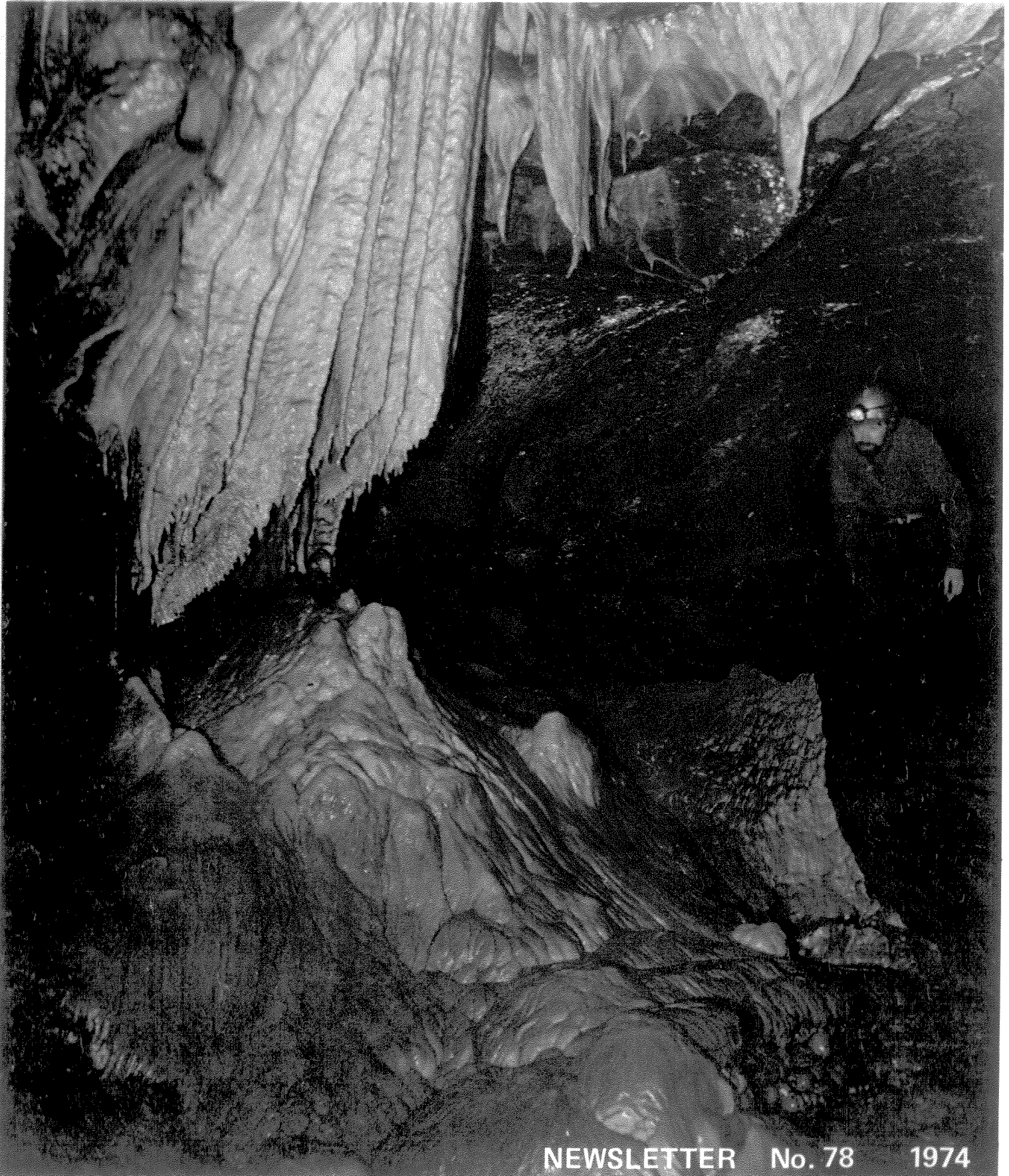


SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB



NEWSLETTER No. 78 1974

S O U T H W A L E S C A V I N G C L U B

No. 78

NEWSLETTER

December 1974

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Cover Photograph - Dan yr Ogof, by B. T. Jorgensen

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Wishing you
a beautiful Christmas
filled with delightful
surprises.

alan.

Printer - Alan Jackson

*Keep smiling,
Brian.*

Editor - Brian Jorgensen

Dan-yr-Ogof - Current

Developments

With the discovery of Mazeways II in August 1972 it was anticipated that exploration would rapidly proceed into D.Y.O. IV, the unknown Giedd system. Such hopes were soon dashed. Dry passages were followed, predominantly in a southerly direction but all terminated in long term chokes within a few hundred feet. In spite of the mile of passage that was explored in a couple of trips, it was all too clear that we were not on the trail to IV.

By October all easily accessible dry passages had apparently been explored and in the hope of breaking the barriers, diving was again resorted to. A significant and strong attack took place on the 7th October 1972 when Roger Solari, John Parker, Jeff Philips and myself visited Mazeways, with the expressed objective of diving in the various sumps. Basically there were two areas that held promise, the first was that of the static Deep Sump, in the north of the extension, and the other, in the vicinity of Lake II, the Mirky Sump. Roger Solari and myself tackled the former while John Parker and Jeff Philips tackled the latter.

The Mirky Sump was the mainstream, so it was clearly important. It had been examined by myself at an earlier date but nil visibility had occasioned a return without anything being found. En route John Parker first dived the Continuation Sump which lies in clear water at the end of the dive from Mazeways I. This sump trends towards the Mirky Sump and is about 200 feet away. It was hoped that the Continuation Sump would by-pass the murky waters of Lake II and lead directly to the Giedd. Opposing such optimism was the probability of a long dive. However on diving it was found that only 150 feet progress could be made before the passage became uncomfortably small, and visibility turned distinctly murky. This could only mean one thing, namely that if any progress was to be made in this area, it would have to be from Lake II. John Parker promptly reeled in his line and made his way there. Unfortunately, the sight that greeted him was positively evil. Like Oxtail soup in appearance, it welled and simmered, visibility was sub zero. Needless to say John could find no way on, returning after an estimated depth of 40 feet and 30 feet horizontally.

At the other site I had more luck, not fully appreciated until the following weekend. Initially a right hand branch was examined and the line laid by T. Moon, C. Fairbairn and R. Arculus, in 1968, was encountered. This was tied off at the 'Bridge' and clearly was not going to take the diver to new ground. A left hand branch was then followed and a dive of over 200 feet made before a return was enforced. The water was clear but the depth was worrying, in excess of 50 feet.

The following week, diving from Dali's Delight the Deep Sump line was reached (a completely unexpected result), and a new connection between D.Y.O. II and Mazeways II achieved. This dive is just over 300 feet, the majority of which is at over 40 feet depth. Consequently it is a more difficult line than that from Mazeways I.

After a long lull in activities Mazeways II was again visited on 16th June 1973, by Roger and myself. The aim was to use a bit of hard persuasion on the chokes. The main high level choke, trending south, was fired first, but fumes prevented examination. Thinking that it might clear, the northern choke was treated likewise. The draught here, which probably connects with some point in Dali's ? was strong and almost immediate examination was possible. However it remained solid, so we left, in favour of yet another southerly choke. This was the low level Cribarth Inlet choke, and although much debris was removed no significant progress was made. The main high level choke had not been cleared, so having achieved next to nothing we left.

The following weekend I again entered the cave accompanied by C. Fairbairn. The primary aim was to gain contact with D.Y.O. II and for this we had ample support spread out over Dali's. As a previous whistle connection had achieved little, a substantial charge was to be used. On the third attempt the slow fuse was successful, (quite an exciting method); at least in igniting the charge, but it had little effect on the choke. Fearful of disturbing people in Dali's if another charge was fired, we left to commence a climb in the Main Passage.

On previous trips, several very promising high level passages had been noted but clearly they required some ingenious acrobatics to gain entry. Maypoles were out of the question, so 'artificial' methods were adopted. A stone with rope attached was eventually lodged precariously in a crack about 25 feet above the floor. It held the weight of two people and enabled an easier ascent than by bolting. However the prussik would have to wait as we had brought no tapes on this occasion. The chokes which had been tackled the previous week were examined, but none held any immediate promise. Consequently we pinned future hopes completely on the climb. On making our exit it expired that no positive contact had been achieved with the Dali's area, so the trip had made, yet again, frustratingly little progress.

On the 7th July we were back, Colin, Roger and myself. Using radio, verbal contact was soon established with A2 Chamber in Dali's but little advance was made by way of 'bang' or draught connection. Abandoning the northern area we returned to complete the climb set up the fortnight before. A bolt was used for protection and soon the sloping ledge at 25 feet was gained. Several peg and tape belays were found higher and after a total of 50 airy feet the high level passage was entered. It looked good and was later named Three o'Clock Series.

700 feet of sizeable passages were explored but all ways on were boulder choked. All chokes were roughly at the same level and we concluded that the area was too high for great potential. The series lies approximately 100 feet above the water table, and above the Honeycombe Sandstone. A fixed rope was left on the climb.

