PLYMOUTH CAMING GROUP



NEWSLETTER & JOURNAL

PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

Newsletter and Journal

October, 1971 No. Forty

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Editorial

Club members have been more active during the past few months and there have been a number of trips out of Devon, as well as a considerable amount of work put in at Kitley, and the usual number of local trips. This revival of interest often does occur during the summer months, when the weather is more clement and some club members have more spare time. However, it is interesting to note that, almost parallel with this spurt, there has also been a growth in our membership figures. The two would seem to be inter-connected.

No doubt most members have heard about the tragic death last weekend of a seventeen year old schoolboy in Swinsto Hole, Kingsdale. He was a member of an experienced school party, who fell 46ft. into a 'crevice'. It is thought that he undid his lifeline whilst passing through equipment to be lowered down the pitch. We extend our sympathies to his parents.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Madam Editor,

I read with interest your editorial regarding Cave Rescue in Devon. I am delighted to note you are interested in cave rescues. So are the six teams and two doctors within the Devon Cave Rescue Organization, the Chief

Constable of Devon and the Cornwall Police. The Cave Rescue Organization of Great Britain are satisfied with D.C.R.O. We have standards to meet. It is true we have not hit the headlines and I trust we never will because it is only when someone is in trouble the Rescue teams appear in the limelight. I am sure my friends from Upper Wharfedale and their less organised ? team workers from Mendip, South Wales, Derbyshire would not appreciate your remarks. Several of D.C.R.O. members devote their spare time to instructing young people in correct technique of caving, believing that prevention is better than cure. Your own club has a rescue team. I would suggest you act as victim and let them rescue you. I am sure you will be impressed with their performance. I was. With regard to the Plymstock Venture Scout Escapade I do not know the details, the Police did not call out D.C.R.O. and they are the only authority who can call out rescue teams. But I will enquire from Police H.Q. Muddlemore what exactly did happen. Perhaps we could help the Scouts in some way to prevent a recurrence of whatever happened.

Thankyou for your interest,

Yours Sincerely,

F.G. Barlow

(Co-ordinator D.C.R.O.)

22, Northfield Rd.,

Okehampton, Devon.

Ed. - I would refer Mr. Barlow to the article in the Western Evening Herald, mentioned in last issue's editorial

which referred, not to a rescue, but to the Plnstock Venture Scouts' hope of rescue should anything happen.

Dear Editor,

Regarding your editorial on the D.C.R.O., I would like to add my views.

Consider that the editorial was that of a Northern club criticizing, say, Upper Wharfedale teams. The club and its editor would be written off as cranks; the people concerned with rescue would have probably been rendered helpless with laughter, and the editorial received merit, or derision, as a comic piece.

The editorial was, it seems, taken in many different ways by many different people. The reactions have one thing in common: we lack confidence.

Rescue is, as the editorial implies, the responsibility of all of us who read these pages and pursue recreation underground, regardless of what club we belong to in Devon. One thing must be made quite clear: regardless of area, sooner or later, a nasty accident arises, which needs every reserve the C.R.O. of the area can call upon. At these times and during the aftermath the local C.R.O. is subjected to the self-appointed firing-squads within British caving, when learned doctors queue to write learned treaties on the particular failings of the hapless rescuers who were, after all, only doing their best.

The potential for a caving disaster in Devon, at first, seems slim, but one only has to visualise something

going very wrong in a Devon or Cornish mine to realise that the most skilled and polished teams of anywhere would be hard taxed to effect rescue.

Within each area a system has evolved, with needs and general experience, leading to a set pattern of rescue. In Devon we have many disadvantages; we have not had the hard experience with which the others have learned the form. We are not confined to a few square miles within which we can pool our resources and equipment: we are extremely scattered with little or no communication between groups.

If, or when , the crunch comes, we can only meet the odds with well-polished and co-ordinating teams and a well-oiled co-operating organization at the helm. Then, but not now, can we say "Thank God for D.C.R.O."

Mike Jeanmaire

Dear Editor,

re: Ascend v. Descend (last newsletter)

This article excited in me an over-whelming urge to spew, but I managed to settle for a muffled yawn.

I am, if necessary, quite prepared to provide concrete facts to fill in the deliberate vagaries (ed. - Little Oxford Dictionary - "vagary - unaccountable proceeding; freak") in my articles, but I feel no need to justify myself to R. Cawthorne, who isn't, as he admits, the committee. Particularly, when he is fully aware of my viewpoints and, if he's not, then that's purely as a result of his own failure to socialise.

My Rabley Cave article was neither intended to be caustic or personal to anyone within the club. Hasn't the club in the past had more than it's fair share of petty- political back-biting? The last thing I want to see is yet another era of super-armchair committees, social cliques and similar non-caving events developing.

If R. Cawthorne is so sensitive that he takes offence at any statement that he cares to see as directed at him, then he should sit quietly in the sidelines of the club with dignity and stop kicking up such a childish fuss!

Yours Faithfully,

D. Send

Shhh! ..... You know who .....

Furnished alcove at rear of Little Man Chamber, THE CENTRE OF WORLD CAVING ACTIVITIES, DEVON.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to

Liz Jeannaire,

12, Beaumont Place, Plymouth,

PL4 8EA.

The copy-date for the next newsletter will be Nov. 25th. Please can I have all material in on time, so that the copies can be mailed well before Christmas. Thankyou.

