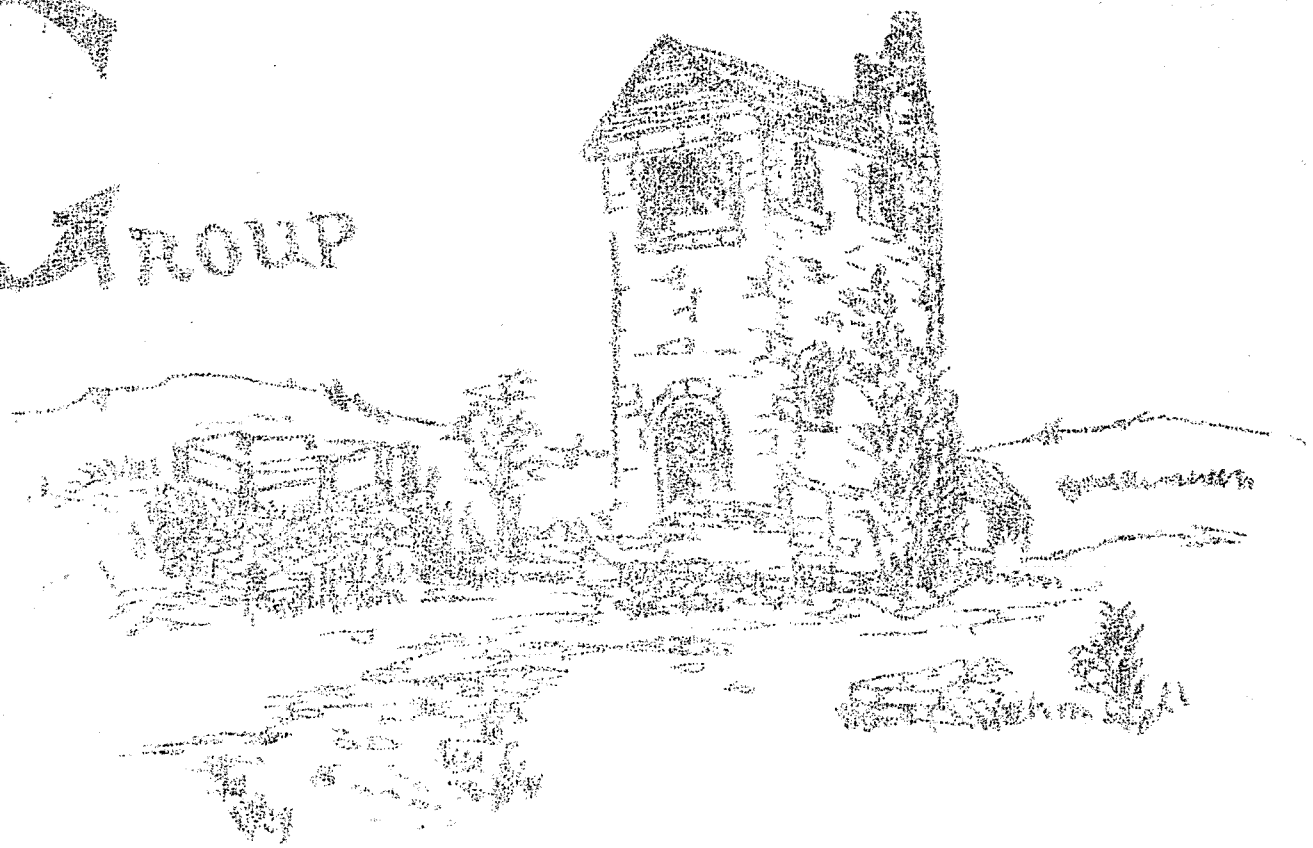
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PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP



NEWSLETTER & JOURNAL

PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

Newsletter and Journal

April, 1972 Number Forty-Three

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Editorial

Activity within the club during the last two months has been mostly confined to Devon, and to consolidating our administrative positions, as the result of the changes in the committee, following the A.G.M. (The A.G.M. report is included in this edition, with apologies for its lateness.) An exciting developement has begun, mainly as the result of new blood on the committee, and as an attempt to justify our claim for a grant from the Youth Committee.

This developement is the setting up of a Junior group. Previously we have always welcomed younger members of the group, but there has been no specific provision for them, apart from Junior Membership fees.

At the moment a separate group is being started, to meet on Wednesday nights and restricted to people of Secondary School age. Obviously it is not the intention that this group should remain apart from the main body of P.C.G., connected only by the noble few who are doing all the hard work. As P.C.G. we will have trips together, mix activities and generally help each other, but the Junior Group will specialize in those kind of activites more particularly interesting to people of school age, with specific emphasis on knowledge of the related sciences. No doubt there will be more to report once the 'Juniors' are more established.

Regular readers will note that this newsletter is shorter than usual, and that more space is being utilised. This is all part of an economy drive: on the previous format, your yearly subs did not cover the cost of your six newsletters a year!

