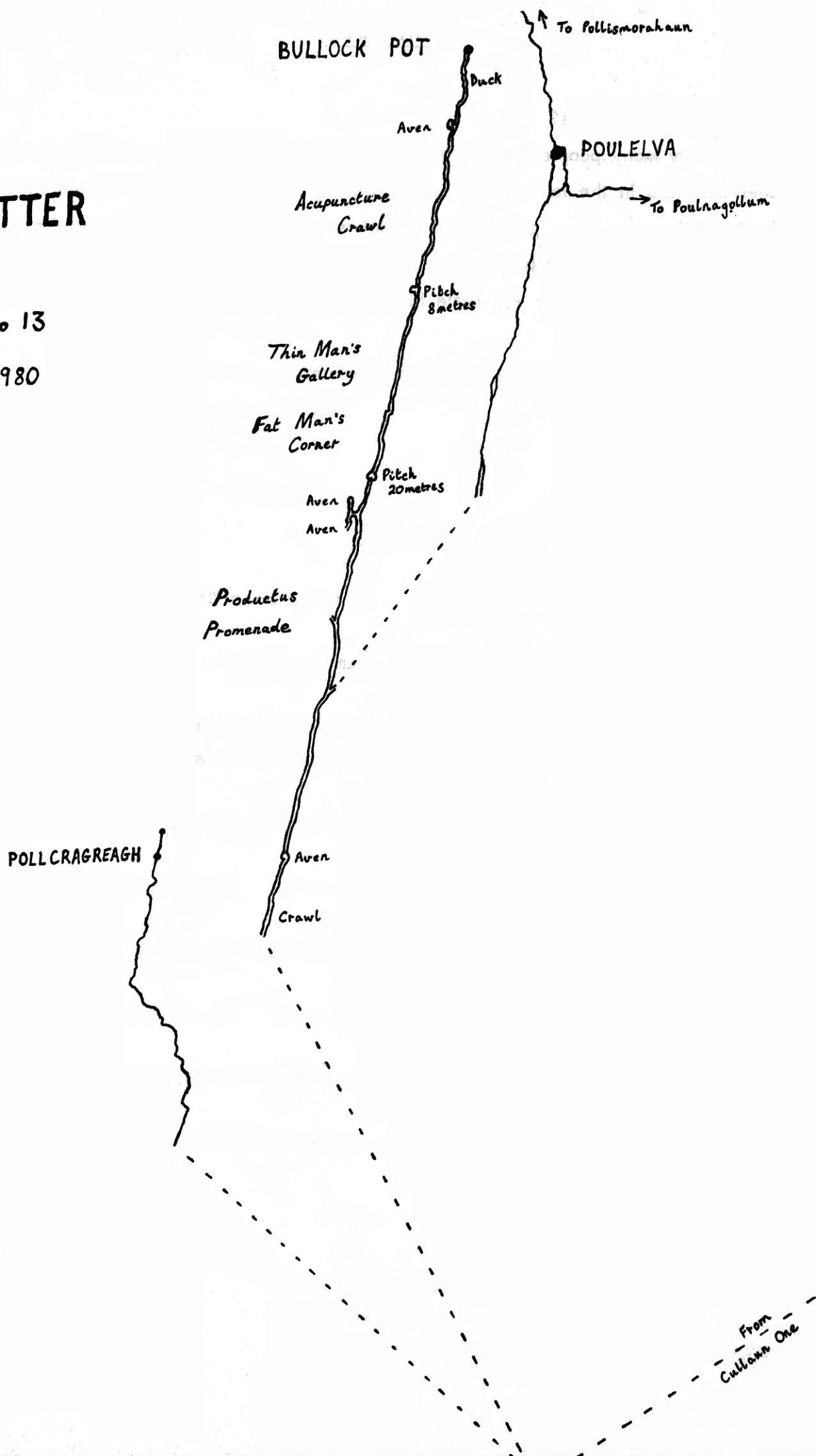


# UBSS NEWSLETTER

New Series No 13

June 1980



## EDITORIAL.

Who reads editorials?

Not very many people, I would think. Editorials are often just a précis of what the reader will find in the rest of the journal, robbing the reader of the element of surprise as (s)he turns the page. Some people like it that way. I had a girlfriend once who used to read the last chapter of a book before she read the first. She wouldn't like my editorials. Mine are of the other type - a little bit of waffle and then the closing date for articles for the next Newsletter.