The Developement of Afton Red Rift

Studies of Devon caves have been mainly concerned with details of their phreatic developement during the Pleistocene. The Devonian limestones have been lithified for some three-hundred and seventy million years, and it seems unlikely that cave formation has been restricted to this last million years or so. Evidence for a much earlier phase of developement is available at Afton Red Rift Cave. We should first consider why Afton is a rift, and not a series of intercommecting galleries on a similar level, as are most Devon systems.

Both phreatic and vadose waters will erode along the weakest discontinuities in a mass of limestone. Most of the limestones in Devon exhibit some form of bedding plane, which offer easy channels to circulating water. The large Devon caves - Bakers Pit and Prid - are almost certainly developed along flat bedding planes. At Afton the limestone is not bedded, but is massive, and contains a fauna of corals and algae. When deposited, the sediment probably formed a part of a reef, similar to those found off the west coast of Australia today. There are no bedding surfaces in the rock through which water could travel.

Since then the Devonian rocks have been folded and faulted. Study of the Geological Survey Torbay sheet (three 50) shows that the limestone in the Afton district is disected by numerous faults. 29% of 30.8km. of faults marked on the map, in the vicinity of Afton, trend ENE,

a direction parallel to the cave entrance. It is likely that the entrance rift is developed along a minor fracture, subparallel to this set of faults. However, most faults are fairly straight, and Afton is notorious for several of its corners, where the rift turns through about 90°. There is another set of faults in the district which trend NNW, and these may also be involved in the development of the cave. The awkward corners in Afton may be the result of erosion along the intersection of two faults, where the rock is considerably weakened, and may be removed easily. This may account for the fact that the widest parts of the Afton rifts are usually at the corners.

If we wish to discuss when the cave formed, it is important to know the age of the faults, which must have preceeded the cave formation. The map shows that the faults cut Permian rocks, which are about 225 million years old. Thus the faults, and hence the caves, are younger than 225 million years. The question is, how much younger?

The final phase in the development of Afton has been its decoration, and the covering of the formations with the red mud. The numerous solution type cavities in the walls, and the interconnecting nature of the passages indicate that this was preceeded by a phreatic stage of growth, when the cave was beneath the water table. At Buckfastleigh there is evidence for a similar event during the Pleistocene. However, the phreatic characteristics of the cave are imposed on a large rift (by Devon standards)

and on passages like the Bypass Tunnel, which are very similar to small pots. There is an almost Mendip style 'ghost' shape to the cave, which is strong evidence that it has suffered some developement under vadose waters, when an active streamway formed the major passages, above the water table. At this time, before the Pleistocene, the rocks must have been exposed on land.

The only occasion when the South West of England has been elevated above sea level in the recent geological past was in the Permian and Triassic periods, between 225 and 180 million years ago. Devon formed part of a Highland area, similar in relief, and probably in climate, to the Pyrenees today. Afton may have been initiated after the formation of the faults, but before the end of the Triassic. This cave may have a history which extends over 200 million years. If so, there must be a very old resurgence somewhere in the Afton district.

Dave Hobson

Drake's Island Cave

Drake's Island is a splodge of rock in the middle of Plymouth Sound, inhabited by seagulls, trees and lots of boring people pretending to be adventurous. Most of the rock is non-cave-forming and, therefore, as boring as the people. However, there is a tiny, tiny patch of limestone

running in a narrow wedge through the 'ill. On the north side of the island there is a built sea wall, and, at the botton, the sea has washed away a few rocks providing access to the cave. Inside the cave consists of a gap, twenty feet long behind the sea wall, and in one corner is the 'cave proper', a dent in the wall about three feet deep. The whole thing is about fifteen feet long. However, in the next cove is a similar wall, and a similar hole. It was unfortunately underwater as the tide was in. Perhaps it may be worth visiting at a later date.

The cave's innermost reaches were explored by Bob Cawthorne, Ted Cawthorne, Ann Cawthorne, Shelley Cawthorne and Brandy Cawthorne on June 22nd. On requesting one of the boring inhabitants that P.C.G. night, perhaps, visit the dungeons of the island, we were told that they are far too dangerous, only experienced underground explorers could visit them. We are underground explorers.

Oh, in that case, they are even more dangerous. And you need Oxygen masks, and there are giant men eating worms down there.
C..... on a bicycle and this is an adventure centre.

Bob Cawthorne

Change of Address

Dave Ford I16, Old Laira Road, Plymouth.

Cliffords

For some reason which we can't quite remember, Alan Henshaw and I found ourselves crashing through the undergrowth of the Gorge at Chudleigh, stumbling towards Cliffords Cave. Stumbling because we were quite confortably jugged up, as were the two people with us, one of whom Alan had dragged out of a Plymouth pub promising a nice easy novice cave with proper gear provided. One short-sleeved jumper, flyless and kneeless muddy jeans, no helmet, no light, and sandels.

The entrance chambers needed digging, as usual, to get past the badgers' dung heaps. Mr. Henshaw was delegated to this task, which, being a faithful sherpa, he completed without a complaint, but not without the hysberical babblings of a man in fear. And now for the report on the cave:

Crawl,..... crawl, crawl, crawl, ...crawl, gruht, crawl, ...crawl, oh, a side crawl, crawl, ...crawl, duck, squeeze, duck, out backwards, crawl, ... main passage, crawl, and crawl, and scalloped, jagged-hooked crawl,.....(air steamy, smelling of sweat, methane gas and best bitter) .....and more crawling and then ..... boulders, about face, crawl, ...200 yards later surface, rain ..... and stand. Negotiating Cliffords Cave, it can be safely said, involves a tendency towards crawling.