With several high level passages yet to be entered Roger and I returned on 6th October 1973. The site this time was the Inlet Aven, 150 feet north of the climb into Three O'Clock Series. The 30 feet aven, issuing a small stream was rather awkward in that there were no cracks suitable for pegging. Having lost two pegs in the effort, the ascent was finally achieved in an hour with a couple of slings and a bit of faith. Ladders were installed and the initial prospects looked excellent. However all ways dwindled to nothing, the stream emerging from an impenetrable fissure. Disappointed with our 200 feet of passage, we were about to leave when a short length of muddy crawl was located which led to known ground in Three O'Clock Series.

With no need for two fixed ropes into the same series, the longer more difficult pitch, (that into Three O'Clock via the Main Passage), was detackled. In the course of the trip, virtually all the high level openings in the northern area were accounted for. There was still one aven in the low level Cribarth Inlet passage that needed attention, but it was the northern area that had captivated what optimism still remained.

The last climbing trip in Mazeways to date was on 27th April 1974, and was undertaken by Bomber (R. F. Beaumont) and myself. The objective was the sole remaining aven of any promise, in the extreme south of the extension. This was the Cribarth Inlet Aven.

The aven is 30 feet high with a tricky overhang about 15 feet above the floor. A peg was eventually inserted, about a quarter of an inch, into a vertical crack, but not feeling too happy with its condition a bolt was placed two feet lower for psychological reassurance. The peg held for ten minutes but inevitably it came away and I sustained a rather dramatic fall. Further half hearted attempts proved abortive and soon we submitted in favour of a dig at the end chokes. This again went well for a time but all too soon the falling boulders proved too big for comfort and we left it in peace.

A dry way on from Mazeways II? Time will tell. Hopes were severely crushed by the failure of the climbing programme and the chokes appeared as hopeless as ever. Such was the state of affairs that confronted us by the summer of 1974. A spark of optimism still glimmered at Lake II and like seeing a glow worm for the first time, the curiosity was impelling. Clearly a low water dive would yield nothing owing to the murk. Paradoxically however, during periods of high water, visibility in the cave improves to about four feet and a dive was planned with this in mind.

On the night of 7th August support was forthcoming and I found the cave in condition. The airbell at 260 feet (on the dive in), was just useable and Lake II was reached with no problems. The water was not as clear as it was hoped, i.e. visibility about two feet, but on diving this proved ample. At 35 feet depth a bedding passage approximately 18 inches high and five feet wide was found and followed, descending gradually. It steadily increased in size and levelled off. After 60 feet horizontally from the bed of Lake II a junction to the left was evident. The passage issued a strong current and appeared to descend over gravel banks. However straight ahead the passage continued to increase in size and ascend.

Unfortunately at 240 feet from base the line ran out. At this point the passage was about eight feet diameter, visibility twelve feet and depth estimated at about fifteen to twenty feet. A jubilant exit was made leaving the line in place, loosely belayed around a stone.

A breakthrough was apparently imminent. However it was to be the fifth of October before a return could be made, the weather preventing prior access. The dive was made under the highest water conditions to date and apprehensions were great. The limit of the line was soon reached, but after ten feet of progress the diver was heartbroken for a known line was encountered and followed for a few feet to air. All that had been achieved was a through dive, from Lake II, to the Continuation Sump. It was a dive of 260 feet.

With ample air a return dive was made searching the right hand wall. Eventually the rising water, i.e. Mainstream, was located, near the bed of Lake II. Unfortunately all ways were impenetrable and the water flowed away via a smallish rift, due south. Too depressed to continue, dry land was sought and a disheartened search made of the low level crawls trending west; to no avail. Finally the Cribarth Inlet choke was examined and a major rockfall was evident. Clearing the accessible offenders little progress was made and a thoroughly disappointed exit was made.

This almost certainly rules out immediate finds via diving. Where do we go from here? The only plausible choice would appear to be a dig at the Cribarth Inlet, but this will require a lot of effort. Hope still flickers but this is highly dependent on support.

Once more I wish to thank all those who have helped the divers. They are sincerely appreciated.

MARTYN J. FARR

---ooOoo---

Snailbeach Mine -

As it is Today

Location: NGR: SJ375022 (One Inch Sheet 118)

Background:

Of the mines in the Stiperstones/Hope Valley area of Shropshire, Snailbeach was by far the largest, was the last to close and consequently has the greatest amount of ground accessible today. Interest in the area grew during the early 1960's with the efforts of the Shropshire Mining Club but it was not until J. V. Osborne and friends visited the area that the 'sporting' aspects became known. The mine has again seen attention from the S.W.C.C., with the result that some further passage has been re-entered for the first time, I believe, since the mine closed in 1919.

The accessible mine today

The mine was worked from a total of 4 shafts, all of which are open today but only one of which is safe (Chapel Shaft) and none of which give ready access to workings. The bulk of the mine is permanently flooded, being below the 112 yard level which is the level of the drainage adit. Two chief levels exist in the main workings above this level, these being the 90 yard level and the 40 yard level. (The depth in yards is measured from the collar of Old Shaft). These two levels used to be entered from Old Shaft and Black Tom Shaft respectively, but may now only be entered from a stope which breaks surface at Lords Hill. Rather than descending this stope from the surface, the best method of access is via Perkin's (otherwise called Robert's) level at the head of a track leading up the valley past the mine reservoir. This level crosses the stope on a timber bridge and a descent of 260 feet from this point gives access to the 40 yard level. The stope descends a further 100 feet or so but with no way off at water level, according to Rod Stewart. Care is needed in avoiding the farm refuse fallen or falling from the surface some 70 feet above the bridge.

The 40 yard level is the most extensive and is the level entered by J.V.O. in 1967. It may be followed in both directions from the stope, west almost to Black Tom Shaft and east to a 'X' cut leading to Chapel Shaft. Several stopes may be climbed on this east branch. On the west branch a winze may be descended for 160 feet giving access to the 90 yard level. This level may also be followed both east and west; the east branch being the most extensive leading to a further winze, with water some 60 feet down, which the mine plan indicates as descending to the 112 yard level.

The Shafts etc.

Chapel Shaft. This is covered with sleepers and looks to be in good condition.

Its collar is about 500 feet above presumed water level (112 yard level) so it would make a good winch pitch. Access to the 40 yard level could be gained this way. If the 112 yard level is not flooded to the roof, this should also be accessible as should the X cut at this level.

Engine Shaft. This could be descended either from the surface or from its junction with the day level about 100 feet down. No recorded access from this shaft to any levels above presumed water level.

Old Shaft. J.V.O. reports descent in 1967 as dangerous and that he expected the shaft to run in by 1970. Still open but suicidal.

Black Tom Shaft. More or less run in.

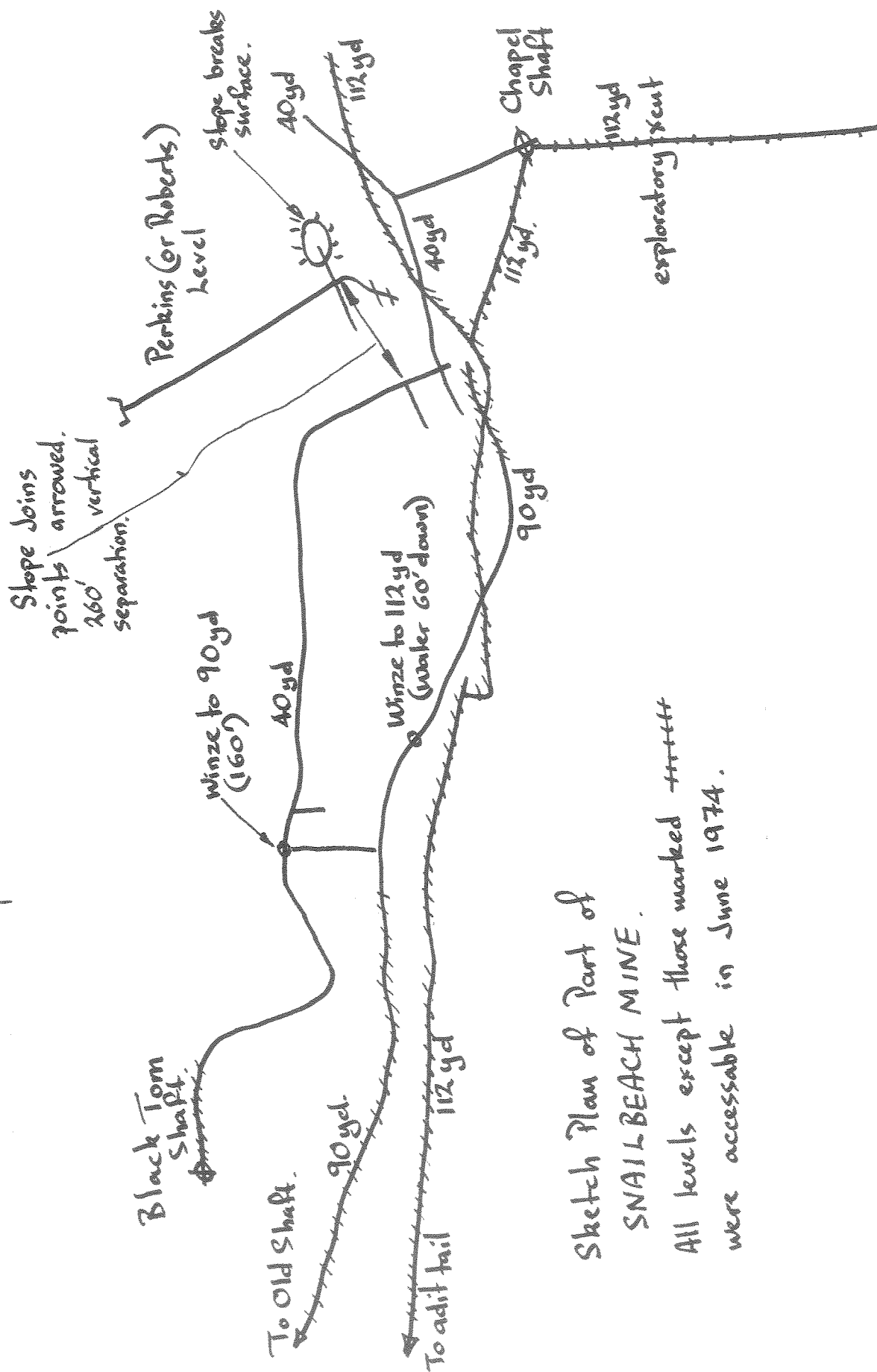
Drainage Adit. Reported to be accessible for 150 yards to a blockage due to roof collapse, which J.V.O. considered digable.