The copy-date for the next newsletter is May 19th.

Membership List

(as from April 1st., 1972)

Honorary Members

S.F. Batey	27, Quarry Park Rd., Peverell, Plymouth
Terry Marston	50, The Deans, Downlands, Portishead, Bristol

Ordinary Mem bers

David Ackrell	13A, Wyndham Sq., PL1 5EF, (67348)
Roy Atkin	86, Shirburn Rd., Eggbuckland, Plymouth
Bob Barrett	8, Salisbury Rd., St. Judes, Plymouth
Hugh Browning	37, York Rd., Paignton, Devon
Bob Cawthorne	22, Devonport Rd., Stoke, Plymouth
Martin Cox	3, Hillside Cottages, Blackawton, nr. Totnes
Richard Cox	" " "
Dave Curry	8, Cambridge Rd., Ford, Plymouth
Mike Drake	1A, Whistley Hill, Ashburton, Devon
John Dryden	Little Coppse, New Rd., Yealmpton, Devon
Pat Evans	1 Erme Gdns, Efford, Plymouth
Dave Ford	116, Old Laira Rd., Plymouth

Graham Furneaux	39, Neath Rd., St. Judes, Plymouth
Norman Gay	441 Blandford Rd., Efford, Plymouth
Peter Gibson	2, Doreena Rd., Elburton, Plymouth
Steve Harris	43, Langham Way, Pound Farm Estate, Ivybridge
Ian Harvey	216, North Rd.West, Plymouth (66904)
Paul Hatherley	2, Furneaux Rd., Milehouse, Plymouth (52934)
Dave Hobson	88, Hillside Rd., Saltash, Cornwall
Liz Jeanmaire	25, Yeomans Way, Cherry Park, Plympton St.
Mike Jeanmaire	Maurice, Plymouth
Bob Jeffery	P.O.Box 1321, Kitwe, Zambia
Rod Jones	28, Caltness Rd., Elburton, Plymouth
Rodney Leach	7, Whitefield Ter., Greenbank, Plymouth
Andy Leftly	9, Northumberland St., Western Mill, Plymouth
Brian Lewarne	19, Mount Gold Cres., Mount Gold, Plymouth
Keith Loze	2, Venn Way, Hartley, Plymouth
Miss I. Miners	Veryan Villa, Balland Lane, Ashburton, Devon
Tony Oldham	17, Freemantle Rd., Eastville, Bristol
Tony Parrot	38A, East Trip, Ashburton, Devon
Steve Poole	Flat 6, 9, Hillsborough, Mannamead, Plymouth
Brian Roseman	13, Belgrave Rd., Mutley, Plymouth
Kimberley Smith	46, Kinross Ave., Lipson Vale, Plymouth (20963)
Nicholas Smith	" " "
Kevin Tole	34, Wycliffe Rd., Laira, Plymouth
Phil Tozer	83, Alexandra Rd., Mutley, Plymouth
Mike Ware	65, Flynnonau, Crickhowell, Brecons. S. Wales
George Watson	35, Avondale Rd., Peverell, Plymouth
Colin Watts	4, Little Points Cres., Mil,brook, Cornwall (623)

Ed. - If any address is incorrect, please notify me so that I can rectify it. Thanks.

Minutes of the A.G.M., Held at Virginia House, on 6th. Jan.1972

The meeting opened at 8.20p.m.

Members Present:

D. Curry	R. Cawthorne	P. Hatherley
L. Jeanmaire	M. Jeanmaire	K. Tole
R. Jones	N. Gay	J. Dryden
A. Henshaw	B. Lewarne	P. Gibson
A. Leftly	J. Wild	

Apologies for Absence:

R. Jeffery	D. Hobson	K. Loze

Apologies for Lateness:

P. Evans	H. Browning

Aoplogies for Early Departure:

S. Poole	A. Henshaw

Chairman's Address
The Chairman remarked on 1971 as having been a good year, with new enthusiasts. Membership was now up to 44, and it was thought that, with a membership drive, it could be even higher. There is still the problem of transport, which seems to induce apathy amongst members.

On the Public Relations side, we have made useful contacts in the City Planning and City Engineers Depts. The club is being, at times, consulted before building work commences.

The problem of access to Radford Cave still continues and we are grateful for the grant towards gating the entrance.

Our thanks to John Dryden for providing us with Kitley Caves as a site for scientific research - a revised Special Publication on the Caves of Yealmpton is expected.

The high standard of the newsletter was mentionned and members were urged to help to continue this. A decent cover would seem a good idea and the Chairman asked for suggestions for designs.

Mention was made of D.C.R.O. and the likelihood of a practice call-out in the near future. Also of the invaluable work done during the year by the Hon. Recorder and the Hon. Treasurer. Finally, it was noted that 1973 sees our tenth anniversary.

Secretary's Report
The minutes of the last A.G.M. were read and taken as correct.