It is not surprising that the club has not had a meet to this cave since I965 (before Exeter Spelsoc (E.U.S.S.) pushed velvet passage tp the sump). But still, it was an enjoyable graunch and members would be well advised to arrange at least one visit.

Footnote - Palace Quarry at Chudleigh has now reopened. The extent of the workings will be more than trebled and one wonders what effect it will have on Cliffords. The Nature Conservancy people have been approached and are at present investigating, as the gorge is a S.S.S.I.

Steve Poole

Low New Road Rift Cave - Yealmpton

Tuesday, I5th. June, I97I. Chatting to the site excavators at Yealmpton, discover that they are having difficulties because they keep hitting bed-rock. 'Nearly lost a bar down one hole over there, it goes in quite a way'. J.K.D. investigates, sticks head into a small hole at botton of Sewer Trench excavation, decides to call back later when workmen have finished for the day. Later that evening Vanessa (my wife) and I return to the hole where the obvious way on is barred by a large boulder. I manage to persuade my mini-wife that if we dig away some of the soil at the side of the boulder, she may be able to get through.

Vaneessa always does as she is told and, within fifteen minutes, she'd bottomed this new cave. I had her securely lifelined in case the cave was a big one and she tried to run away. It wasn't; she didn't.

The following day the sewer pipes had to be laid and the trench refilled.

John K. Dryden

Fairwater Dream

I pace the green turf of Lindridge fields
With hazel twig held 'twixt outstretched arms.
I plead with my branch to bend and yield
When I cross subterranean vaults concealed.

For somewhere below, I believe, there lies
A labyrinth, winding through sandwiched beds,
To link with a torrent of considerable size,
That runs through clean tunnels to Fairwaters' 'Rise'.

Many moths I have searched: quarry, wood and stream,
And lugged at places where hearsay relates
Caverns were found that have since choked with earth.
Then, at last, in Coombesend Chasm, I stood.

Into the depths I plunged, enthralled,
Through crystal galleries and muddy tubes.
Yet, below ninety feet, each route grew too small,
So again, I divine, tense at each footfall.

Steve Poole

Meet Report

Phoenix United, Stowe's Section

Aug. 30th.

Members Present:

Steve Poole Kevin Tole Alan Henshaw Peter Carter (guest)

A trip had been planned to botton Phoenix on Bank Holiday Sunday, and it actually took place as planned.

After an early start, which includdd a few jugs of bitter and a 'genuine nock Cornish, tourist-type extortionate pasty', we arrived at the entrance shaft to the first stope at Io'clock. Starting to rig the I20ft. pitch we encountered the usual P.C.G. contradictions and innovations. After an hour and a half of cavers' jargon and relief from the bitter, Steve disappeared, followed by Kevin, Pete and myself. We all reached the botton of the stope and started to load tackle onto our armchair caver, cum sherpa, cum what you want ,names not mentionned. Festooning him with ladders, headers, pulleys, ropes, we

followed his carbide smells down into the first level. Shafts were disappearing into the mine everywhere and, after dropping stones down a few, we followed the level across a very interesting but hairy-fairy narrow ledge of rubble with a sheer drop of 100ft. plus. We had a quick boulder-rolling session, and decided to rig our second pitch. This was down a virgin shaft and, after a lot of straws had been drawn, and a lot of cheating had taken place, Pete bravely disappeared down what is now known to be a 70ft. shaft. He eventually came out in the botton of a second stope, connecting with the usual route for bottoning Phoenix. We all climbed down and had a look around at a very extensive stope. It would have been quite impressive if we could have seen the small dots of the miners' candles and the miners working the stope looking like ants compared with the expanse that surrounded them. We finally collected the remaining tackle and proceeded along the level towards the final pitch. Eventually we reached what seemed to be a dead end, but a small hole situated on the right-hand side of the level gave way to a black, resounding void. We quickly set about laddering it and decided that Steve and Pete should descend first, and then climb back out, and lifeline Kevin and myself down. Steve and Pete quickly disappeared and the only indication of their presence was contributed by noises of large boulders crashing into water, and mad cries of excitement. After a long, uninteresting wait, Kevin and myself started screaming for them to climb out. They finally climbed back out and did the honours of lifelining the two of us down. (one at a time.) My first impressions were that

this made Hanger Passage seem very insignificant. I shall not attempt a description because I could not discern the walls from the void to acquire the dimensions. After a very interesting walk around the stope, we decided it was time to head for grass and try to get some drinking time in. A lot of grunting and groaning brought us to the bottom of the last pitch. Pete climbed first, followed by Steve and myself, leaving our gallant volunteer, Kevin to tie tackle on for hauling to the surface. Great difficulty was had in hauling tackle up to the surface, but greater difficulty was experienced when lifelining Kevin out. A great cry for "manual haulage" was heard and we hoisted Kevin and I00' of ladder half way up the I20' pitch. The last man got dragged out at twelve thirty and, after cleaning the tackle and storing it in the car, we ate heartily on Spam bread, and Spam, Spam butter and Spam sandwiches.

Alan Henshaw

Meet Report

South Wales

8th. to I4th. April

Members present:

R. Cox M. Cox

During the Easter holidays my brother and I went up to South Wales accompanied by our parents. When we arrived

there we found nothing to do except caving, so off we went to the Brecon Mountain Centre to find out about the caves. They supplied us with plenty of information.