Articles for the next Newsletter, please, before the end of October.

Lots of love,

Charlie Self

### AWAY TRIPS 1980

June 13th - 15th	Cornwall.	Camping near St Agnes (perhaps)
June 20th - 22nd	Yorkshire	Camping behind the Helwith Bridge
July 10th - 25th	Co Clare	Cottage with the green roof, Murphy's Bridge near Lisdoonvarna
October 4th - 5th	Mendips	UBSS hut      Bring songbooks and asprins
October 11th - 12th	Mendips	UBSS hut      Bring songbooks and asprins
October 25th - 26th	South Wales	(Hopefully) SWCC hut
November 8th - 9th	Mendips	UBSS hut      Bring Fireworks and Asprins
November 21st - 23rd	Yorkshire	Greenclose House near Clapham
December 6th - 7th	South Wales	Whitewalls (Chelsea SS hut)

### PUB MEETS

Tuesdays	Crockers Upper Lounge, Cotham Hill
Fridays	Union Long Bar      (Term time only)
Sundays	Crockers Upper Lounge, Cotham Hill

### TREASURER'S MESSAGE

The University Union has promised us a current grant of £400 for the coming year. During the previous three years it was £300. In view of this rather steep rise the Union is asking us to raise the level of our subscriptions, which we have maintained at the rate of £3 p.a. since 1976. Please would members write and tell me to what level they think the subscriptions should be raised, bearing in mind that we would like to keep it steady for at least five years, otherwise it makes nonsense of our bankers orders and covenants? Other caving club subscriptions are: Cave Diving Group £5, Wessex Cave Club £6, B.C.R.A. £7, Bristol Exploration Club £8.

The Union is also loaning us £500, so that we can buy our tackle materials for the next three years now, instead of waiting for the prices to rise. This will be repayable when we get our next capital grant, which will be applied for in May 1981.

Oliver Lloyd,

University of Bristol Spelaeological Society,  
University Road, Bristol, BS8 1SP.

### ABUSE OF THE HUT - NOTIFICATION TO ALL MEMBERS

There have been several cases of people staying at the hut without signing the hut book or paying fees. There have been instances of damage done by unknown parties staying at the hut. These may or may not have been members.

All members are entitled to use the facilities of the hut, but should they do so they are requested to pay their hut fees (which stand at 25p per day or part of a day for members and 50 p for guests) to the Hut Warden or to place the money in the tin provided (on the shelf by the top bunk nearest the fire). They are also requested to sign the Hut Book.

If there is further abuse of the present system there is a danger of the hut key being changed. I hope that this measure will not be required and that members continue to enjoy caving on Mendip.

Michael Martin  
Linda Wilson

Hon Secs

SITUATIONS VACANT ..... STOP PRESS

Owing to the departure of Mr Ken Baker, who is taking his talents elsewhere, the Society is now without a resident moaner. Thus applications are invited to fill this vacancy. Please submit applications in writing to the Secretaries by 1st June (or before if impossible) together with an example of talents in this field.

# CHARTERHOUSE CAVING COMMITTEE

A meeting was held on Sunday 11th May, 1980 at the Hunters' Lodge Inn. Eight of the ten clubs were represented. Bernie Danvers presented his report, minutes and accounts. The Secretary / Treasurership was then taken over by Tim Large, 53 Portway, Wells, Somerset.

The Accounts showed a small bank balance and there was also an account of £22.75 in the Midland Bank at Shepton Mallet in the name of Richard Stevenson, which was not being released without Stevenson's consent. Another note from the Chairman (Alan Butcher) was prepared, to try to obtain its release. More than half the member clubs were two or more years in arrears with their subs and it was considered that, provided payment of these could be obtained, it would be possible to keep the sub for 1980/81 at £5. The U.B.S.S. paid up its arrears, Its sub is less than £5 by one tenth of the tackle fees paid on account of G.B. Cave.

Tackle fees for G.B. Cave had been held at £15 a year for four years and at the request of the U.B.S.S. this is now raised to £20, payable on 1.1.81, with review again next year. It was noted that the B.E.C. gets about £50 a year for St. Cuthbert's tackle fees.

