes.

When we asked the village President if there was a good place to camp he took us to an old, recently deserted Nunnery built on the edge of The dried up the Vikos Gorge and another smaller one leading into it. river bed lay about 1,000ft. below, whilst above us rose another 300ft. of sheer cliff face. From the Nunnery one could walk along a fantastic path, in places cut out of the bare rock, by the villagers some hundred years ago In places the path gave way when their village was invaded by the Turks. to a free drop of about 1,500 ft. The echoes produced by shouting from this path to the other side of the gorge were tremendous. A camp was established in a courtyard in the Nunnery near the well-house. accommodation was provided in a minute room jutting out over the gorge; on a balcony; in the gatehouse; on a terrace under ripening grapes; and, until a scorpion was discovered there, out in the courtyard.

The day after our arrival our interpreter got us a guide and the services of a really tough mule on which we loaded about 6 cwt. of equipment. Even so it showed no signs of fatigue on arriving at the pothole after an hour's toil up the mountainside. It was not immediately apparent that the two entrances to the pothole belonged to the same system. One entrance a tall rift in a small depression with an easy 70 ft. pitch looked far more promising than the vast adjacent hole which was about 50 ft. across, and according to local opinion, 300 metres deep.

At the bottom of our 70 ft. entrance pitch, however, was a very steep loose scree slope which led to another pitch, very difficult to belay on account of the loose material at the sides. But the interesting fact was that one appeared to see daylight near the bottom(?) of this pitch. At first we wondered whether the "Cow's Eye" story could be possible after all, but there was a discrepancy of some 500 ft. to account for before we would meach the level of the floor of the Mikos Gorge.

Because of the difficulty of belaying this second pitch we decided to descend the main shaft, which had a much safer belay. On the first day we descended 170 ft. and the shaft was still going strong. Two days later we returned to the pothole. The first man down reported the start of a big open pitch 180 ft. down. The first 40 ft. were the worst - down a wall

covered with moss and dirt; 100 ft. down the hole narrowed to a steep gully for some 70 ft., then opened out into a vast cylindrical chamber. The ladder hung free for about 100 ft. in this chamber and this part was described even by one of our down-to-earth Northern members, as a really aesthetic ladder climb. Some 45 ft. from the bottom was a steep ledge which connected with the other entrance. The bottom was most unexciting compared with the descent. It was simply choked up with scree and now completely dry. The total depth of the pot was 300 ft. in one single ladder pitch.

We descended several other holes in the area; all were dry and cheked at the bootom with scree. A few showed signs of water action - fluting and rather poor stalactites - but here again it is likely that these pots have only been modified by water action.

A few days later the members in the Austin left Monodhendri, and as I had to return to Englandearly I went with them. The others stayed a bit longer but found no deep pots. On their way home they visited a few Yugoslavian caves and had the unusual experience of floating down a subterranean river in their goonsuits whilst the two local guides sat it out in comfort in their boat.

I returned home more or less the way I had come, through Italy, but this time, along the West Coast, through Naples and Rome, and then up to Milan. Our only caving then was the 15 minute trip through the Simplon Tunnel, but in France we visited the source of the River Loue near Pontarlier, but the Electrical Authorities have pretty successfully prevented anyone entering this fine resurgence cave.

In conclusion, it would appear that the Pindus Mountains differ from the conditions to be found in Yugoslavia. The lack of surface drainage in the Pindus Mountains and a thick layer of scree, sealing off the joints, prevent any concentrated percolation.

I would like to thank Dave Mercer, the Geomorphologist of the Expedition for his technical assistance. A detailed account of the caves of the Findus Mountains, written by Mr. Mercer, is being published shortly by the Cave Research Group.

Trefor Woodford.

#### 3. CLUB NEWS.

#### AN APPEAL.

This is an Appeal and has the full support of the scientific sub-committee which sponsors it. The author is continually aware that archaeological material has been and will be destroyed. It is felt that some attempt should be made to make a permanent collection of such material which is now dispersed amongst the members of the club. The animal bones at Foel Fawr were well photographed at the time of discovery. Surely copies of such photographs should be held by the club for posterity? Again, are there any photographs of the Ogof-yr-Esgyn dig, or of the human skeleton in O.F.D.