Treasurer's Report
£40 had been spent on a duplicator for the Club. Expenses within the club had been low for 1971. The club had applied for a £150 grant.

Annual commitments had amounted to £32.50. The manuscripts for 'All that Remains' and 'Yealmpton Caves' were on the way to being completed.

Members were reminded that meet fees should be collected from each person attending a meet, at the cost of 3p. each.

R. Cawthorne again remarked upon transport problems.

Tackle Secretary's Report
The Tackle Secretary thanked P.Tozer for keeping a watch on the tackle during his absence. H. Browning then gave a list of club tackle including losses.

There was still digging gear in D.G.C., which had been taken out there by various people and not returned. There was a request for more ladder lengths up to 1000ft., wire rope and ladder rungs are also required. P.Tozer proposed that the fibralated tape be cut up into long lengths. Despite some disagreement, a motion was carried that the rope be cut up as soon as possible.

It was suggested that a wire rope be bought for shaft work, as rope did not have such a long life. This proposal was to be brought up at the next committee meeting.

Editor's Report
The editor required more articles for the newsletter.

Librarian and Recorder's Report
K. Tole said that Dines was missing again and asked that if anyone had borrowed it, they should return it at once. There was also a need for maps of the Gunnislake area.

Election of Committee
The following posts were taken by

Chairman	D. Curry
Secretary	P. Hatherley
Treasurer	R. Cawthorne

The remaining committee members are:

Liz Jeanmaire	Brian Lewarne
Kevin Tole	Hugh Browning

Any Other Businass
D. Curry said that P. Hatherley had been appointed as Deputy Rescue Warden in place of P. Tozer, as he was available on the phone and could be contacted more easily.

B. Lewarne thought that new members were not being looked after as much as they should be. D. Curry said that it was up to new members to approach leaders in charge of meets.

It was suggested that, perhaps, one person could be put in charge of the Clubroom at clubnights.

The next committee meeting would be held at the Clubroom on Thurs. 20th. Jan.

The meeting closed at 9.30p.m.

Pat Evans

Palaeontology

Palaeontology is a branch of biology dealing with ancient life forms as shown by fossils, and is thus associated with the science of geology. It is a science which has given us a great deal of information on the evolution of both flora and fauna.

The first bone cave to be systematically explored in England was one at Oreston near Plymouth, in 1816. Joseph Whidby excavated a rift in a quarry here, and discovered a bone of the now extinct species of rhinoceras. Four years later, a hyaena den at Kirkdale in Yorkshire was excavated by the celebrated Dean Buckland. From his results it was evident that a hyaena had lived here. Gnawed bones of the mammoth, rhinoceras, stag, bison and horse, probably belonged to animals that the creature had dragged in to eat in privacy. Dean Buckland studied many other caves all over the British Isles, and, in 1822, published his 'Reliquiae Diluvianae'. This work laid the foundation for palaeontological studies in later years.

McEnery, at Kent's Cavern, discovered the existence of man within close proximity of extinct animals. Unfortunately, his work was ignored because it destroyed the theory of Diluvial Mud - supposedly laid down by the Great Flood, when Noah built his Ark. This belief was shattered when William Pengelly, the great

palaeontologist, eventually supported his ideas.

Nearby, in the Brixham Cavern at Windmill Hill, it was proved that man was coeval with the extinct mammalia. During the next year, in 1859, additional proof was found by the discovery of implements in Wookey Hole.

Similar excavations throughout Britain built up a picture as to how man lived many thousnads of years ago. It showed us that they had all reached the same stage of crude civilization at the same time, and this told us that communication between different communities existed.

Most sites of palaeontological interest have now been damaged beyond use to anyone, or they have been completely excavated and their bones sent to different museums all over the c ountry. At Joint Mitnor Cave in Buckfastleigh, someone realized the mistake which was being made. The bone deposits were only partially excavated, leaving a section of the Talus Cone for future reference.

At Kitley Cave, the bone deposits are almost completely untouched and it is possible that a great deal of information may by extracted in the near future. But this must be done in the same manner as Joint Mitnor Cave and with specialist advise. Unless this is done, all that will be gained is a pile of worthless bones.

Paul Hatherley

Another Devon Cave Legend

FROM the Rev. Polwhele's "History of Devonshire", p.51.

"Just within the Bolt-head, at the west end of Salcombe bar, is a subterraneous passage called Bull-Hole, which the common people think runs quite under the earth to another such place, in a creek of the sea called Sewer-mill, at about three miles distance. The tradition is that a bull should enter it, at one end, and come out at the other. How far these two caverns are really the same has never been determined. They have often been entered, but no person has had resolution to proceed sufficently far to ascertain the fact".

This place has not been visited, as Bull-Hole is a haunt of the children off Salcombe who would certainly have followed the cave to its impenetrable end. The other sea-cave at Soar Mill (renamed) lies two miles to the west, the intervening 437 feet high hill being composed of metamorphic schists.