<u>Tackle</u>	Stope from Perkins Level	: 260ft. ladder 300ft. lifeline
	Winze to 90 yard level	: 150ft. ladder 150ft. lifeline
	Chapel Shaft to 40 yard level:	at least 300ft. ladder and rope.

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BOB HALL



Sketch Plan of Part of
SNAILBEACH MINE.

All levels except those marked +++++ were accessible in June 1974.

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An Aladdin's Cave

Jeff Morgan first heaved himself through a tiny gap in a rockface at Dan-yr-Ogof, in the Upper Swansea Valley, in 1912. He could have had little idea then, as he wriggled his way through the narrow passage, that he was on his way to discovering an Aladdin's cave of rock formation with may soon become Wales's biggest tourist attraction.

The caves at Dan-yr-Ogof this year attracted 200,000 visitors and within the next five years the Morgan family, who still own the caves, intend to push this figure to well over 250,000.

But to achieve this aim they have launched a massive investment programme costing £100,000, in the last year alone. A motel, caravan park, museum and Welsh craft shop have been set up in the grounds around the caves.

"We had to decide four years ago whether we were going to allow the caves to carry on as a small family business or really go for the big league," said Mr. Ashford Price, project director.

The Dan-yr-Ogof caves were first opened to the public in 1939. But then the war came and they were requisitioned by the Army for an underground arsenal.

After the war a long legal wrangle over the family estate followed. And it was not until 1964 that the caves were reopened.

The decision was taken by a consortium which now involved several branches of the Morgan family. This included Mr. Price, his father Dr. Alfred Price, and Mr. Peter Morgan, son of Mr. Tommy Morgan who was with his brother Jeff when the caves were first found.

"We wanted to open the caves because we did not want all the work of the Morgan brothers to go to waste," said Mr. Price.

In the first three months of business 30,000 people visited Dan-yr-Ogof. "I think we must have had nearly everyone from the Swansea and Dulais valleys here. But the following year we didn't get so many and were then faced with the hard job of attracting people from further away," he added.

They advertised widely and relied on word of mouth to attract the people. The number of visitors dropped to around 55,000 a year and then slowly increased over the next five years.

Their publicity campaign was given a massive boost in 1966 when a new series of caves was found by a 24 year-old domestic science teacher, Eileen Davies.

To make her discovery she struggled through a narrow tunnel called the "Endless Crawl", which had previously proved too tough for explorers.

The initial decision to make Dan-yr-Ogof into a major tourist attraction was taken in 1970. "We had to do something; attendance was increasing by 5,000 a year, but we had almost reached saturation point," said Mr. Price.

The caves' directors decided to drill through 120 feet of rock to make a tunnel to an enormous cave, the height of three double-decker buses, discovered in 1953 above Dan-yr-Ogof.

The project involved moving 60,000 tons of boulders and laying one-and-a-half miles of electric cable. The total cost was more than £30,000 but the success of the scheme was immediate - the number of visitors jumped to 150,000.

This year they set about meeting this need by building a motel with a large dining function room, seating 200, and a 30-site caravan park. All were designed to blend in with the natural beauty of the area and as an added attraction they bought the fishing rights for a 750-yard stretch of trout stream.

"After spending £100,000 this year I think we probably need a period of consolidation but there is plenty of scope for expansion in the long term," added Mr. Price. He reckons that this year should see the number of visitors increase to 250,000 which, he says, should virtually make Dan-yr-Ogof the largest tourist attraction in Wales.

In another five years, he says, they would have established this position.

The entrance fee to visit both caves is 60p per adult and turnover last year was £50,000 but it will be well up on that this year.

At present none of the directors - who have other jobs - draws any salary, all the money being ploughed back into the business.

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Cave Conservation -

Getting it Together

Cave Conservation - a subject supposedly in the forefront of all cavers' minds at the present time! I say supposedly, it has certainly been paid much lip service in the recent past, but one hardly needs to be a clairvoyant in order to observe its negative effects both within and without our cave systems. It is most popular for our national bodies, regional bodies, and even caving clubs to appoint a "Conservation Officer" - indeed it's quite the 'in' thing to do! But what are these good people really doing? - what are they achieving? Fairy Hole, Weardale, (what's left of it that is), is still inaccessible; despite the so called triumph at a Public Enquiry, Ogof Dydd Byraf appears to have a very doubtful future; and at Cwm Dwr the quarry continues to eat its hungry way into the hillside at an ever increasing rate, seemingly unnoticed by the cavers, and with no apparent regard for the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. Surely, it's a valid question, "What are they achieving?" Or to be rather fairer, "What are we achieving?" It would still appear that there is really only one effective way of conserving a cave, in any real sense, and that is by purchase of land and mineral rights, and development as a Show Cave following closely on the heels of initial discovery. This has yet to occur in the U.K., but a visit to any of the many caving areas of Czechoslovakia, would I feel sure convince the most ardent anti-Show Cave-ist of the validity of the proposition!

In saying all this, I am not for one moment belittling the tremendous efforts that are currently being exerted by certain individuals, Conservation Officers, or otherwise, moreover I am concerned that the message hasn't really percolated through to the grass roots, as it were, of the caving world - or a little more hopefully, if it has, then the roots haven't shown much response!

A string of seemingly unconnected events recently brought me to ponder the whole subject of caves, cavers, and conservation of caves. Shortly after the forum on Cave Conservation at the BCRA National Conference in Leeds in September, I came to be taken, on a wet Saturday afternoon when Dan-yr-Ogof was in total flood, on a most enthralling 'through trip' from Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Top Entrance to the old, original entrance to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, at the back of Y Grithig. This came after a gap of almost four years from my once very regular visits to the then freshly discovered, and rapidly developing O.F.D. II and III cave systems. It had been an exciting trip, as much a piece of pure physical exercise, as equally, a stimulation of the aesthetic senses, and then again to the ever present questioning - "How did it all happen?".

Two days later, I came to be out walking, high on the edge of the grit outcrop - almost exactly above the "II" Streamway, (the Marble Showers series). It had been a stormy morning, and the wispy clouds were lifting out of the valley, moving up the slopes above Dan-yr-Ogof, over the limestone outcrops of Twyn Ddu and Twyn Walter, and climbing out of the Upper Byfre - and eventually lifting from the Fans altogether. The Haffes was a raging white torrent, and yet another storm was brewing, way out beyond the Giedd. The elements were truly

at work! Below me, a group of cavers set forth from Powell Street, Penwyllt, and slowly trod their inevitable path to the Top Entrance. Below me also, the human ants were at work, relentlessly eating away at the limestone, and carrying it away in their 'Tonka-like' little trucks. My thoughts turned to the veritable wonderland beneath my feet; the wealth of potential scientific discoveries, from the proverbial spiders with hairy knees to the larger mystery of the genesis and growth of the Ogof-Ffynnon Ddu System, but more particularly to the physical exercise and expertise and the human relationships and bonds that were to be experienced by that little band of cavers, walking up to the Top Entrance.