A new permit book was being devised which, to save paper work, would include the indemnity chit. The design was on the lines of a cheque book. The counterfoil would have the indemnity on the back signed by the permit holder. Permits were of two sorts: temporary (a fortnight) and period (one to five years). At the expiry of the period the counterfoils could be thrown away. A new indemnity would then have to be signed and a new permit issued. It was requested that the U.B.S.S. Secretary signed the master for the permits in respect of G.B. Cave. The cut-off date for old/new permits would be 1.9.80, after which all old permits would be invalid. The permits will be issued in books of 100. The Temporary Permits will cost the clubs £5 a hundred and they can charge what they like (it is unusual to charge one's own members) the Period Permits are issued free of charge. It is these that most of the member club members will be using.

The Waterworks' solicitors were examining the indemnity with a view to its revision.

Insurance with Stewart Wrightson had lapsed and a cheaper insurance policy with Crusader had been taken out costing about £25 p.a. It is not certain whether this covers the use of "bang".

Constitution may be in need of revision; no one seems to have a copy.

Report on digs included: Longwood Valley Sink, Timber Hole, Toothache Pot, Reynold's Passage in Longwood/August Hole, Reed's Grotto, Ladder Dig in G.B.

Next Meeting: 22nd February, 1981, 2.15 pm. at the Hunters'.

Oliver Lloyd

### ACTIVITIES IN G.B. DIG

I didn't go digging in G.B. once before, when I was an easily conned first year student. We set the syphon going but there was too much water and the pool it was syphoning into had filled up. So four of us went for a 'swim' in the pool instead, which was very cosy!

So when Mike was showing interest in going digging recently my natural curiosity got the better of me, and we arranged to go to G.B. at the end of term. Consequently, one cold, fine morning in March three students (who knew no better) set off over Blackdown, watched with amusement by Geoff and Ces (who did know better). We got to G.B. and went straight to the dig, which was rather full of water.

Martin didn't have a wetsuit on so he had a good excuse for not grovelling to find the pump, which meant Mike and I had to. We set it up as instructed and I started pumping,...nothing happened except a load of bubbles came out. Then it occurred to us that we had the two connections the wrong way round, and we were pumping air instead of water, and when we changed them round it worked! I then spent the next 45 minutes sitting in the water, which gradually became liquid mud, holding down the ends of the tubes. As the level fell Mike eagerly scuttled as close to the face as he could. Eventually the syphon stopped so we were ready for action.

Mike volunteered to be first at the face, so I lay and wallowed in the mud behind him to haul out the buckets of gunge, and Martin pulled them up the slope and dumped them. Then Mike became incapacitated by a nosebleed, so I had no choice but to do the honourable thing and hit the face, whilst Mike was busy turning the brown mud red! It wasn't really as nasty as I'd expected, and I'd made about 9 inches progress before Mike decided he could come back. All the time water was flowing out of the top of the face, and the mud gradually became more and more like the emulsion paint I painted my room with, the buckets of mud were half floating on it, but I really enjoyed batheing in it. After about 18 inches progress we decided it was time to retreat, but we intended to return tomorrow.

The walk back over Blackdown was freezing, but at least I thought there would be a nice fire blazing in the Hut, and perhaps Geoff and Ces would see us coming and make a pot of tea. No chance, they were there but they didn't seem to have noticed how cold it was without a fire, and we even had to make our own tea, not the heroes' welcome I'd expected. Thankfully it rained all night, and I didn't have too much difficulty convincing the others that it would be too wet to dig; we went home instead.

So now I know what it's like, and I might even go again sometime, when the memory of the nastiness has worn off. If any other keen young students are at a loss for something to do after exams, or even before exams, I can thoroughly recommend digging in G.B. as being a wonderful character building exercise.

J.A.C.

## THE CONTINUING SAGA OF GB DIG

The story so far :-

The first assault at the dig having been made some weeks previous I felt it was time to renew the attack. It was Saturday night - Graham and Linda's party. The plans were made with SAS efficiency, despite a traitor in our midst, "let's go to Longwood" he whimpered.

Morning came. We were to go and re-tape the formations in Bat Passage. No mention of the dig was made, but don't let that fool you. With our mission accomplished, I shot off to the dig with cries of "I'm just having a look". As I scurried along the sludge I remembered Janet's words "I thought I could feel a draught". I reached the face. The air was still. I thrust my arm down the airspace over the mud and groped. There was no roof! Is the passage opening out? I scraped at the mud, Paul and little Mick scraped at the mud. Time was running short and we were forced to retreat, but not before enlarging the hole so that your head could be pushed through. 7ft of virgin GB was revealed before our eyes. What lay beyond?