Steve Poole

Demolition of Industrial Archaeological Remains in the Tamar Valley

Recently Cornwall has seen another spate of destruction of industrial archaeological remains. In some cases, the last surface remains of, in their time, important mines, have disappeared as a result of demolition by different people. Of particular interest to the Tamar Valley and this area has been the demolition of the largest and best engine house at Drakewalls and also the disappearance of the engine house and dumps of Old Gunnislake. This matter seems to me and to other people both inside and outside the club to be a serious matter. Why do governing bodies such as Cornwall County Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and other local councils, just let this destruction slowly continue?

These engine-houses and stacks are of industrial archaeological interest to a large number of people, who come to see these remains. Why then do these surface remains slowly but surely get turned to rubble?

The usual answers are that the ruins are unsafe; that they are an eyesore or that they just stand in the way for developement. Definitely, in some cases, engine houses are unsafe, and, in some cases, they are in the way.

It seems sacrilegious to continue destroying the only surface remains of a once thriving industry, and the attitude of local councils seems completely opposed to all other viewpoints.

At Old Gunnislake the tips have been removed to be used for levelling Gunnislake A.F.C. football pitch. The engine house and stack were removed because they were dangerous and covered in ivy. The engine house has been reduced to a pile of rubble and Michael's shaft was exposed and a large concrete cap put on it.

The demolition of the Drakewalls engine house was carried out by the propietor of the garage at the top of the hill.This man was obviously in a difficult situation. The engine house was on his land and children were playing on it, and in the ruin. The engine house was obviously a liabibity (it was, of course, said to be dangerous) so it was demolished. It could have, however, been fenced off or otherwise separated from the surrounding paths, as have other ruins on the sett. There were, at one time, plans to flatten all the stacks and engine houses on the sett, but these were rejected since the positions of the shafts were not known.

There are now rumours that the next engine houses, etc., to go are those in the Wheal Alfred, Wheal Edward area. This destruction has to be stopped at some time. The engine houses should be either restored in some small or even large way, or else made safe. The disappearance of the surface remains of a once major industry should not be allowed to continue.

Kevin Tole

Hexworthy Mine

The beginning of mining on Dartmoor can never be accurately determined. It is known that prehistoric man carried out the first crude attempts at smelting tin, so the date must be in prehistoric times. These early hunters picked up the heavy black cassiterite pebbles from moorland streams and experimented with them. By throwing them into the fires in their crude huts, they observed a heavy metal amongst the ashes the following morning. No use was ever made of this phenomena. Evidence of this fact is shown by the presence of cassiterite pebbles and partially melted tin slag amongst hut remains in the Hexworthy and other districts of Dartmoor, especially at Dean Moor.

It is probable that the first purposeful tin smelting took place in this district after the coming of the Normans in 1066. These early tinners knew nothing of the mining techniques at that time and simply skimmed the top off the lodes. Other tinners simply sought the heavy black tin stone from the beds of streams and a alluvium and separated it from other rock debris by swirling the alluvium around in wooden pans - just as the early gold pioneers in America did.

Tin working probably became established at Hexworthy around 1150 and, within a century, Dartmoor's production overran that of any other tin producing area in Europe.

The first underground working commenced in the 18th. Century. Levels were dug into the lodes from the valley floors. A simple form of overhand stoping was used to extract the high quality ore. the ore was then removed from the mine by the levels (which served a dual purpose as drainage adits) and washed in the stream. This, and other practices, raised a great deal of argument between the miners and Plymouth fishermen, who complained that the Plym estuary was silting up rapidly, due to debris brought down by the moor streams whivh were tributaries of the river Plym.

Smelting was usually carried out on the spot, and the excellent quality tin was extracted and taken away by tramway off the moors. It was then resmelted at the Stannory towns, moulded into blocks, stamped and sold by auction. Remains of the old smelting buildings or blowing houses, as they were called, exist clustered around the old mine workings. The furnaces were kept working by a pair of bellows which were connected to water wheels.

A general decline of tin mining occurred and few of the mines survived into the 19th. Century. In 1890 a revival of the mines for copper, arsenic and other minerals, as well as tin, brought prosperity to the area. Work at Hewxworthy started in a shallow shaft sunk in a gulley. and this was soon enlarged and deepened, with other newly sunk shafts, to extract ores from greater depths in the lode below adit. Previous workings had been shallow because the mine was so remote and none of the workers had had sufficent training to keep up with the mining standards of the time. Now the mine had been taken over and, with modern techniques, it prospered. The mine was vigorously worked by water wheels worked by a system of leats, which provided a cheap source of power. In 1905 electricity was first used at the mine. This was supplied by way of a 200ft. Pelton Wheel at Saddle Bridge.

Throughout its long life, Hexworthy has seen much mining activity, both crude and prosperous. It is only a small mining area, surrounding the upper course of the O brook on Holne Moor near Swincombe. It was previously known as Henroost Mine and Hoaten Wheals, and is still called this sometimes. Although it closed somewhere around the 1910 date, it is far from forgotten. In fact, it has recently saved the livelihood of the locals. It played an important role in the prevention of the building of the Swincombe Resevoir.