Cavers are a rare race, a rare variety of the human species, but by and large they appear to me to be a good and remarkably trusting bunch! True, there are rivalries, but the bonds, I believe, are much deeper than these. Trust in their own kind is a fine thing, but when this trust is extended to the 'outside' world, then it belies the reality of the situation. Cavers, above all are lovers of freedom, but if their freedom is not to be lost for ever then they must 'Get it Together' and present a solid united front. They must not allow their freedom to be eaten away willy nilly.

We must, of course, be perfectly honest with ourselves in the first instance - there are, at least, two readily identifiable threats to cavers. Apart from the constantly increasing demands from the hard rock extraction industry, there is the threat from the caver himself; it was a dismal shame when the Cave Preservation Society failed, way back in the 1950's. Still, the urge to 'press-on' prevails over the urge to CONSERVE FOR THE FUTURE - perhaps it always will? But here we must ALL make an effort, we must pass this on FIRMLY to the novice and to all newcomers to our caves, as perhaps the first principle of caving. We must also be quite clear where our responsibilities lie when it comes to the educational establishments, 'education' in general, and the so called 'fringe' clubs, (P. Francis, SWCC N/L 77, p.5-6). It is at present a sad fact that, in the same way that an Architect is advised never to re-visit 'his' building after occupation by the client, an explorer should never re-visit his original discoveries - for he knows they will never be the same again!

The internal threat is indeed our own domestic affair, and we must be ever-vigilant in attempting to deal with it, - but the external threat is an entirely different matter. Fortunately, as a direct result of the Sandford enquiries, a more enlightened view appears to exist generally in our National Parks, and in some cases, (notably The Peak), they have become Planning Authorities in their own right. As was made clear at the Leeds Conference, it is through legitimate political representation on the three particular National Park Planning Boards that we can best bring real influence to bear, with respect to most of the external threats to caves. At the present moment, a speleological nominee is being put forward to fill a vacancy on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Planning Board. I hope that we will be successful. Where caves are outside of National Parks, as in North Wales, then there is no reason why similar action cannot be taken at County Council level, although here the process of election does tend to be rather more 'difficult'.

Having said all this, I still feel that our caves are vulnerable. Despite

the Planning Boards, Twyn Disgwlfa is still being quarried away at a rapid rate, quite outside the boundaries of the planning consent. I am fast coming to the conclusion that cavers should band together nationally and form an 'Action Group' backed by a fund for the protection of our caves. Something that can be tapped readily, if and when a serious threat to one of our major caves arises. This Club is currently endeavouring to establish just such a fund from within its own membership, specifically for the protection of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. I think that this is right, but Ogof Ffynnon Ddu is a part of our national heritage, and the call should be a national one. BCRA, in co-operation with Pengelly, has the machinery for running such a national fund, and does perhaps possess more of the scientific, technical and administrative expertise for this than any other body at the present time.

At the BCRA Winter Meeting, due to be held in Wells on 7th December, the main item in the programme is a Discussion Panel on Quarrying - this will be another opportunity for feelings to be vented, and hopefully, for action to be initiated!

DAVID JUDSON

---ooOoo---

A Little Time and

A Little Effort

For over 25 years Ogof Ffynnon Ddu has given a vast amount of pleasure and knowledge to us all. Our skills and ingenuity have been tested in both the sporting and scientific aspects of caving.

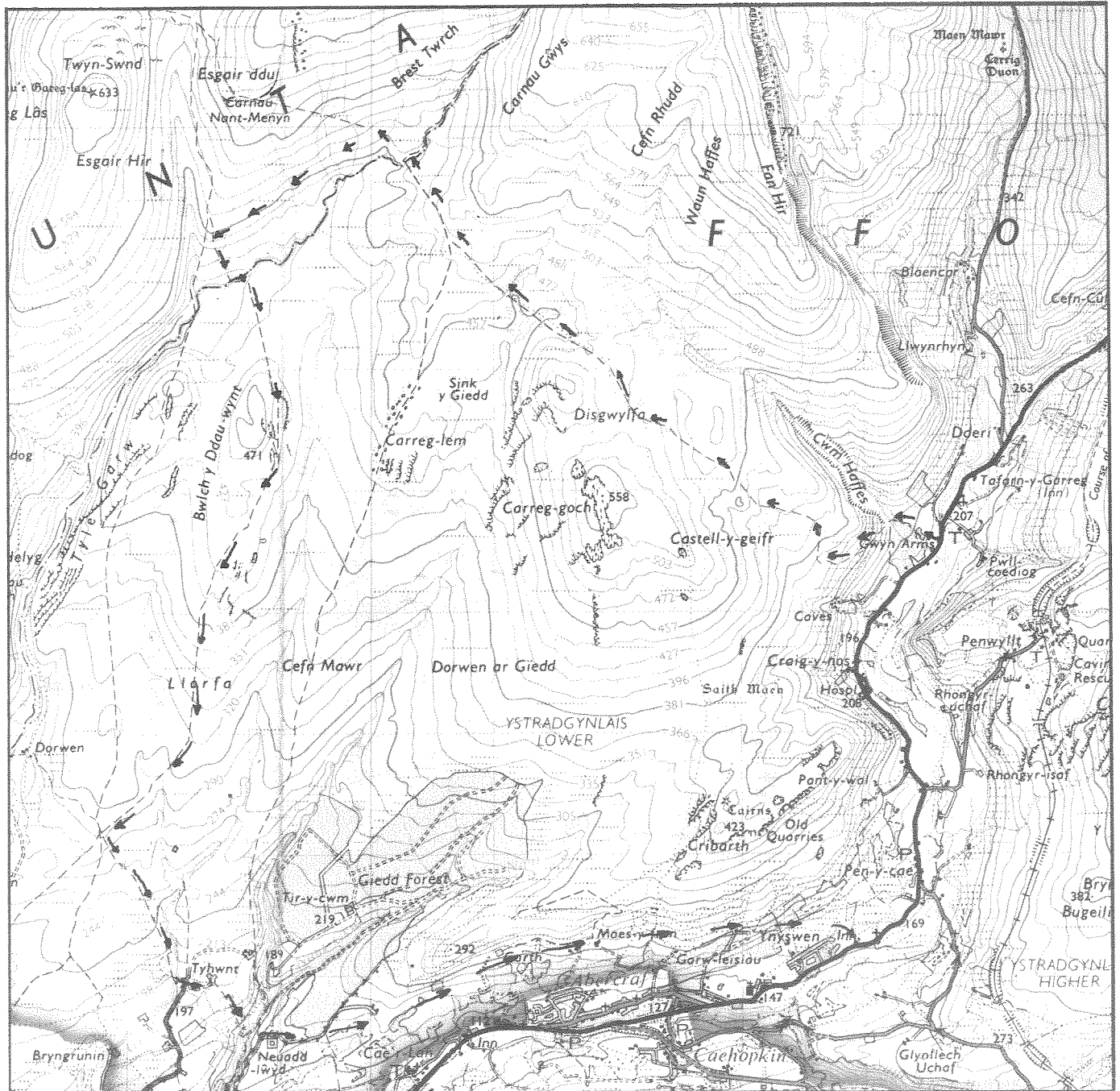
What we owe to the cave cannot be measured, but we can return something of the debt.

Everyone is aware of the threat that the local quarries pose. If the proposed quarrying extensions are passed then the damage to the cave could be enormous. We must try to stop permission for these extensions being granted. If the fight is carried to court then it will be expensive and we as a club will bear the brunt of the cost.

SAVE OGOF FFYNNON DDU

ROUTE OF THE SPONSORED WALK

EASTER SATURDAY 1975



We do not know when the "crunch" will come, so let us be ready. What is needed is a fund, a large one, that is to be used only for conservation. The fund will be controlled by the Club Committee but will be separate to Club funds.

This is where a little time and effort from you can help O.F.D. A cheap and very effective way to raise money is by holding a sponsored walk. If the walk is of a reasonable length and over an interesting landscape, then that is a bonus for the walkers.

On Easter Saturday 1975 there will be such a walk. The route as shown, is over some of the finest local mountain scenery. The length is approximately 15 miles and is quite comfortable walking. It is hoped that at least 150 walkers will participate and the target is a £1,000 plus. A little effort in raising sponsors could easily double this figure.