I should be grateful for the loan of any negative material, or colour transparencies, in order to make copies to place in the club library. I hope to make black and white full plate copies of all photographs. It was suggested at the meeting that a collection of photographs of cave entrances should be started - especially the small little known ones. Will the next generation remember for example where the 'first' Tunnel Cave entrance was? How about it?

Derrick Webley, 39 Heol Isaf, Radyr, Glamorganshire.

#### INFORMATION WANTED PLEASE.

John Hartwel writes as follows:-

"I'm bringing my own record of South Wales caves up to date and looking through some old notes I have found the names of several caves of which I know nothing. They are I'm sure mostly rat-holes but in the interest of being complete I would like to include the list in the news-letter and hope that some member knows them"

(Details such as Map Reference, Length etc.)

Ogof Uchel ) Richards Rock Cave. Llandybie Coltshill Quarry Cave Ogof Isel White Lady Pot Twll Bach Du Cefn Cadlan Ogof Clogau Mawr - Black Mountain Twll Mawr Du) Twll y Defaid - Avon Mellte Green Cwm Cave Llethrid Cave No.2. Ogof yr Onnen Ogof yr Either Cadlan Llethrid Quarry Cave Tull-y-Pwll - Nedd Cadlan Pot Llethrid Pot (Cont. after Supplimentary Library List.)

Also in the Club Records are several unnamed caves at map references:-

 22/656176
 22/863160

 22/591162
 22/591163

21/428936 22/942125 A cave between Pwll Derw and Pulpit Hole

#### PUBLICATIONS

Now to be in printed form and available in April 1963 to Librarians and all parties interested in Northern Topography:-

Northern Cavern and Mine Research Society Transactions - Vol.1.No.2. 1962-3.

The above Transactions is a periodic society journal, publishing material relative to the history of mining, especially northern British mining and pertaining to the Science of Speleology in general.

Edited by: Robert T. Clough, A.R.I.B.A., F.S.A. Scot.

Price: Fifteen shillings per copy (Postage Paid) to non-members of the Society.

Obtainable from: Robert T. Clough, A.R.I.B.A., (Editor, N.C. & M.R.S. Society.),

Stoneleigh, Utley, Keighley, Yorkshire.

Principal articles in the next issue will comprise:

The Transactions is printed by Crown Press (Keighley) Ltd., and the printing will consist of 300 copies only, each of which, in addition to the above contributions contains 15 specially-prepared full-page plates.

Some Technical Aids for Cave Exploration by Members of the South Wales Caving Club.

This publication has been produced by the Cave Research Group. Club members can obtain copies for 10/- post free from:-

A. Ashwell, "Cuilcagh", Stanyeld Road, Church Stretton, Salop.

The publication contains articles on ladder making, wet suits, self-lifelining devices, scaling equipment, magnetic position finding and synthetic fibre ropes

#### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:-

N.G. Anderson, 15 The Parade, Whitchurch Cardiff.

J.C. Powell, 23 Park Avenue, Whitchurch Cardiff.

M.S. Hussey, 5 Park Crescent, Pontyclun, Glamorganshire.

D.T. Lloyd, 32 Parish Road, Cwmgwrach, Neath.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

K.A. Bassett, 106 Umberslade Road, Birmingham 29.

A. Ashwell, "Cuilcagh", Stanyeld Road, Trevor Hill, Church Stretton, Salop.

#### SUPPLIFICATION LIST OF LIBRARY MATERIAL NO.4. - MARCH 1963.

Those items marked \* require £1 deposit.

Axbridge Caving Croup, Newsletters Dec. 1962. Jan, Feb., March, 1963 and Journal 1962. The Belfry Bulletin. No. 180 Feb., 1963.