Paul Hatherley

Extracts from 'Panorama of Torquay'

(a very old tourist's guide, written by Octavian Blewett)

Draught in Sea Caves in Limestone

P.12 "Along the side of Park Hill, there are numerous hollows and fissures in the limestone, which can be explored only in a boat. In one of these, 'The Blower', the wind issues strongly from an aperture in the extremity, and therefor appears to indicate internal communication".

Mines in Limestone

P.14 "The limestone of the (South Hams) district is more or less impregnated with iron, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Brixham. About 40 years ago, so much of this metal was found at Sharnham Point, on the property of George Cutler Esq., that considerable quantities were shipped to London and the provincial markets."

A Marine Resurgence

P.103 "Elberry Cove .....is protected by a ledge called, from its appearance, the 'Honeycombe Rocks'.....At a short distance from the beach, the surface of the water presents a curious phenomena. A fresh water spring, rising, of course, in some part of the chain of hills above the cxove, makes its exit from the sandy bottom, about eight or ten feet below the surface of the sea at low water mark. (There is a report that a spring (swallet?) loses itself in the hills above, but we have not been able to prove its accuracy.) It ascends perpendicularly with particular force and forms a smooth circle, four or five feet in diameter, on the surface of the sea .....We made some experiments in conjunction with Mrs. Griffiths in order to ascertain the character of the water ejected by the spring. The result was satisfactory and proved that it was a body of fresh water pouring out of an aperture of large size, and with such strength, that the sand disturbed was forced by its power to the surface."

Footnote

No. P.C.G. member is known to have visited any of these locations.

Steve Poole

Meet Report

11th. - 13th. Feb.

Mendip Weekend

The caving weekend proper started in the Belfrey on Saturday morning. Brian and Andy arrived the evening before and Liz, Fish Martin and myself spent the previous night at Clevedon. It was midday by the time definite arrangements had been made for caving.

Swildons was the obvious choice. We decided to do the round trip and IV, via Blue Pencil on the way. Unfortunately the Twenty was crowded. An half-hour wait here, and then on to Tratman's Temple; through the Blasted Bass Squeeze and Damascus Passage to the Mud Sump; passing Shatter Pot on the left, Greasey Chimney was climbed and, after a couple of hundred yards of muddy zig-zags, the top of Blue Pencil Passage reached. This was hideously boring, muddy, awkward, tight and tortuous.

There is a large quantity of bang hidden in every nook and cranny from the original widening of the passage. It might be a good idea if someone were to remove this from such a constricted hole. It's all very well to say that it's too old to be of any danger, but it is possible that it could act as a dangerous mental omen for an inexperienced caver. I was getting quite worried until Fish told me it was safe. An exhausted beginner could easily panic one of these days, if no-one in the party knows about bang.

(ed. - It is unlikely that an inexperienced beginner would be down Blue Pencil in the first case, and it is also unlikely that anyone who is not experienced would recognize the bang for what it is.)

A quick look in the IV streamway and then back up B.B. to the Double Trouble series. The sumps here had already been bailed by a party in front, so we moved on, through Bang Squeeze, Doomed Grotto and Glistening Gallery. These passages ranged from muddy ducks, muddy squeezes, muddy slides, muddy tubes to muddy mazes, with the emphasis on mud! Back in SwildonsII, hoards of other speleos were met with. A slow trudge to the surface had to be made, with holdups of half-an-hour at the sump and the Twenty. We reached the surface after just over five hours underground and a very enjoyable trip.

Sunday morning was spent eating breakfast and drinking coffee. Hunters' hole was suggested by Andy and, to Fish's discust (sic), we all agreed. The key was collected from the Hunters (in a round-about fashion!)

Andy and Brian festered in the Entrance Shaft whilst Fish, Martin and I festered in the rest of the hole! Feeling in a 'not-too-active' mood, we laddered the pitch in one go from the squeeze. This is the mistake usually made here, and, from this time on, the spirit of Hunters Hole got to work! I descended first, only to find that a C-link was undone 20ft. down. Further down the ladder formed a massive tangle on the middle ledge - and, of course, it was wedged in the crack on the bottom ledge. Fish and Martin came down without too much trouble and we had a quick look at the diggs at the top and bottom ends of the tunnel before nipping down Sanctimonious Passage. A small sling came in handy for the bottom drop near the end of Sanctimonious Passage.