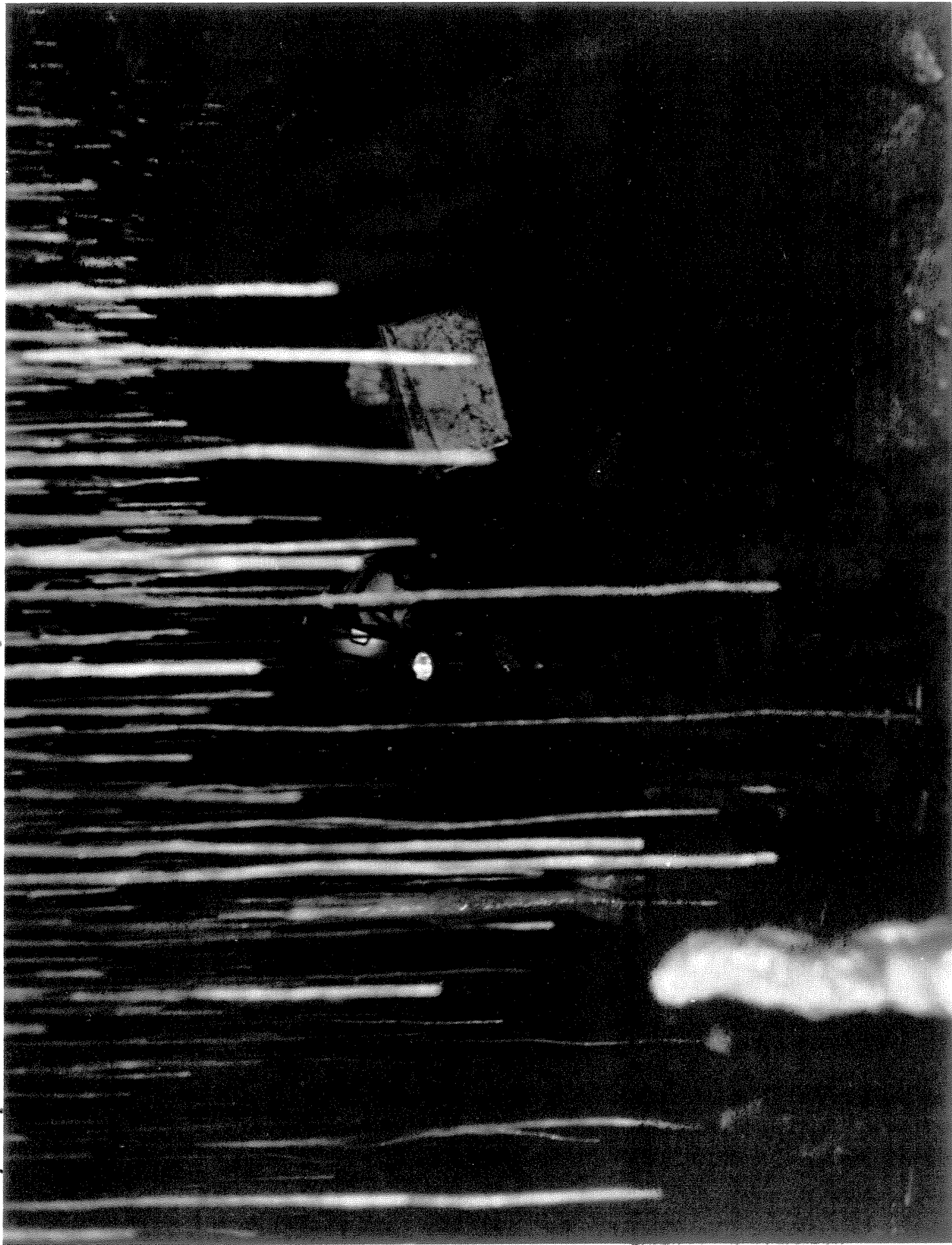
As most of us could walk much further than this, the idea is to get sponsors who will pay for the 15 miles completed, therefore knowing how much they will have to pay beforehand.

Please do your best to walk, and with as many sponsors as possible. If you ask around you will be surprised at how many people will act as sponsors, without wanting to know the reasons. It surprised me! If you have any friends who are interested in O.F.D. then ask them to find a sponsor and join the walk, but please bear in mind that as Easter Saturday is the A.G.M., then overnight accommodation is not possible for non-members. There are plenty of camping sites in the valley.

Send me your names and addresses and I will send you a sponsor card, which has a map of the route printed on the back. The route will be marked by red stakes, in case of bad weather, and tents will be set up at 5 mile intervals.

Do your best; if you can't walk - sponsor. The cave can only benefit.

B. JOFLING
44 Carhampton Road,
Falcon Ridge,
Sutton Coldfield.



DAN YR OGOF by BRIAN JORGENSEN

Bucket and Spade

On walking from the Pont Nedd Ffechan - Ystradfellte road through the gate opposite the Porth yr Ogof turn-off, and taking the unmade track, one arrives at a pleasant, gently sloping dry valley. This valley runs along a fault which makes it interesting cave-wise, as the fault terminates downhill at the spot marked 'copious issues' on the geological map. The 'issues' are just outside the main Porth yr Ogof entrance and on close inspection there seems to be a considerable flow of water from about three places, the most obvious at meadow level, opposite the park bench, the others less discernable in amongst the pebbles. Where does such a large flow come from? The answer may be in a considerable sized cave in the dry valley I've mentioned.

Anyway, if one continues on up the dry valley, one arrives at Y Gwal - conspicuous in the middle of the low grass by its wire fence. Here is the beginning of the mystery. Y Gwal is a short scramble into a large phreatic tube, cut-down keyhole shape and similar to many passages in O.F.D. II. After 80 feet it ends in a boulder pile. It runs for this distance in the direction of Hole by the Wall cave, which sits right on top of the fault. Near Hole by the Wall cave is another sink - a lot of water going underground at this point.

Clive Jones organised a camping weekend in June 1973 to dig Y Gwal; we also inspected the area, which offered numerous alternatives for what turned out to be a difficult dig. One such alternative was Hole by the Wall, but it was clogged at the time and not descended.

Earlier this year, a few of us called at Y Gwal to dig, made little progress there, so wandered to Hole by the Wall and found it open with signs of having taken considerable water. Small, thin folk went down and pronounced the place entirely diggable.

The place is a short pot with a rift at the bottom. The rift widens, turns a corner and narrows again. It was solid rock and a bang was called for.

Since that time Bruce Foster has visited the place with his fireworks, not to mention the efforts of John Paddy, Brian & Co., but no one has yet been able to manage the squeeze and more work is called for. The encouraging thing is that one can see the rift continuing onwards and that dye placed there came out again at the Porth yr Ogof resurgence mentioned.

There are numerous other sites in the area worthy of being looked at with the chance of much quicker returns for less labour. Y Gwal was found after a crow-bar stuck into the bottom of a shake-hole caused a run-in. Are there

passages, perhaps leading into the system of which Y Gwal is obviously a part, similarly only a few feet beneath the surface? It would be a pity if the club neglected such an obviously fruitful area which is on our doorstep.

GARY JONES

---ooOoo---

REPORT ON A RESCUE PRACTICE HELD IN OGOF FFYNNON DDU I
ON 27TH JULY 1974

The chief purpose behind this practice was to give some members of E.G.O.N.S. basic training in stretcher handling. Several S.W.C.C. members also took part in, and learnt from the practice.

The route chosen started from Pi chamber near the climb down to the Subway and led via Bolt Passage to the Step. Testing the feasibility of this route provided a further good reason for the practice. The victim was assumed to have a smashed knee and a fractured forearm. Bolt Passage at its upper end is fairly tortuous, but no serious difficulty was experienced in moving the stretcher through this area. Had the patient been either longer than his 5'9" or much more heavily built the story might have been different but only minor gardening would have been required even then. The stretcher was lowered to the stream from Continuation Traverse.

Once again deficiencies in the stretcher were apparent: the patient slumped down and weight was put on his feet: an effective, versatile means of fixing the patient in the stretcher is vitally needed. An effective means of head protection is also required: we felt that a motorcycle style helmet which would be strapped to the patient and fixed - perhaps elastically - to the stretcher would be the best answer. The use of a plastic face guard was once again suggested: one has been included in rescue kit.

BOB HALL

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Club Notes

New Members

Boyd and Jenny Potts,
3 Greenway, Hlland Ward, Derby, DE6 3FE.

Robert J. Wynd, ("Bob Pen y Cae"),
Plas y Darren, Pen y Cae, Swansea.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs N. Christopher on the birth of their daughter.

The next Newsletter closing date is January 31st. It is intended to produce an up to date Members' address list in this issue, so please ensure the secretary has your correct address.

Address Changes

Dennis Kemp, 10 Lon Cilan, Cilcain, Mold, Clwyd.

Frank Salt, c/o Commonwealth New Guinea Timbers Ltd., Bulolo, N. Guinea.

Andy Freem, 1 Larkhill Cottages, Larkhill Lane, Formby, Lancs.

Frank Honey, 'Franklyns', 55 The Avenue, Lewes, Sussex.

Clive and Clare Jones, 3 Wersa Close, Abernant, Aberdare, Glam.

Dave Wolfenden, 17 Penmaen Terrace, Mt. Pleasant, Swansea.

Gary and Liz Jones, 49 New King Street, Bath, Avon.

Ogof Dau Gi

Bob Radcliff and myself decided to broaden our knowledge of Welsh caves after the 1970 AGM, and went off to the Neath and Melte valleys, after a quick trip in Wills Hole.

Whilst a member of the "Gower Caving Club", Bob had stayed in a barn at Pant y Llwyn Farm, which we now revisited and obtained permission to explore the escarpment behind the farm.