"The next thrilling instalment" :-

Martin Warren and myself scurried down to the dig. Things were as we left them. I peered through the hole. It was the same as before. (Damn - the UBSS Practical Jokes Group has missed another golden opportunity - ed. ) But not for long. A ramp was dug just large enough to torpedo yourself through and into the vast chasm beyond. No such luck. The rock came down to mud level leaving a 3 in wide meandering rift above. My worst fears were confirmed - the dig had to continue at the same level.

The following week :-

Bob, Paul and myself made the last assault. The dig was pushed a few more inches, once we actually got there.

MM

## YORKSHIRE - EASTER MEET

I arrived on Thursday having hitched up to Preston. Graham and Clive arrived some seven hours later having lost little Mick on route (more accurately they failed to find him). Linda's offer of a bed for the night was eagerly accepted by all as we set forth to partake of the normal UBSS refreshments in the local hostelry.

Friday morning came and went. Finally we departed for Inglesports where the obligatory purchases of gear associated with any Yorkshire meet were made. From there to the Helwith Bridge where we pitched Graham's palace alongside Oliver's

which was already erected.

It was perfect walking weather. Despite this fact some fool (was it me?) suggested caving. Like an idiot I eagerly jumped to my feet. Washfold it was to be. A nice trip abseiling in and laddering out. Unfortunately there was more to it than that. I'm referring to the 140 foot pitch. The descent was perfect, the view from the top as Clive descended fantastic. It was the ascent I didn't like, especially the tortuous last 40 feet. My arms suitably aching, I proceeded along the traverse. Whoops, cramp in both legs. Most uncomfortable. On reflection a most enjoyable?? trip. As I sank behind a beer mug what delights does tomorrow hold in store?

Saturday - Out Sleet's Beck. A very interesting cave once it was located. I particularly enjoyed the squeezes in the streamway between the pitches. Linda came up with several new ideas on how to abseil and ascend (reference to her ability to be extruded through a pulley).

Sunday - Carol's choice of caves - Smeltmill Beck. Definitely an un-Bob sized cave. This is an epic grade 2 trip which anyone who's anyone has done, and won't do again.

Monday - Dow-Providance through trip. This was a fun trip with no serious route finding difficulties. If you don't like traverses, then tough luck cos you have to put up with them. The streamway at the end was suitably cold and horrible but the exit was most impressive. Definitely a worthwhile trip.

Tuesday - Browgill-Calf Holes. Oliver's little gem. I'm glad I didn't miss it. It's definitely a collector's item; ideal training for freshers.

Thus having completed 5 trips in 5 days I was left to hitch home in time for a school reunion that evening.

Other intrepid members undertook separate trips, noticeably Ken Baker, Steve Perry and Julian Walford who polished off Car Pot. They say it's tight!

MM

#### WHITSUN IN YORKSHIRE

It was a small but select party this year: Ian Cassely, Clive Owen, Wanda and Barbara Iskrzynska and Oliver Lloyd. On the Saturday Clive and Ian did Car Pot in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours on rope, while the other three explored the Ling Gill streamway for the first time. The gorge is like an unroofed cave, sporting, beautiful and a botanist's delight. We were stopped at a pitch, which seemed rather difficult even with a rope.

On the Sunday Ian and Clive bottomed Long Kin East in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, while the others explored another Nature Reserve: Colt Park Wood. For the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile length of this wood the going is very hard over limestone clints, but we were rewarded by finding *Trollius europaeus*, *Paris quadrifolia*, *Actaea spicata* and *Convallaria majalis*. Ian and Barbara had to leave that evening, so on the Monday, determined to push Ling Gill to the very end, Wanda and Oliver took Clive with them for assistance on the pitch. A through trip was completed.

### DEATH OF A THOUSAND CUTS or BULLOCK POT - PART THREE

Have you ever seen bold spelaeologists, red faced and roaring their joie de vivre as they toast the ceiling with the base of their beer mugs, suddenly turn ashy grey and stare vacantly into their now-empty glasses? At the mention of a name?

Have you seen young mothers whisper a word to their bawling infants? Have you seen these babies open wide their eyes in horror, just as their mouths close tight with fear?

Dear caver, be warned! If you are a witness to events such as I have described, then run! Run with all your might. Run as if the hounds of hell were at your heels! For someone will have found a cave that is worse than Bullock Pot.