So, the next day, we drove down to the Llangattock escarpment, where Aggie is situated. After getting changed the two of us left for the caves while Mum and Dad stayed behind. It is a fairly long walk before you come to the first cave, which is Eglwys Faen (three thousand feet). This we decided to do. At the entrance we met a party of cavers who told us the way, which is straight forward. It consists of a very large chamber with straight passages leading off, all of which eventually end. In some places it can be very wet. There is also a higher series to this cave which, as I found, is very difficult to get up into, but really a ladder is the easiest to use, as mentionned in the book 'Caves in Wales and the Marshes'. The ladder is not essential for the main part of the cave. I might mention that, in this cave, there are a lot of very low, dusty crawls, After a three hour caving trip we came out into the warm sunshine for some coffee. On the way to the car we noticed another cave at the end of the old tramway, so we decided to explore. The cave, itself, is more or less one long passage, which divides into two halfway along, and carries on to a dig, where it ends. This cave is about 250ft. long.

Sunday, IIth. April

We were up early with our gear packed and drove to the

famous White Horse Cave (Porth-yr-ogof) to find the entrance flooded by cabbages. We were soon changed and ready to go down to the entrance, when, to our surprise, some members of the P.C.G. turned up. But we didn't wait for them and so we entered the cave. It is an easy cave with some crawling, swimming, sumping and walking. We went in the main entrance and to the right beneath the two avens, and out into the stream passage, and turned right, again following a stream, which led to the creek. So we turned back a bit and went towards Hywel's Grotto, which is a long crawl which opened out into a small chamber which we thought was Hywel's Grotto, but the book shows different pictures which we did not see. So we are still unsure. After leaving that crawl we crossed the creek by keeping to the left-hand side wall where the water is fairly shallow. We then entered the Maze, which stands up to its name. We covered all the Maze and got lost a few times, even with the survey in our hands. We arrived at the entrance after retracing our steps. We then decided to do the upper stream passage which comes out at Entrance C. This, we found out, could be quite a laugh. So we kept running in Entrance E (Main Entrance) and turning left up the upper stream passage and out at Entrance C. We did this a few times until we got tired. Just before the Main Entrance we found Entrance D_2 which is situated up in the right-hand bank. This drops down into the Maze ,which leads back to the Main Entrance. After having a swim in the big pool outside the Main Entrance, in we went again, this time to the White Horse itself, which can be seen from the Main

Entrance. Just past the White Horse is a stream passage which leads to Sump 5. After looking at this, we went back out of the entrance and over the top of the cave to have a look at the resurgence, where there is a very deep pool, which leads to a waterfall. Between the Main Entrance and the Resurgence there is another entrance which we went down into, and it opened out into a wide chamber, covered with shingle and water.

We soon left this and returned to the car where Mum was waiting with a good idea. This was to get straight into the car with all our wet gear on, drive straight to Little Neath and do the caves there. On arriving we found lots of other cavers who were scattered here and there. We followed the instructions in the book which led us to White Lady Cave, and Town Drain. On arriving at Town Drain we found a party of twelve with some bang! Stuff which they were using to dislodge a few boulders in Town Drain. After attempts to use a 2-cell as a detonator, a three-cell was used and what a noise, which was muffled by I,000ft. of rock and then there were the vibrations, which shook everything. Soon after the cavers disappeared to inspect the damage and came back choking with the fumes. We waited a few minutes and then decided to enter the cave, which we managed to penetrate about 400ft. before we could see no further, go no further because of the blanket of gas, which was dense. Back at the surface we came to the conclusion that Town Drain is what its name suggests: dead round tubes. White Lady Cave is opposite and the other party had been in. We watched one caver

traversing the wall with 50ft. of water below him, and he nearly didn't make it. After a long trek up the dry bed of the Ned, we went over to see Little Neath Entrance, which is at water level, and a small entrance. About half-an-hour later a few of the other party arrived for a quick descent and us being fools, (my brother and I) having no wetsuits, joined the party of two, which made four, I think. We disappeared down into the bowels of the earth. The stream passages are very small and very wet. After what seemed to be about 400ft. we stopped for a chat. We found out that they were from Yorkshire and doing a tour of the South Wales Caves. One of them wanted to visit our glorious caves in our homeland, Devon. After a torturous crawl back to the entrance, Mum was waiting, wondering where we had been bacause we didn't tell her about this little cave. Soon we were changed and back at our caravan in the Brecon Beacons.

Tuesday, 13th. April

We set off with our gear packed for the caves near Dan-yr-ogof. We arrived there just before lunchtime and decided to be led into the caves by a guide. The tour took about an hour and led us nearly a mile into the cave. Soon after arriving at the entrance again we bought a ticket for Cathedral Cave (Tunnel Cave), which was first opened to the public on the 8th. April. The cave is about 200yds. long, 60ft. high and over 60ft. wide throughout the showcave piece. The guide was very friendly, so we got talking and told him that we were members of P.C.G. He stayed in the cave

with us for two hours, talking about caving and about Cathedral Cave, which cavers can penetrate further than the show cave. The Guide is a member of S.W.C.C., which was very helpful. After giving our goodbye greetings and a tale of what a guide's job is like, we emerged into the sunlight to have some lunch, because we must eat sometime in our lives.