This scarp displays the P - A unconformity extremely well and abounds with cave features; most of which are small. However, slightly to the north of the track from Plas y Darren Farm there is a small cliff which appeared to have a cave behind it. The entrances were all too tight until enlarged by some lusty blows with a lump hammer, which resulted in a flatout tight crawl for about 1 meter.

The cave was subsequently called Plas y Darren North, to distinguish it from some minor features to the south of the track. It was disappointing being effectively a single chamber 1.1/2 - 2.1/2 m high by 5 m wide and 15 m long. The roof was of grit and the floor well fretted and friable lime-stone, which in places contained deep pits but obviously didn't go.

After a fruitless search further along the escarpment we returned to the farm to examine two small resurgences close to the farm, Pant y Llwyn East and West.

The east resurgence is smaller, and drains a knoll of limestone between the farm and the road, and is used as a water supply by the farm.

The larger west resurgence drains the escarpment already described and was dug by ourselves and Bill Little (who had heard about the free tea at the farm!) on the following day. All we found for our efforts was a tight fissure 0.2 m x 0.4 m from which water was issuing. This discouraged us sufficiently to retire at the offer of free tea.

During conversation over tea we were told of a cave in the knoll of lime-stone drained by the east resurgence, in which two dogs had been lost and "contained a chamber twice the size of the New Inn". We were assured that although it had fallen in it would only take a few hours to regain entry.

Further enthused by the tea, we went to the entrance and crawled in, after about 3 m the roof came down and we had to squeeze through into a pot about 1.1/2 m deep, blocked with a mixture of grit boulders and mud.

The following weekend we returned with digging tools and lowered the floor some by 1 m, but found no sign of horizontal development. We decided to

continue digging, but had to timber the shaft, to contain the spoil.

Work now became slow and spoil disposal was a problem, but at about 4 m depth we broke into a short side passage which lead to a parallel side pot.

The dig was now becoming a major operation, as it had failed to fulfil its promise and a break-through was looking less likely. We decided on one final effort in the smaller side pot, using the main pot as a spoil tip. After a day's work this pot narrowed down to a crack too small to get a crowbar into. This was the end, so far as we were concerned, of the Ogof Dau Gi dig. If the big chamber does exist then it will only be entered by deepening the main shaft. It is possible that it exists, because what we have dug in, even allowing for farmers' exaggerations, could not be called even half the size of the New Inn.

The entrance has now been fairly securely blocked by the farmer, Mr. Winter, of Nant y Caredd, from whom permission should now be sought, as the Williams have left Pant y Llwyn and it is only occupied by weekenders.

Frank Baguley has subsequently informed me that both he and Bill Harris have dug this cave without much success.

There follows a list of sites in this area mentioned in the text, together with altitudes and grid references, by courtesy of the Cambrian Cave Registry and Frank Baguley.

	NGR	Altitude
Ogof Dau Gi	SN 9233. 1235	310 m
Pant y Llwyn Rising East	SN 9215. 1228	282 m
" " " " West	SN 9207. 1230	283 m
Plas y Darren North Cave	SN 9227. 1270	325 m

N. CHRISTOPHER

The Cefn Onn Tunnel

Reference has been made to a chamber filled by mud and water being entered when the Cefn Onn tunnel was being driven in about 1890 (Davies 1966). It has also been mentioned by the author that a strong flow of water comes from the tunnel in most weather conditions.

The tunnel is 1.1/8 miles long and carries the main Rhymney to Cardiff railway. The tunnel is almost straight and runs north-south through the southern rim of the South Wales coalfield, from Wernddu near Caerphilly to Cefn Onn. The limestone in this area is steeply dipping, and heavily dolomitized.

During the wet season of 1967-68, I had occasion to travel regularly to Cardiff, and after one particularly wet night in October, I noted a strong stream issuing from the tunnel wall. Several hours later on my return journey I paid special attention and observed that the water was emerging in a powerful stream from between the masonry at a point approximately half way along the tunnel on the eastern side. There is also a large diameter pipe (about 10 - 12" diameter) leading away from this point for about 100 ft. where it terminates.

I observed the point carefully on several subsequent occasions but never saw the water flowing from between the brickwork again, but I have noticed heavy tufa deposits in several parts of the tunnel.

I believe British Rail consistently refuse to allow inspection of the tunnel by cavers as the tunnel is used regularly by trains. This is unfortunate in view of the promising nature of the site.

Reference

Davies, M. : Care Sump index South Wales 1966.

N. CHRISTOPHER

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Caving News From

North Wales

OGOF PANT-Y-WENNOL: EXCAVATIONS OF 8TH TO 15TH SEPTEMBER 1974

Introduction. Mr. and Mrs P. Wilkins of Cardiff helped at the dig for the week and Mr. D. James for two days during the period. Considerable progress was made, excavation being carried out in metre squares 0, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21 and 50. Undisturbed 'cave earth' was found in parts of 0, 4 and 50; cave earth disturbed only by burrowing animals was found in 19. Because of the low roof, only the outer parts of 4, 19 and 21 could be excavated, and 50 only provided a narrow strip of deposits, the remainder being solid rock.

The Finds. The major finds of the week were:

1. Parts of the skeleton of a child, the 4th human skeleton from this cave.
2. Part of an adult skeleton apparently buried in a fissure in the cave, the rest of this skeleton having been found earlier scattered in disturbed deposits.
3. Pottery, probably Neolithic A, but also resembling certain Late Bronze Age pottery.

Human Bones

Square 0 - Metacarpus II right, Phalange, 3 rib fragments, Premolar with crown worn almost flat, and an incisor. Juvenile bones comprised skull fragments in stalagmite, a right mandible with 1 molar intact, unerupted, and a rib.

Square 1 - a mandibular molar on the surface.

Square 3 - a premolar and a skull fragment, left side.

Square 10 - Skull fragment.

Square 14 - Skull fragment.

Square 16 - 2 skull fragments, right clavicle, right humerus, left ulna, rib, pelvis fragment, left tibia, right calcaneus, and metatarsus III R.

All these bones were at the bottom of a fissure filled with rubble and covered with a flat stone which had slipped into the fissure.

Animal Bones. These were found in all the squares except 2, comprising ox mandible with 3 teeth, 2 right pig maxillae, with 3 and 4 teeth respectively, pig astragalus, many sheep or goat teeth and bones, teeth of fox or dog, and about 30 unidentified fragments.

Pottery and Bone Tool. 26 cm below a disturbed surface, but in a pocket of undisturbed cave earth situated under a stalagmite floor extending from the south wall was found a small potsherd. This is coarse, grey ware with calcite

inclusions and smooth on the outside. It is difficult to say with certainty whether the piece is Neolithic A or Late Bronze Age, and this problem has also arisen in 2 other Welsh caves within the last 10 months. One bone has been roughly worked from a rib, perhaps of ox, into a pointed, blade-like instrument 10.2 cm long, 1.8 cm wide and about 3 mm thick. The point was slightly rounded and polished by use and there was a slight polish along both edges of the blade. The tool could have been made to pierce skins or as a stylus. It also bore three irregular, longitudinal striations caused by drawing a sharp stone or flint along it.

Conclusions. The first truly undisturbed human bones have now been found in the cave. The adult bones in the fissure seem to represent a burial which was covered with rubble and a capstone. The child bones are the remnant of a burial against the cave wall. Dating is provided by the pottery, but this is not conclusive until something more strictly identifiable like a rim is found. Of great interest is the discovery of hearths in the red silt layer, which takes human occupation back to before the 'stalagmite period'. It is considered that the red silt could have been laid down during the late Mesolithic period. There may be a correlation between the red silt here and the yellow silt in Lloches-yr-Afr, the cave excavated on the Great Orme 2 miles away. So far, of course, the Upper Palaeolithic is absent from the cave.

MELVYN DAVIES

For further information see S.W.C.C. Newsletter No. 77.

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EXCAVATION OF THE LLOCHES-YR-AFR ROCK SHELTER, GREAT ORME.

SUMMARY REPORT.

The archaeological excavation at Lloches-yr-Afr has now been completed. It lasted from October 1973 until 17th March 1974.

Deposits laid against a faulted face of carboniferous limestone alongside the Marine Drive were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.78 m and a width of 3.0 m for a distance of 1.9 m from the rear wall, and these notes are a summary of the findings and conclusions. As the volume of material was comparatively small it was completely removed. A demonstration section left for 2 weeks in March near the end of the work was destroyed by vandals.

An analysis of the finds made shows that use of the shelter started just at the end of the cold period following the last Ice Age (Weichselian). The first occupation was by a hyena which left behind the remains of the bones it had been crunching in a periglacial, rock-fall deposit. Many of the bone fragments have been assembled, and they seem to comprise the proximal end of a tibia, possibly of horse.

With an amelioration of climate, calcareous deposits which do not have the hardness of a tufa were laid down, suggesting a warm, damp climate, and the first signs of human occupation appear. A flint microlith which seems to be of a type fabricated during the Mesolithic Period (intermediate between the Old and New Stone Age) was discovered. It is difficult to date this as the Mesolithic culture was in vogue from about 8,000 years B.C. to 4,000 years B.C.