The return to the surface was rather slower than the descent. Fish climbed to the top ledge and returned the rope - joke! It insisted on getting caught up and tangled in the shaft. Eventually it reached the bottom ledge, so I climbed up to give it to Martin who climbed straight up to the squeeze. By sheer fluke, the rope came straight down to me and I started to climb up. 45ft. from the bottom, I stopped to pull up the ladder. It refused to move, being jammed in the crack in the bottom ledge once again!!Down again to the bottom, and this time I hooked the ladder up above the ledge. I stopped again further up to haul up some more ladder and then trudged up the ladder to the squeeze, feeling fairly unfit! The tackle was hauled up to the surface in one big enormous knot, and coiled before changing and going back to the Belfrey for food. We had been down for nearly three hours and it was 5o8clock by now, so we made a quick exit for Plymouth.

Paul Hatherley

Archive Snippet

"toufa" - "a substance, which was taken out of rather an extensive cave on the Western side of Hooe lake, nearly at the extremity of the (railway?) line leading south".

P.56 of 'Lime Ronks of Plymouth', by the Rev. Hennah.

This must have been a part of the Rabley systen.

An Intermittent Spring

from the guidebook 'Devonshire' by Dodsley, 1764.

"At Brixham ..... is a spring, called Ladywell, which ebbs and flows from one to eleven times in an hour. The rise and fall of it at a medium, is about an inch and a quarter, and the area of the basin in which it is received, is about 20 feet. It sometimes bubbles up like a boiling pot. The water, which is as clear as crystal, is very cold in the summer, yet never freeee

Ed. - no doubt most memberssaw the article in the 'Independent' concerning the club. We are indebted to Rod Leach and Tony Scott for this publicity, and for the two following articles.

All This and Money Too

My temerity in allowing members of the Plymouth Caving Group to take reporter Tony Scott and myself underground, risking life, limb, camera equipment and notebook, was amply rewarded when, fortified by a pint or two of the local beverage, we plunged into the murky depths of Bakers Pit.

The idea being to describe the underworld of Devon to its surface population through the newspaper medium, we were to make a full photographic record of the 'journey'. Thus we came to what I suppose is called the Entrance Chamber, where the party's enthusiasm was immediately dampened.

We decided this impressive section of the system would be an ideal place to start work; unfortunately the flash guns did not, and, after several minutes of blank exposures and with the members making libellous comments like 'ruddy amateurs' and 'should have brought my instamatic' as they stared blankly at the roof, the first shots were put in the can.

Now I thought I had been clever in exaggerating the weight of my equipment far beyond its actual, but my grunting struggles with that ammo can were studiously ignored as we made our way through the system, shooting film whenever practicable.

This was my first trip underground after a lay off of some four years and those days in Derbyshire and Yorkshire seemed a long time ago. But one thought still lingered: that systems of this kind can be pretty tight in places, but so far they had been conspicuous by their absence. This situation, however, was soon remedied, as we entered a small chamber where our generous hosts offered to show us a very interesting piece of phreatic developement. Now the Cat Crawl IS very interesting - just about as interesting as the descending rope at its exit, with the habit of taking peoples' fingers off!

Off again through the maze with its very pleasant formations; a little bit of rifting (I still resent the appearance of that flake just where I wanted a back purchase) and so to find our way out.

The return journey and THAT picture of the ladder climb whose conception must have been of very dubious parentage! (Actually, I'm told that that is the only way Bob will use a ladder, normally he just jumps - without a lifeline, too!)

From there to emerge, myself still carrying that ammo box seemingly every ounce of its previously exaggerated weight, and hastily followed by reporter Tony, beaming all over his face - at least, I think he was beaming; it was very difficult to tell through all the mud on it!

In short, Devon caves, Bakers in particular, have left a

lasting impression on me - somewhere about the end of my spine and where the remainder begins!

Rod Leach

March 15th.

Lovely, I thought. Back to Nature. Getting down to the real nitty-gritty.

Boiler-suits too. Just the job for a middle-class socialist with a guilt complex.

A day caving in Bakers Pit which everyone assured me was a doddle, and Dave Curry said was easy so long as I didn't get claustrophobia.

"Don't worry too much about it", he added thoughtfully. "We carry dental pliers in case you do."

So bolff, frank and fearless newspapers being what they are, they sent a timid and cowardly reporter along. And my name's Tony anyway.

I was all enthusiastic about it at first. It wasn't as cold as I'd thought it was going to be. The climbing was fun, especially since I've been restricted to climbing lampposts on a Saturday night for some time.

Even the formations were more varied and eerily beautiful than I had realized.

But the watershed came when Paul Hatherley, Bob Cawthorne, Andy Leftley and Steve Harris, all giggling insanely, suggested a quick detour around the Cat's Crawl.

"It's a bit tight, but interesting", they added, clutching their sides.

Lovely, I thought, I've been in tight squeezes before.

Rod Leach, the photographer, went first up the thirty or so feet long horseshoe passage. He, I should add, Knew what caving was about.

I was completely in the dark. My light wasn't very good, either.

I followed, full length, arms outstretched, elbows and knees and toes all present and correct and pushing.

And got stuck. Which is not only a very embarrassing situation to be in on your first expedition, but positively alarming.

Rod's boots moved on down the foot-high passage.