After a long thought, it was decided to visit Craig-y-nos Quarry Cave, which is about half-a-mile down the road from Dan-yr-ogof. To find this cave with the directions from the book took about an hour. Quickly we were changed and into the cave, which has a small entrance, which leds to 1,000ft. of cave system. Throughout the cave, the passages require crawling and getting damp. The passages are all going downhill and are very like tubes, as mentionned in 'Town Drain' earlier on. At the end of some of the tubes a stream can be found, which disappears into a pile of gravel at the end of each passage. Also throughout this cave animal bones can be found, especially near the entrance. This cave takes an hour to do throughly, that is if you don't get lost, which is very easy. After looking at a few more holes in the quarry we returned to the caravan and, after a long journey on the Wednesday, returned to Devon, after a successful caving holiday.

M. Cox

Meet Report

The Rowten-Kingsdale Saga

Sunday, May 30th.
Monday, May 31st.
Tuesday, June 1st.
Weekend, July 3rd. to 4th.

Members Present:

Fish Steve Poole Paul Hatherley Rod Jones

Kingsdale: the magic is not only in the name. It was long sought for and hard won by the caving generations that dreamed of a master cave, then hypothetical, now reality, masked behind the waters of Keld Head. This is our part of the tale.

Bob Leakey was the first to tackle the sump at the bottom of Rowten. In Bob's own Words, it was a sitting duck, and his own efforts, without the aid of today's sophistication, almost 30 years ago, was to cheat him by perhaps as little as 3 feet, of entering Kingsdale.

The way in was to be via the Simpsons-Swinsto system, and the difficulties encountered in exploring the master cave, forced the original parties to enlist the help of the Northern Cave Diving Group to find an easier way in. The sump at the bottom of Rowten was dived and tied in with the expanding Kingdale system.

My introduction to Rowten-Kingsdale was by conversation with the late Bill Frakes and John Ogden on the feasibility of free-diving into Kingdale. It was decided that it was worth a try but Valley Entrance was opened and Rowten was laid aside as too drastic an enterprise. The Valley Entrance was to give impetus to the through trip and exchanges in various combinations. The tigers began to search for new routes within Kingsdale: Rowten was the obvious choice.

Dennis Summerbell, the veteran E.U.S.S. free-diver laid siege, working alone, often unable to use the diving line, swimming free, was beaten by the last few feet into Rowten.

New Year's Eve, 1970, Liz, A. Moll and myself made grandiose (ed. - drunken) plans for Summerbell to eventually overcome his final pinnacle, but it was New Year's Eve and, like the hangover on January 1st., these plans too were forgotten - almost.

Whitsun Sunday, May 30th.

found Liz and I looking for accomodation for Steve Poole. At the N.P.C. we found Moll, who was merely obeying his last orders and had come up to Yorkshire for the Kingsdale plot. We immediately made arrangements to have a go next day. We hurriedly went back to His Lordship'S (Mike Wooding) and broke the news. His face fell a few degrees as he told us that John Gardner and himself had planned the same trip to the extent of having the bolts and line ready-packed for the job. Being a good type, so we thought, he kindly let us carry on with his gear.

Monday, May 31st.

Rod Jones, Paul Hatherley, Steve Poole and Fish, the P.C.G. element were, as usual, late by the time we reached Kingsdale. Moll had left with a large party of M.C.G. (Mendip Caving Group) sherpas, as they were carrying diving gear in. We decided not to take our own sets, just the line and bolting gear. We met the sherpas on the way in.

At the sump we found various M.C.G. types dotted about various air-spaces, looking for Moll, who had, of course, disappeared with diving gear. I met Alan Wicks in the first bell, he was holding the line at the point where Moll had disappeared. Moll eventually came back, but as his mask had flooded, he had not seen much of the route he had taken. I then put the bolts in the first and second air-bell. On the return trip, I found that Moll had found the only possible squeeze in the entire sump; this brought our busy work to nil!

Tuesday, June 1st.

Mike Wooding, John Gardner (L.U.S.S.) and Fish, Steve Poole (P.C.G.) We returned to Kingsdale sump. A second bolt was put in the first bell to avoid Moll's constriction. Wooding and I then continued to Rowten, belayed the line and removed the old N.C.D.G. line.

The rest of that week saw Steve Poole and I looking for likely lads to descend Rowten. We failed to do this, so we left for Devon, leaving Kingsdale to the winds and His Lordship.

Weekend, 5th. - 6th. June

A L.U.S.S. (Lancaster University) party free-dived into Rowten. John Gardner and Wooding dived the second upstream sump to the first air-bell.

Weekend 3rd. - 4th. July.

Despite internal attempts at sabotage, Horice was set on a northerly course with Rod Jones, Paul Hatherley, Liz and myself. Driving in shifts, we eventually arrived with the dawn at Kingsdale. Having nowhere else to sleep, we kipped down outside the valley entrance. We rose again in search of the Orpheus and breakfast. Malc Woods was eventually found; Hobit, unfortunately, had to visit a dentist - what some people will do to avoid caving!

We changed and started the abysmal task of humping tackle over the moor to Rowten. It was all Paul and I could do to carry a few yards and collapse. We reached the Turbery Road and, eventually, the roaring gash in the moor that if Rowten.