Another change of climate and something similar to the present climate came into being. Human occupation intensified and the cave deposits consist of successive charcoal layers, some interspersed with wood ashes, representing hearths. Near the bottom a potsherd was discovered which can be dated to one of two periods - the early Neolithic (about 3,000 years B.C.), or the Iron Age (perhaps 500 years B.C.). Unfortunately the fragment carries no distinctive markings, but its stratigraphical position suggests the older date. The hearth contains abundant food remains including limpet and mussel shells together with bone fragments. Sheep, pig, deer and ox were eaten, but the bones are always very fragmentary suggesting that small joints, perhaps precooked, were carried to the cave. It does not seem that people lived in this cave, there are no large animal bones, and the lack of pottery, except for one small fragment, is significant. Some of the bones have been fashioned into points or spatulas, probably as aids in eating the shellfish.

Oddities have been found such as the pile of about 30 white, quartz pebbles, probably collected from the beach below the cave and whose function is unknown. Also the pit which contained nothing more exciting than scraps of bone from meal remains, and a stake-hole examination of which showed that the roughly-cut stake had been hammered quite firmly into the cave floor. Such a stake possibly carried a cooking-pot over a fire, or skins hung up to dry.

Thanks are due to Dr. J. G. Evans for analysing all the molluscs collected. They are marine shells representing human food debris. Also to Mr. Paul Stevens of the Pedology Section, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Bangor, for detailed soil analysis on samples from the five main layers.

The results show that the shelter was an enclosed cave for millenia until the construction of the Marine Drive truncated it into the rock shelter now to be seen. The deposits were all very calcarous - good conditions for preserving bone and shell material, and the cave suffered not at all from flooding which, in other caves, often causes disturbance to the deposits.

Finally thanks are due to Mostyn Estates Ltd., who kindly granted permission for the excavations to be carried out.

MELVYN DAVIES

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Four Trips in the Reseaux

Felix Trombe

The Trombe is, at present, the sixth deepest cave in the world and University College Cardiff Caving Club, (U.C.4), had arranged a visit during August 1974. Situated in the French Pyrenees, it occupies a beautiful foothill site 20KMS. south east of St. Gaudens, in the province of Haute Garonne.

An ephemeral air of organisation pervaded the undertakings. The V.W. mini bus (Gorilla) was overhauled by Brian Clargo and J. Sloman. Dave Mills and Liz Ramsden looked to the catering, while Mike Appleyard held the finances. This left three, 'Bomber', Pete Robinson and myself with a slightly detached frame of mind.

The one glaring weakness in the proposed trip was the basic attitude of the participants. This fear was soon to be borne out. The plan was for eight of us to travel to the area by mini bus, into and onto which was also packed multifarious caving gear. Prior arrangements concerning the Trombe had apparently gone well and for this and other sites, the tackle consisted of 600 feet of ladders and 1400 feet of ropes. (Actually only 75 feet of ladder was used and never more than one rope.

Rennes, Nantes, Bordeaux and Toulouse slowly crept by. Three days after leaving we were there, encamped, purely by chance, in the spacious garden of the local caving club, at Labaderque, near Aspet. The two groups soon came to an amicable relationship, in spite of their suspicions of our caving ability and tackle. The Marseilles Speleological Group were off down the cave that evening, (Editor's Note - see what revised drinking laws could mean to us!), via the Trou du Vent, and generously agreed to show us a couple of entrances en route. These lie in extremely densely wooded terrain with few, if any landmarks. Our degree of enthusiasm now became manifest, only four people feeling like a stroll to the Trou du Vent, (T.D.V.), and the Gouffre Mile, 1KM further up the hill. It was a beautifully clear evening with magnificent views over the plains to the north.

The following morning it was decided to split into two parties, to attempt both entrances. Brian Clargo, Mike Appleyard and myself, opting for the T.D.V. were actually underground by 8.30 a.m. The only tackle in our possession was a 300 foot rope and a further short length. We expected the whole cave to be tackled by the French as they were currently working on a particular passage and surveying. The ropes could be used on the Puits Cognac, the 300 foot pitch leading to the bottom of the T.D.V. Completing our personal tackle went carbide, food and electric lighting.

The draughty entrance in the mixed coniferous-deciduous forest led to a small passage and within a few feet Pitch I, (20 feet). This and all succeeding pitches to the 'Main Chamber', the normal destination, were equipped with ropes and ladders. Pitch II followed after another short low crawl and was about thirty feet. A few tight rifts and one emerged at the top of the hundred foot pitch. This was of comparatively small dimensions and the backwall curtailed any fast movement. At the bottom the sinuous route continued, first horizontally, then at a steep angle. A few hundred feet brought one to what was to prove to be a sixty foot pitch with an awkward take off. More disconcerting was the bolt, similar to the 'parb a', which was found to be rather too small for its housing. Two hundred feet beyond came the final pitch, leading to the Main Chamber. This was equipped with the standard rope and ladder but both were very precariously attached to an inverted bolt. The whole abseil was free hanging and about 65 feet.

The trip so far had taken us one and a quarter hours. Without hanging around, we set off down the large tunnel, approximately 50 - 60 feet square. The scree descent was rapid, leading to a large gloomy chamber floored by dissected, dark brown mud banks. Here lay what could only be described as a rubbish tip. A one time camp, it was now a festering heap of tins, paper and sundry waste. On a flat area, dominating the scene, lay a dexion pyramid, a sort of frame for sleeping accommodation.

500 feet beyond, the large passage terminated at a squeeze through which the draught blew like a gale. Passing through, lights were immediately extinguished. Relighting, we continued the last few feet to a large circular

pot, about 20 feet in diameter. This was as deep as the trip was to go for Brian and Mike, so traversing across the top to where the fixed rope was bolted, I prepared to descend. This pitch, not the Puits Cognac, as expected, was about 60 feet and free. Unclipping, a streamway led off, walking height to begin with, but all too soon degenerating into a steeply descending bedding crawl. The draught was strong, but the carbide stayed alight. After 100 feet, the series of pitches that were indeed the P.C. began.

Checking the bolts was the first part of the routine, the second being to get into a position where one could clip on. The first pitch was over a flow-stone cascade, large and with little water, a total of 40 feet. The second was 20 feet descending diagonally into a dry tube, an alternative to the water shoot. This was to prove particularly difficult on the ascent as the bolt was located on the lip of the overhang. After a muddy and horizontal 20 feet, a steep 50 feet slope led to an immense void. Here the difficulties really began. The bolt was placed hazardously on an exposed right wall and it was impossible to pull up enough slack to be able to thread the 'Clog' descender and affix to the 'Whillans' Harness. It could only be described as an incredibly ingenious 'cock up', but not to be beaten, ascenders (Clogs), were adopted and the pitch undertaken in reverse. It proved to be 40 feet, onto a narrow ledge where the line had been securely tied off. Gathering shattered nerves, there was little consolation in the following pitch for its take off was probably worse. The bolt was placed about four feet down the face, but by lying over the ledge enough slack could be taken in to thread up. After a short fall therefore the pitch was straightforward, approximately 100 feet in depth.

At the bottom the wet and dry routes converged and a sizeable streamway, amazingly sculptured, led off. Within 250 feet three climbs, not exceeding 20 feet, were passed. At 500 feet a 25 foot pitch proved impassable but remembering ample rope at the base of the P.C., a return was made and 150 feet borrowed. Not far beyond the 25 feet, a 30 foot pitch was encountered and quickly passed. The immersion, 40°C, was complete. At the base of the second a huge stack of rotting wire ladder was found, following the streamway a continuation of over 100 feet in pleasant passage was made. This terminated in a nasty muddy climb which was eventually bottomed, about 80 feet. Wandering through a lugubrious chamber with vast accumulations of organic debris, the sump was found. This point lies at 509 metres below the entrance, (1276 metres). The sump itself looked relatively short but it occasionally backs up by 80 feet.

Above the terminal descent a search was made for the high level route which must exist, judging by the draught, but feeling fatigued it was soon abandoned. Then came the long slog back, finding the inadequacies of the Clogs. It took two and a half hours to climb the P.C., having to stop at the head of almost every pitch to relight the carbide.

By the time the Main Passage below the T.D.V. was reached the prussiking was over and the remainder of the way out was made on ladders, using self life-lining techniques. Not far from the 100 foot pitch, i.e. three pitches to go,

lights failed and it was a highly worried hour, fumbling in purgatorial darkness, before the carbide could be persuaded to function ... with the use of traditional emergency liquid supply. Daylight was greeted ten hours after entry, my escort in attendance.

Brian and Mike, incidentally, had made their way out of the other entrance, the Gouffre Mile, as arranged, having waited in the vicinity of the Main Passage until the other three arrived. The five then surfaced via the three short pitches and a multiplicity of short climbs, taking photographs en route.