\*The Cave Research Group. Newsletter No.86. Publication No.11 Some Technical Aids for Cave Exploration.

Shepton Mallet Caving Club. Journal No.4.

\*S.W.C.C. Newsletter No.42.

\*British Standards Inst. Nylon Mountaineering Ropes. Country Quest, Spring 1963. (Article on Gower Caves.)

# INFORMATION WANTED PLEASE (Continued)

Thursday Cave.

Buttertubs Cave.

Wall Cave.

Cave near Buttertubs Cave.

Names, if any, of:-

Small Cave inhabited by animals at the far end of Waen Fignen Felin from which a dog was rescued several years ago.

A cave-discovered by David Hunt in the clints between the Dan-yr-Ogof dry valley and the Haffes.

A small rift cave in a low cliff near the above clints entered by a large party including N. Dilly, C. Jones and Glyn Thomas.

Hon. Secretary......C. Jones, Llandough Castle, Nr. Cowbridge, Glam.

Hon. Treasurer.....L.A. Hawes, Cribarth, Court Moor Avenue, Fleet, Hants.

Hon. Editor.....B.de Graaf, Neuadd, Llangorse, Breconshire.

Hon. C.R.O......G. Clissold, Silhouette, Staunton, Nr. Coleford, Gloucs.

Hon. Records Officer..D.W. Jenkins, Dinmore, Dyffryn Road, Llandrindod Wells, Rads.

# 6. LIST OF MEMBERS.

#### PRESIDENT.

Brig. E.A. Glennie, C.I.E., D.S.O. Seaton House, Shrublands Road, Berkhamstead, Herts.

#### VICE PRESIDENTS.

A.H. Hill Esq., 32 Marine Road, Oreston, Plymouth.. Dr. D.A. Bassekt, B.Sc., Ph.D., F.G.S., The National Museum of Wales. D.W. Jenkins Esq., Dinmore, Dyffryn Road, Llandrindod Wells, Rads.

## HONORARY MUMBERS.

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Dr. D. Nichols, 75 Chatsworth Avenue, Cosham, Hants.
Dr. A.J.R. Hudson, Mackworth Villa, St. Thomas, Swansea.
Dr. F.J. North, 19 Chargot Road, Cardiff.
G. Platten, Rotherfield, Fernhill Lane, New Milton, Hants.
G. Powell, Rhongyr Uchaf Farm, Penycae, Swansea Valley.
Mrs. G. Price, The Gwyn Arms, Penycae, Swansea Valley.

Alexander, J. Flat 2. 70 Talbot Road, Manchester 16. Anderson, N.J. 15 The Parade, Whitchurch, Cardiff.

Bowden Tyle, Miss. S. 51 Coronation Road, Bristol, 3.

### MEMBERS.

Andrews, T. 135 Danson Road, Bexley, Kent.
Ashwell, A.W. Mr. & Mrs. 'Cuilcagh', Stanyeld Road, Trevor Hill, Church Stretton, Sal
Aslett, E. Dr. T.B. Clinic, Courtland Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil, Glam.

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Barr, R.J. Chestnuts, Histons Hill, Godsall, Staffs.

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Bauguley, F.& D. 15 Flm Grove, Aberdare, Glam.
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Bayton, R. 15 Weig Gardens, Cendros, Swansea.
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Birchenough, W. Coedmor Farm, Llechryd, Cards.
Boughton, Miss.M. 21 Coniston Avenue, Sheldon, Birmingham 26.

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Davies, M. 18 Tymynydd, Pontnewydd, Cwmbran, Mon.
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Dingle L.S. 2 Penylan Terrace, Roath, Cardiff.
Dolphun, Mr.& Mrs.P. The Uganda Co.(Africa)Ltd., P.O.Box 1., Kampala, Uganda.
Dryden, J.K. 11 Miles Buildings, Bath, Somerset.
Duerden, M. 44 Moreton Street, London, S.W.1.

Evans, G.C. Mr.& Mrs. 25 Wren Road, Sidcup, Kent.

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