Maniacal tittering came up the tunnel from the chamber where the group were waiting for us.

I heaved and wriggled and took off my helmet. But the press had been well and truly stopped. I couldn't even get my hand to my chest to reach my notebook.

Which is about as serious a situation as can exist for a reporter. Not only might I get seriously killed under all this rock, or go insane, I might lose my job.

No news is invariably bad news from the reporter's point of view.

Rod finally had to turn round up ahead where the passage bent and widened and give me a pull. I felt about as adventurous as a drag-sheet full of suet.

Still the ordeal by water was not over. The Cat's Crawl, as you will all undoubtedly know, ends in a hole in the side of a sort of clerestorey, ten clear feet above the floor of the chamber.

A rope hangs through said hole for the especial comfort of visiting novices. It, like everything else, is covered with mud.

Rod went first. Carefully lowered himself over the edge, transferred his weight to the rope and slid immediately to within two feet of the ground, dangling by his little finger nail, which was caught between the rope and the lip of the hole.

A perfect example of the Pit and a human Pendulum.

With a rending howl, he pulled free, still accompanied by tittering from below. I'll show them, I thought. I'm not going to get caught like that.

Nor am I going to stand for being patronised by these amiable veterans. Like when Keith Loze said airily; "When you take a novice down here, they really think they've been caving".

I jumped into it feet first and said "Well, have they?"

And he smiled pityingly and said nothing. Ooh!

Where were we? Oh yes. So I carefully and securely wrapped my leg around the rope in a secret way taught me by a Chinese taxi-driver who was born on the Andaman prison islands off India, gripped the rope firmly with my right hand, between where it was tied to the rock and where it disappeared over the lip to my feet and let go of my rock handhold with my left hand .....

It's very hard typing with one hand, but the doctors tell me the bandages should be off by next month.

Many thanks for a most enlightening trip. Oh, and by the way, I think I've discovered the secret of caving attraction. It all has to do with apres-cave. For cavers are so used to operating in darkness that they have no trouble at all picking a pint and partner

"....I can define
The Reasons you go Caving, and Why you're Always There."

The sun shines down on the three cavers as they change in the summer air. Checking his light, the leader climbs the quarry face, followed by his two companions. He reaches the cave entrance and carefully steps inside. A shiver passes through him as the cold atmosphere of the cave creeps under his boiler suit and is absorbed by the pores in his ochre-stained skin. He is used to the feeling - it has happened many times before - and, as a large, boney spider crawls sluggishly up the wall beside him, a thousand thoughts flash across his mind.

As our leader takes a few more steps into the depths, the world as we know it, is left behind. Gone is the sun, radiating its solar heat onto tanned skins; gone is the singing of the always present birds and the buzzing of the familiar honey bee; gone is the rustling of the green foliage as it sways in the warm summer breeze and the sweet smelling country air.

It is replaced by the continuous dripping water; the loud hum of the cave flies as they toy with death next to the draping spiders' webs; the muffled rustlings of the cave creatures, bats and spiders, and the movements of distant companions. All are heard with incredible clarity. As he sits and waits for the other two members of the party, he realizes all his senses have become more acute; his eyes have become stronger, making out distant shapes in the smallest light source.

His companions now join him. The last flickers of the light from the sun have now been smothered by the dark and damp limestone rock. Our friends have now taken on new identities. They have become true cavers and, in being so, their awareness of living has increased ten fold. Their world is no more than what their beams will reveal, and is always confined to the roof, floor and walls. Familiar habits of the outer-world have now been lost. Every movement has to be planned ahead and, to our three experienced cavers, this has become instinct. Every muscle has to be exerted in order to progress. Arms, hands, elbows, knees, back and shoulders all become as important as feet. Exploration of the cave has now begun.

This is the time all cavers wish could exist for eternity. The chance to be side-by-side with nature, and to control one's own awareness. These three cavers are now in complete coherence with the elements.

Everything they do from now on gives them satisfaction. To traverse over a deep drop creates in them an anti-fear of heights feeling and to squeeze through a narrow hole gives them an anti-claustrophobic feeling. To climb a ladder being continually battered by a thundering waterfall gives them a tremendous feeling and satisfaction of winning against one of the greatest erosive features of the world. To immerse themselves in a cold, muddy sump gives them an unusual sadistic satisfaction. They may have a tremendous admiration for nature when they look at the fantastic formations with which she decorates her underground vaults. Most of all, they are caving because they are fulfilling man's only

aim - to be better. In this case, they are bettering the elements of the world.

This is why they cave. This is why we cave. Enjoyment comes last. REal enjoyment cannot possibly be felt under the harsh conditions that are to be found in a cave environment. If people cave for enjoyment, alone, they are not true cavers and soon turn to some other sport. Someone who caves for the above true inner, psycological feelings is a true caver, and will remain so for the rest of his life.