Rod and Malc were rigging the first pitch - an awkwerd mossy gully, on the left of the waterfall - at the bottom of which neither we n or P.U. were quite sure what to do next. A trench, some 50ft. deep took the stream. Malc and Paul made their way along the bottom via a car-wreck, to the head of a deep pitch, which would mean climbing in the full force of the stream. A traverse at the top of the trench brought us again to the top of the shaft - this, we decided, could be the way on. By now we had spent some two hours, getting this far; we were not sure whether we were at the same pitch P.U. meant us to be at. Thunder rolled over the moors above our heads; we had inadvertently used the wrong sequence of tackle and did not know how much gear we now had left. As a final straw I lost the party's only whistle. Malc and I decided that the shambles ahd gone on for long enough but the intrepid Rod had other ideas. He felt convinced that this was the way on and volunteered to descend. We rigged the pitch and, within minutes, Rod yelled back our affirmative. Paul quickly followed and then Malc and I

rigged a double-lifeline, with which I wished him luck. The descent was rapid, the pitch clear: the fall entered on the right, filling the shaft with noise and spray. I joined Paul and Rod on a broad, spray-swept ledge at the 110ft. mark. Below was a void, of which we could make out very little, due to wetness. Paul and I huddled under a ledge, feeling cold and miserable. I could, by this time, imagine a C.R.O. report "they then made the fatal mistake, etc., etc.," Was this all really worth our while, for a so-called, dubious first?

All was not well with the fail dangerous double lifeline - frantic yells echoed up and down the shaft. Eventually Malc had to abseil - luckily he had had the sense to bring the spare ladder with him. He grinned "Well, we're not coming back this way, are we?" We were, to say the least, committed, but we were only half way down the gumtree. We pulled back the ladder, tacked on another 30ft. and prepared to descend the last, violent, wet 50ft. On landing at the bottom, Rod and I skirted a series of large holes in the floor, that took the stream, and traversed into an abandonned rift. We headed around corners for 100ft. until we came back above the stream and a dry, 30ft. pitch down to it. Paul and Malc joined us with the rest of the tackle. Down we went, along the stream, to the final pitch, a wet 45ft. Rod insisted on belaying in the stream. I was sent down first to scout out the sump. Here we assembled for the final obstacle. We got out our masks and weight belts, read the L.U.S.S. quaint notices on free-diving. The sump was sheer pleasure after the roughness of the pot. The first part from Rowten is 27ft., roomy, pleasant, with good visability, all came through without a hitch. The next part, 12ft., brought us to the final bell. A short duck and we stood in Kingsdale. From here we crawled and walked through the master cave until we eventually arrived at the surface at Valley Entrance - victorious.

We decided to detackle on Sunday. This took us three hours. Rod and Paul went through to Rowten via Kingsdale, to clear the last two pitches, and took the gear out through the sumps. Malc and I went to the head of the main pitch. Our thanks to Bob and Linda who helped us get the gear off the moor, and to Malc whose skill and perseverance piloted us through.

Fish

Meet Report

North Wales

19th. - 26th. August

Members Present

Paul Hatherley Keith Loze Dave Hobson Pete Hobson

Pete Williams

We said goodbye to Plymouth at 4.30a.m. on the Thursday. We decided to take a Plymothian thunderstorm up with us, so all the way up it rained. It took over three hours to get to Bristol, longer than usual because of the storm.

Having met the Hobbits in Bristol, we had some breakfast and then drove across the Severn Bridge and finally into Wales, where we didn't get lost, and found the Dan-yr-ogof caves. We had decided to visit Tunnel Cave, or Cathedral Cave, as it is now known, so after tea, we paid our fee and waited. After half an hour the bell rang and we walked up the path with the guide.

The cave entrance is a man-made tunnel through solid rock for 100ft. It gives way to a very impressive chamber full of lots of pretties. On one side is a big, dark gap. When the lights are turned on you can see that the gap was, in fact, a gap. A massive great streamway going on into the distance. After several hundred yards of this passage with its formations and little stream, a large lake appears with a tiny waterfall in one corner. This seemed slightly artifical to us but the cabbages didn't seem to notice it. We left the little electric pump at the top of the waterfall watering the water of the water falling down the falling waterfall as it fell to the plastic impregnated water of the lake.

We left here late afternoon and drove on up to North Wales. The P.C.G. mob halted at a campsite north of Barmouth, within easy reach of the goldmines, manganese mines, copper mines and iron mines which seemed to profound the area.

Finding a place to pitch the tent wasn't easy among all the cabbage survival box crates. "Here" said someone, so, with a loud screech and revving up of engines, we raced to the large area of grass in the middle of the site, crushing several tents and sprouts

in the process. The tent was put up in an hour and people stepped back as the growing monster took shape. Everyone slept well that night, happy and contented.

T

The bacon and eggs were cooking noisily in the frying-pan next morning, so I decided to get up. One hour later we were driving back through Barmouth to a little place called Bontddu. The mile walk up to the gold mine didn't take long and we were soon at the entrance to a heavily draughting adit. Deciding to come back in a few days, we explored the dumps. Being different from the cabbages swarming all around us, we were not satisfied with ordinary bits of pyrite or fools gold so, convinced we would find nothing, we made our way up the valley to Vigra Mine. Here, Dave informed us, we would find lots of erythrite, a pink hydroxide of manganese. This is fairly rare in this part of the country and we found quite a bit of it on this dump. By now it was gurgle time. The afternoon was spent eating, sorting our rocks, looking at maps, sleeping and other similar habits.

After a meal of fried meatybeggs and eggy bacon on Saturday morning, the Loze transporter took us to the foothills of the Cader Idris mountain range. Parking the car at the National Trust car park, we began the walk up the Fox's path. After climbing 1,300ft. the six of us reached the second lake called Llyn y Gadair. Now there is a piece of useless information, one of the many I shall give because I am armed with a 6In. map.