Bullock Pot is bad, but it is not that bad. Phil Buckberry in Newsletter 10 offered us his opinion (perhaps mellowed by hindsight): "the most tortuous, horrible, nasty, vile bit of canyon that I have ever been in." Phil must be excused the severity of his language - he did get stuck at 'Fat Man's Comer'. The bullock after which the cave is named got stuck at the entrance. The bullock was pole-axed. The Buckberry emigrated.

Bullock Pot has been known for years. It has always been considered impassably tight. Oh the wisdom of our elders. And my own folly. Last year I persuaded Phil, Bob and Sam to give Bullock Pot a "serious" look. They ran out of time and tackle at the second pitch. This year, on hearing that I was going to Ireland, they gave me a "serious" look. Honour, pride - they are strange concepts. They can get you into all sorts of trouble. They got me down Bullock Pot.

Perhaps I should begin the tale of our misadventure, Julian Griffiths and myself. Forgive my hesitation: the scars have not all yet healed, even now - a month after the event.

It was a lovely day, that last day of April. Gentians grew by the roadside, mocking the sky with their blueness. We donned black rubber and disappeared into the darkness. I shall not describe our progress to the second pitch. If anyone needs to know the details of the cave let them read Newsletter 11. Suffice to say it was awful, truly awful.

We stood at the head of the second pitch, on the threshold of the unknown. Julian's spirits were high - he would have wished the cave to go on for ever like this! We descended the pitch, 20 metres deep down the side of a spacious aven. This aven is a magnificent sight. It must be 30 metres tall and is the most roomy place in the whole cave. A low canyon passage led off to the south and we followed it. Though by no means large, this canyon was a welcome relief after the struggles of Thin Man's Gallery. After perhaps 60 metres an inlet entered from the right. On our return journey we followed this inlet to a pair of avens; a very small and southerly heading dry canyon passage was not explored. The combined streams of Bullock Pot and the inlet had carved a far more substantial passage from the unrelenting limestone and we fairly charged down this for about 200 metres. The cave was now not only large enough to walk upright and facing forwards but to swing the arms as well. - Productus Promenade. As the

cave roof lowered we heard ahead of us the roar of water. Another pitch? This seemed unlikely as we were already at the level of the productus giganteus bed, the fossil layer seen in lower Poulmagollum and in the Poulelva Streamway. As we continued the noise grew louder and to our surprise we found a large volume of water cascading into our canyon from a small inlet passage. Though this inlet would be passable we made no attempt to follow it. What an extraordinary cave this is! That it should join the Poulmagollum-Poulelva water was always a possibility, but to have the Poulelva Streamway stream entering as a tributary with Bullock Pot the major passage .....!!! We continued our stooped walking progress for another 200 metres, passing an aven, until we were forced to our hands and knees. The cave rapidly degenerated from here and we stopped without reaching a definite conclusion soon after the cave lowered to a flat-out crawl over cobbles. The stream continued its bubbling progress.

The downstream continuation from the second pitch is about 500 metres, making the cave roughly 1 kilometre long. The cave follows the dip throughout its course (as confirmed by carrying a compass) so the end point must be very close to Pollcragreagh, or 600 metres from the resurgence Killeany Rising. Of course it is the Poulelva water - there aren't any other streams that large - but if any disbelievers wish to try a dye test, good luck to you!

Charlie Self

U.B.S.S. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 1980/81

President	Dr. R.J.G. Savage
Vice Presidents	Dr. D.T. Donovan
	Dr. H. Taylor
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Curator	vacant
Hut Warden and M.I.C. Rescue	Chris Pepper (not on Committee)
Other members	S.A. Moore, Wanda Iskrzynska, Kirsten Hopkins
	P. Bruce-Jones

## BALCH'S DEPENDABLES

Steve Perry has given you a really thorough account of the Carbide Lamp, so thorough indeed that I can only fault him in one respect, and that is his omission to mention that you get a marvellous aroma from the lamp if, instead of water, you pour in Burgundy.

You may wonder what on earth I am writing about. Well, this is a Scientific Paper, so I must quote Balch's reference (Balch, H.E., 1948, Mendip -- Its Swallet Caves and Rock Shelters, 2nd Ed., p. 10). This is what he says, after having his light blown out in a gale.

"I might pause here to say that in spite of occurrences such as this, candles are by common consent the most dependable illuminant, as they cast no treacherous shadows."