Paul Hatherley

A Squint Around Dean

The Dean limestone, near Buckfastleigh, lies at the southern end of the 8 mile long mass extending to Ingsdon, and is one of the twelve fragments which have been separated (at surface) by river dissection, and, possibly, by severe faulting.

Only 100 feet of the Dean bed lies above the water table, and the extenct is 1 mile long, by 200 yards wide, following the line of the valley in whose side it is buried.

On walking across the surface, only one natural karstic feature can be observed; the large resurgence issuing into Dean Burn. Two quarries have been worked, an old un-named one, and Potters Wood Quarry. The old quarry is an incredible tangle of undergrowth and bushes, and the shallow faces are mostly obscured by slumped topsoil. I could only find one dig worthy of the slightest attention.

Potters Wood is more interesting, harbouring Bunkers Hole, Shaky Cave and a number of possible digs. (More could be found if someone took the trouble to inspect the ivy-covered faces in greater detail; remember New Cave at Western Torrs?)

Bunkers was only 100 feet long, with a small stream, when explored and first recorded by the early D.S.S. pioneers. Exeter University Speleological Society (E.U.S.S.) forced the streamway for a short distance in both directions, and, in 1968, the D.S.S. blasted a draughting crack to push the cave's length up to its present figure of 600 feet.

In 1967 a walled-up entrance was noticed by Mike Bond (D.S.S.) who soon demolished it to reveal a ruckle-floored chamber. Bill Tolfree (of the same club) again used chemical persuasion to open up 100 feet of solid passage through which flowed a very large stream, creating a series of ducks and sumps. These were dived by the only diver available at that time, Eric Grey, who reported that progress soon became too tight for safe progress.

A big question-mark still hangs over 'The Lost Cave of Dean'. For no known cave resembles the description given of it:

"1829, December. I visited the neighbourhood of Buckfastleigh, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Lyte. Mr. Yards Bullet, on whose estate of Dean some of the caves were situated, had made the necessary arrangemnts against our arrival for investigating them. The cave of Dean I investigated (3?) years previously, and saw no probability of success, but from the report of extraordinary discoveries being made there, I was induced to repeat my visit, and also to ascertain the existence of other caves. The cave is a vertical fissure in compact limestone, running down to an indefinite extent in the strata. It was open at the top, through which the rains wash down the mould of the surface. The mouth lies about in the middle of the quarried surface. Conducts through by a horizontal passage, through which it is necessary to creep some yards, when the cavity enlarges and divides into two small branches closed at the ends. The roof and sides had been coated with the most exquisite groups of crystals, of arragonite, and stalactites etc. of which there were still xxxxxremaining some fine specimens. The best had been transferred to the Manor House of Dean Court and we soon found, at Buckfastleigh, the existence of fossil remains. There did not appear the slightest hope".

The most interesting question remaining concerns whether Dean conceals an open streamway, and, if so, does it extend on up the valley under the racecourse?

A clue may be found in 'The Memoirs of the Geological Survey: Explanation of Sheet 349 for Ivybridge and Modbury', P.61, printed in 1912:

"Mr. J. G. Hamling told me (W.A.E. USSHER F.G.S.) that a subsidence had taken place at a point in a hedge near the High Road, between the road and Dean Court Orchard, and that a hole had appeared which it was hard to fill up. This suggests a swallet hole in subajacent limestone under alluvial deposits."

I have managed to pinpoint the site, but alas! it looks like any other part of the same field. But, still, several digs do lie waiting for someone to attack, but for myself, I shall remain greedy and stick to mastercave country.

Steve Poole

A young man from the South West went up to Yorkshire at the time of the Harvest moon, to find some of the life he had always heard was available up there, in the far country.

He enquired of the landlord in the Hill Inn, where everyone was, as the pub was well nigh empty.

It was explained to him that the North has a weird custom on the night of the Harvest Moon. It is traditional for all couples to part, just for that night and to go and sport themselves in the caves, with whatever partners nature sends to them.

The landlord explained that it was traditional to go to the cave entrances (carting with yyu 500 foot of electron ladder?) and to call "Oooh, Oooooooh!" If the call is answered, you follow to the source, and there is your sport for the night.

Our young Westerner thought that this was a fine idea; some of the life he had been looking for, and far better than at home.

Off he went to the direction given by the landlord. At his first entrance he "Oooh, Oooooooh!"ed, but got no reply.

Nothing daunted, he continued from entrance to entrance, from Kingsdale, to Rowten, to Simpsons, and even to Penyghent. At each he got no reply and was gradually coming to the conclusions that he had arrived too late.

By the coming of dawn, his "Oooh, Oooooooh!? had become more a "Oooooh, OoooooooooooH!" and he was getting tired.

He found one last hole and decided to try before returning home, to where they don't play japes like this.

"OooH, Oooooooh!", and ,lo and behold, there came faintly, from the distance "Oooh, Oooooooh!". He broke into a shambling run and disappeared from sight.

And promptly got hit by the TRAIN.