One of the members of the party sat down here and didn't get up again, so the five of us continued up the last stage. This consisted of a massive scree slope, over 1,000ft. high, which was very loose. After well over an hour of struggling, the top was reached. Another ten minutes of walking led to the smmmit named Penygadair, which is at a height of 2,927ft. A bite to eat and then down the scree slope again. It took only ten minutes to get down and another 40 to reach the car. Food and drink and then into Dolgellau for an ice cream.

Back in the campsite, someone suggested a swim. Five of us got changed in the middle of the deserted beach and dived into the warm sea.The sixth, sensible one among us stood on the beach and watched.

Sunday was rest day for the two Petes. They wanted to play at touroids and look at Barmouth and the sea front. We were not interested in such things so we drove up a lane to the top of Barmouth, intending to look at Hafoty Mines. This mine runs North from the town following the managanese grit formation. Having walked two miles north from where the car was parked, we met the first mine dump. We were looking for Psilomelane, the rare manganese ore, but nothing but copper pyrite was found. It was pretty stuff so we collected some of it, but it was the Psilomelane we were after.

Two hours and a few miles later the right dump was found and we went mad, picking up all we could see of this grey ore. By now it was getting late so we went back to Barmouth and the seaside.

Monday morning was not a very good morning. In fact, it was a terrible morning. The weather was fine, it was just trying to get up which made it so bad. The meaty eggs and eggy bacon was fried by that well-known egg-fryer, Dave - wait-for-it - Hobson. The beans were produced by Mr. Loze, the butter directed onto the bread by Pete and Pete and the script for the coffee was written by Paul.

By 11a.m. everyone was ready, so we set off for sunny Anglesey. Having reached Beddgelert, Bethgellert, Beddlegurk, whatever, we headed along the A.487. 7miles later Betws Garmon was reached. According to a book, a large Siderite vein lived here. Looking around, the site which we saw caused us permanent damage. Big, black holes staring down at us from the hillside. It was just like Castle' an'Dinas only on a much larger scale. Crossing a field, a large adit met our eyes, then another full of lots of water and nice and open. Climbing a few hundred feet, we reached the first stope. Looking down you could here (sic) roaring waterfalls. Looking straight on the stope carried on into the distance with beams of light coming down from the surface at various intervals, causing the walls to glow and leaving the unknown depths in inky darkness. Shivering at the thought of a fantastic mining trip here, we left the underground workings for another time and looked at the dumps. Plenty of siderite was found and some rare Pisolithic ore: a heavy grey-black material containing round fossil-like structures.

It was now getting late so we drove on up North. Caernarvon

castle was next stop. One hour was long enough here, so we left the cabbages and drove on across the Menal Bridge and into Anglesey. We decided, first of all, to visit a small village to the west, called Llanfairpwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch, which, translated, means St. Mary's Church in a hollow by the white hazel, rlose to the rapid whirlpool, by the red cave of St. Tysilic. Having played at aabbages here for a while we left for the North.

We were heading for Parys Mountain, a hill in N. Anglesey full of open cast and underground copper and arsenic works. We counted about 2 dozen shafts, some 50ft., some 100ft. to 150ft. and a few at 300ft. One of them still contained the original bob. The beam appeared in very good condition. The hill is very barren and there are many large quarries around the top with some large carbona type holes in the sides of them. The whole area is very loose and unstable so the underground workings are probably in a bad way. Very little minerals were found here but a chat with the local revealed there were 101 shafts in the hill but these had been filled when a boy fell 100ft. to his death in one of them some years ago.

The evening was spent in Harlech, and the usual stew cooked in the tent when we got back. There was now ¾ of the strawberry flavoured Instant Whip left.

Tuesday was gold mining day. Everyone was up early, needless to say. We parked the car at Bontddu and wlked up the track, trying to look as inconspicuous as possible. Reaching the shed where the gold was extracted, we met a coach load of tourists. Hiding away in the corner and getting changed into underground gear would have looked far too obvious, so we mingled with the crowd.
"Now then, on your right you can see the huts where they took the gold for the Queen's coronation ring" informed the guide. "they sorted the gold ore out from the copper, tin, iron and arsenic and took it away to be smelted."
Groans and screams of agony come from Dave at this remark. "Really, Oh Yes, Fancy that" come from thecrowd.

Completely disgusted at the ignorance of the guide, we slithered into invisibility and chnaged to go underground. There was a choice of squeezes at the entrance to the adit. The 12in. one between the

bent rails seemed the easiest around the gate, so we climbed through. The 7ft. high adit continued for 100ft. before ending at a shaft. This was flooded to adit floor and ladders continued up into another level. The quartz vein could be seen in the roof, where the gold would come from. This level continued for 1,500yds. with the occasional stope in the roof. Two flooded shafts were now in the way. The firat was on the side of the level, but the second blocked the way. A single rotted plank was lying across it, one foot above the water. Some members of the party did not seem to like this at all! A flooded section came next and everyone actually got WET up to the knees.

The stopes now became much bigger with a lot more deads hovering above our heads. Just as Dave said we were lucky there were no collapses, one appeared before our eyes. Some deads had fallen across the bottom of the stope and it would have been impossible to climb over them without bringing the lot down.

The gold rush urge forced Dave and I through the collapse, which was more stable than expected but the others weren't convinced of its stability, so we carried on alone. After another ½mile of passage much the same as before, the end was finally reached, about 2 miles from the portal. Dave and I went mad here, collecting loads of rock in the hope of finding some gold, the actual quartz vein where the gold comes from hovering a few feet from our heads.