The following day, Wednesday 14th, our objective was Goueil di Her. This, the flood resurgence of the Trombe, is situated some distance to the east of the sinks, at an altitude of 479 metres. Basically it is a large phreatic passage, including three sumps leading to an unpassed fourth. This is reputed to have been dived, by the French, to 100 feet depth, without anything of significance being found.

It was rather warm when the entrance, 6 feet in diameter, was discovered and lethargy was rife. With temperatures over 90° in the shade, the Cardiff spirit remained unruffled in spite of my sarcasm, so I set off alone. Wandering past the memorial plaque at the entrance, to the diver Henri Dufour, the draught was distinct. If the cave ended in a series of sumps, what about the draught?

The passage, on average 15 - 20 feet diameter, made its way, dry and easily, to the first sump, reputedly 60 feet. Slowly retracing one's steps, the sump by-pass was found, after about 100 feet, at the top of a 20 foot flow-stone climb. The squeeze at the top had successfully funnelled the air with the resultant formation of a wind tunnel. With only one carbide lamp, optimism was ebbing. A cell was clearly desirable. On the surface, the aura of festering was as evident as before, so returning to the fray the squeeze was passed and entry gained to a small high level series. The way on was obvious, just follow the gale. Three more squeezes and associated wind tunnel effects, a complete spiral, and the upstream side of the siphon was reached. In spite of some fabulous clusters of aragonite crystals the frustration was immense owing to the fact that the water was now 50 feet below, with an impossible descent. After a thoroughly disappointing search a return was made to find three of the U.C.4 just arriving at Sump I. We then all made our way out.

On emerging from Goueil di Her we returned to camp where the Marseilles S.G. had extended an invitation for one person to accompany them down the T.D.V., to view their techniques and to have a look at their new passage.

Underground by 4.00 p.m., I was very surprised and impressed by the speed and ease of movement of the 'wellied', dry-suited natives. For the duration of trip the Clog descender was temporarily exchanged for one of the Petzl variety which they adopted, finding it superior in several respects. Basically it consists of two fixed pulleys around which the 9 mm. rope is threaded. Its main advantage must be the fact that one does not need to remove it from one's

person, whilst clipping onto the rope.

We reached the Main Chamber somewhat faster than on the previous day and promptly set off up the slope to the new passage, over 1000 feet away. Surprisingly there was no desire to push on when we arrived at the limit of previous explorations. The barrier, a 50 foot pitch, clearly led somewhere very promising as the passage beforehand was large and descending slightly. However, the survey came first and when the known limit was reached, an exit was made. All back on surface by 11.30 p.m.

We were all up before 8.00 a.m. the following day, the others having decided to visit the Grotte de Pene Blaque. Situated in a steep escarpment about half way from the T.D.V. to the Goueil di Her, it is, unfortunately about two miles from the nearest road. One mile of this is strenuous walking through undergrowth, fighting off horseflies, nettles and soaring temperatures. There was clearly a lesson to be learnt here, namely to get one's approach march over very early in the day.

At 932 metres, the entrance, when it was eventually located, was very impressive. An eight feet diameter tube emitting a very strong, cold, draught opened onto the wooded cliff-face, 25 feet above the scree. The walk in, arriving at 10.00 a.m. had exhausted everyone and wandering into the cave near the rear of the party I was not surprised to find discarded items of equipment. Route finding, as usual, was easy, just follow the telephone wire. However, after a couple of thousand feet the gradient had steepened appreciably and eventually a particularly slippery slope had us stumped. As luck would have it, we had now jettisoned all tackle, and a long haggle ensued before someone could be persuaded to return for a rope. This done, five decided to press on but numbers soon dwindled to two. Then at last, we arrived in the roof of an immense passage, optimistically the one leading to the famous 'Dromadaire'. This lies at a depth of 200 metres below the entrance. Mike didn't fancy the 60 feet climb so I continued alone.

Heading west the passage was followed for about 1000 feet to a complete fill. Returning, the easterly direction was examined. Twenty minutes along the telephone wire and a camp was reached which was thought to be the 'Dromadaire'. However, the wire continued and about ten minutes later the awe inspiring and incomprehensible chamber was gained. Strolling through a stalagmite garden the right hand wall eventually returned to view and in five minutes the 1956 and '68 camp was located. Luckily a trickle of water was found and the parched outward journey commenced, finding the others about 1500 feet from the entrance taking photographs. This was to be the last time any tackle was to be used but luckily not the last caving trip.

One of the highlights of the 'expedition' was the memorable visit to Norbert Casteret, at his home near St. Gaudens. This set us on the quest of the 'P.S.M.' and in spite of flooding we made a speedy and highly exciting return trip, via the 'E.D.F. Tunnel', to the 'Verna' and Lepinaux Shaft. This took six hours.

The grand tour then commenced. Carcassonne, and the Mediterranean led to Grenoble where a solo trip was undertaken in the Caves de Sassenage (the resurgence of the Berges). The route home incorporated Geneva, Versailles, Bayeux and the Normandy Beaches.

Apart from the fact that we did little caving, it was a cheap and excellent introduction to several French regions. The Trombe itself was found to be most entertaining and although we did not manage a traverse of the whole system, useful information was gleaned that will undoubtedly prove of future use.

M. FARR

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From The Records

The following new additions to the library have been made in the past few months:

Climbing Blind by Colette Richard.

A blind woman's climbing and caving experiences in the Alps and Pyrenees.

Descent Nos. 28 and 29.

Proceedings of the University of Bristol Speleological Society
Vol. 13, No. 2.

B.C.R.A. Bulletin No. 4, May 1974.

B.C.R.A. Transactions Vol. 1, No. 2, April 1974.

Two papers, both by P. M. O'Reilly and L. G. Bray, on "A preliminary hydrological study in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu" and "Preliminary Oxidation studies on some waters from the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu system" will be of special interest to members.

Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club Newsletter No. 53.

The Red Dragon - The Annual Journal of the Cambrian Caving Council

Well worth reading and can also be purchased from F. Baguley at the ridiculously low price of 30p - excellent value.

Wessex Cave Club Journal No. 152 - 154, Vol. 13

Red Rose C.P.C. Newsletter Vol. 11, No. 2

Gotham Cave Group Newsletter Vol. 6, No. 6

Contains an interesting article on the "Caves of Pendine", Carmarthen.

We have also received journals from overseas clubs, including:-

National Speleological Society News (U.S.A.)

Union Internationale de Speleologie Speleologica Emiliana (Italy)

Die Hohle (Austria)

Schweizer Naturschutz Protection de la Nature (Switzerland)

Remember, these journals are obtained for your use.

P. FRANCIS
Records Officer.

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THE LAW AND ADMINISTRATION RELATING TO PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT -

D. A. Bigham, M. A., Oyez Publishing 1973 - £3.00.

390 pages - $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x $8\frac{1}{4}$ " - soft-bound

To me this comes as a most welcome book - a light in the darkness. Here for the first time has been collated and analysed law and administrative procedures relating to the protection of our cherished environment. Mr. Bigham's book is a comprehensive practical treatise of prime importance to the lawyer, the surveyor, the planner, and more to the point here, any individual who might have a concern about the protection of our environment, whether it be our caves and karst features or on a wider basis.

Although the subject matter would on the face of it appear to be a most boring one, this book is essentially highly readable, and beyond that it is a most valuable reference book, containing tables of Cases, of Statutes, of Rules and Orders - and rounded off with a most thorough and clearly set out Index.

Out of the fifteen chapters, it is most relevant here to mention the following: The Countryside, Agriculture and Forestry; Extractive Industries; Pollution of the Environment; The Countryside, Conservation and Recreation.

If you are at all concerned about the protection of our environment, the conservation of our caves etc., then I cannot commend this book too highly, as a bible to have at your side.

(Available from NSCAC - Bookshop, Whernside Manor, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria).

D. M. JUDSON

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REVIEW:

FRENCH FILMS ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - issued free on request by the Scientific Dept., French Embassy, 41 Parkside, London SW1X 7JP. (Revised Edition - 1974).

This could be a most useful catalogue for conference/symposia organisers, or social secretaries of caving clubs etc.

244 films are listed, all 16mm, and all being available free of charge from the agents, Contemporary Films Ltd. The catalogue is well organised into the various disciplines, Chemistry, Medical Science, Earth & Environmental Sciences, etc., and is well indexed. Date of issue and duration is given, together with a short precis on each film.

Of direct interest to the speleologist there are two films; "Cave Biology" (Laboratoire Souterrain du CNRS a Moulis 1972, colour 35 mins.) and "Cave Fauna" (Vandel 1959, colour 23 mins.); but there are many 'gems' in other fields, ranging from "Research on the Sexual Behaviour of Sows", to "Biology of an Earwig"!! Of a more general interest there are; "The Genesis of the French Alps" (23 mins.); "From Pelvoux to Viso - a Geological Flight over the Alps" (32 mins.); "Archaeology in the Laboratory" (16 mins.), and "Modern Methods of Archaeological Excavation". A useful little catalogue.

DAVID JUDSON

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