After some time we made our way back to the others who were somewhat bored. Several other side levels were looked at on the way out, one of which led to a shaft with working kibble and winch. The mine was well worth looking at and we spent a good 2 hours in it. The rest of the afternoon was spent in looking for specks of gold in the rocks, making Instant Whip, and trying to use up as much of the dried milk as possible.

Alas, this was our last day and so the Snowdon trip could be put off no longer. We drove up to Pen-y-pass but on getting there, found the car park full. The whole area was swarming with touroids and the nearest parking space was a mile down the road again at Pen-y-Gwryd. Anyway, we eventually reached the Pyg Track and started the slog up to the Llyn Llydaw Resevoir. The Glasyn Lake was passed next, permanently stained blue by the cooper works just above it. The scree

slope was next, and the touroids were crawling about everywhere. A whole car park full of them. Seeing them trying to climb up with inadequate footwear and dragging and carrying little children as well was pitiful. Reaching the top of the ridge, an even worse site (sic) met our eyes. Hundreds of people dragging themselves up the Snowdon Railway in one long queue.It was just like a Pilgrimage.

Keith and Pete H. reached the top in 105 minutes. I reached the top in 110 minutes. Dave and Pete W. in 120 minutes. The visibility was perfect and you could see for miles - well, you would have been able to, if there wasn't so many people about. There were hundreds of them. The cafe was worse than a sardine tin. Having rested and run out of oxygen, not because of the height but because there were so many people consuming it, we walked around the horseshoe to Grib-goch. This was much more fun than the Pyg Track. We were walking along a ridge, with a 300ft. drop on one side and a steep slope ending in a sheer drop on the other side. The ridge was only 2-3ft. wide, so this was certainly no place for anyone with a fear of heights. As the descent began, we speeded up and Dave, Keith and I reached the car sometime before the others.

It was then back to the campsite for more dehydrated stew and yet more of the horrible Strawberry flavoured Instant Whip. The usual gurgle, gurgle, gulp in the evening and then a good night's sleep.

Everyone was up at 7a.m. the Thursday morning. The rest of the happy vampers were up equally early to watch us take the tent down. I've never seen so much canvas! Anyway, we left by 9a.m. and made our way slowly home, stopping off to visit various places on the way. We were back in time for club in the evening.

Paul Hatherley

Odd's End

Our little tale begins somewhere in the Kremlin, where 3 members of the C.C.O.E.R.S. (Central Committee of Enlightened Russian Speleology) were lamenting the loss of the 53rd. Hero (drowned whilst trying to navigate the Volgasale Master Cave on the back of a sturgeon.)

"To improve the sad state of Russian caving, we must infiltrate on the methods of the Imperialistic Caving clubs of the Capitalist West, Comrades. Who is the best?"

Alas, we know the answer to that one. So it befel our lot that 3 members of the K.G.B. were found in the Hunters, lurking in search of a contact to set up a cell of caving and communist sympathisers within a club. Al last their plot was complete; our heros set about their task and, within a few weeks, the Russians had gotten our entire technical knowhow. We hardly noticed tackle mysteriously disa- and rea - ppearing.

Back in Mother Russia, the great day arrived. The glorious Red Caving Army, equipped in our gear. The shame, as rank upon rank of Russian potholers stood before an open pot not in wetsuits, but in baggy, cloth trousers and strange ex-Army jackets.

Row upon row of red Wellington boots came smartly to attention as the Commissar of C.C.O.E.R.S. read to the potholers a translation from the English - 'Fairwater Dream'. With a click 20,000 plastic torches lit up. Suitabley braced, the Commissar, himself, stepped upon the shiny, new wire and metal runged ladder.

ZIPP as the 536 rungs cascaded down the shaft, followed by the Commissar himself (the 54th, hero). ????? will never let us know whether it was accident or design that the ladder which was copied was the one without rung-fixing pins!

Fish

New Members

S.F. Batey	27, Queen's Park Rd., Peverall, Plymouth
R. Atkin	86, Shirburn Rd., Eggbuckland, Plymouth
A. Leftley	9, Northumberland St., Weston Mill, Plymouth
M. Drake	1A, Whistley Hill, Ashburton,,Devon
D. Lester	'Ellenville', Beechwood Ave., Mutley, Plymouth
D. Hill	19, Bowhays Walk, Eggbuckland, Plymouth.
T. Parrott	38A., East Trip, Ashburton, Devon

F. Steer 8, Prince Maurice Rd., Mutley, Plymouth

Meets List

Thurs. 14th. Oct. Slides of Iceland
Clubroom - 8p.m.

Sun, 24th. Oct. Pridhamsleigh Cavern
leader - Paul Hatherley
Clubroom - 10a.m.

Sun. 7th. Nov. Devon Great Consols
leader - Phil Tozer
clubroom - 10a.m.

Thurs. 11th. Nov. Preparation for Rescue Practice
clubroom

Sun, Nov. 14th. Rescue Practice - Kitley Caves
clubroom - 10a.m.

Weekend, 19th.-21st. Nov. Buckfastleigh Area
sleeping at Cresthill, arrive there any time during weekend

Sun. Dec. 5th. Castle'an'Dinas
leaders - Paul Hatheley and Phil Tozer
clubroom - 10a.m.

Boxing Day, Dec. 27th. Christmas Dinner - The Great Hall, Phoenix Mine. Details to be arranged later.

Weekend, 31st. Dec. -2nd. Jan. Mendip
meet in the Hunters before midnight on the Friday.