The candle is probably still one of the cheapest forms of illuminant since a pound of them, price 80p., will last you from 12 to 20 hours, according to conditions. First you have to light it, and here I recommend a dry box of safety matches carried in a polythene bag in your helmet, in the place where most cavers carry chocolate. There is room for them both. You cannot count on striking an England's Glory on the walls of a cave, since these are sometimes rather damp, though I have succeeded. If you dip the match sticks in candle grease beforehand, this will save them from dampness, if your fingers are dripping with moisture, a not uncommon event in caves.

When walking along a cave passage, carry your candle between the 3rd and 4th fingers (the thumb is No. 1), so that the palm of your hand can act as a reflector. An additional advantage is that the palm protects the flame from draughts. When climbing turn the candle round, because you are going to turn your hand round with the palm downwards. Before ascending a wet pitch, blow out your candle, put it in your pocket and climb in the dark. You can relight it at the top. When descending the Forty in Swildon's we always used to leave a lighted candle or night-light at the top for this purpose.

When your candle is getting too short to hold, light a new one, melt the wax at its base and stick on the old one underneath. This means that you can completely use the second candle without any wastage. When you have altogether finished, blow out your candle and gently press the wick into the wax. When you next need to use it, the wax can be melted and you can start with a long wick instead of one that has been broken. This gives you more light.

When moving along cave passages the candle burns fast, the wick is long and the light very bright. When held up in a boulder ruckle you can drop candle-grease on the heads of your enemies. But the greatest use to which a candle can be put is on cave digs. Here with no draught they can burn with a steady flame for a very long time. You can stick them in the

mud or where you will, so that they illuminate your work, and leave your headlamp off.

A candle is also a good indicator of bad air, though not as sensitive as a canary. There are spots in Banwell Bone Cave for instance, where the air is heavy with carbon dioxide and rather short on oxygen. Here if you light a candle and gently lower it into the black damp the flame will get smaller and move towards the tip of the wick. When it reaches that it goes out and you know that it is time you got moving. A match will behave in the same way but a carbide flame will not.

I cannot claim to have used the candle as my primary source of illumination, when I started caving (I used a cycle lamp), but I have been instructed in its use by two of Balch's pupils. We always used it on cave digs, and what Balch says about "casting no treacherous shadows" derives from the fact that it is not beamed from a reflector.

Oliver Lloyd 26.2.80

#### THE PARABLE OF THE SONS OF JAMES

And the Lord looked down on the people and he saw that they had worked hard  
And he said that they should have a holiday and that it should be called a bank holiday  
At this time there was in the City of Bristol a young man named Geoffrey  
Upon the holiday he journeyed unto the town of Ilchester  
And in Ilchester he went to the abode of a woman named Cecily  
He took with him on this journey a bottle of water  
And it was Holy Water for the Sons of James had laid their hand upon it  
But Geoffrey knew that in the town of Ilchester there was a band of archaeologists  
And he knew that if the archaeologists came upon the Holy Water they would consume it  
And the Devil came to Geoffrey and advised him to hide it  
And he hid it amongst the belongings of Cecily  
When Geoffrey departed from that place he forgot the Holy Water  
And Cecily found it and she said he hath left me a gift  
So Cecily consumed it and she gave some to the archaeologists  
And when Geoffrey realised his mistake the Water was no more  
God said unto Geoffrey Thou hast sinned and hath been deceitful  
And thus Thou hast lost thy Holy Water  
And Geoffrey saw his sins and he repented  
And when he next had some Holy Water he shared it with all  
And God was pleased

JAC

BRIG.E. AUBREY GLENNIE: A MEMOIR

News has reached me of the death of that outstanding figure in cave biology, Aubrey Glennie, towards the end of February 1980, at the age of 91. His surveying duties in the Indian army took him to the limestone districts of the Himalayas, where he discovered many caves and practically made Indian caves his own. He had already retired when I first met him in the nineteen fifties. In my early caving days I used to organize scavenging expeditions to clean up Swildon's. Aubrey wrote to me to say that on no account was I to clean out the Shrine Pools, as they harboured an Isopod called Asellus cavaticus. After this I hunted for the bug and found it in other Mendip caves, sending my specimens to Mary Hazelton, Aubrey's niece and amanuensis.

In 1957 I worked with their biological team in the newly re-opened Pen Park Hole. The idea was to get in as early as possible, so as to see the cave fauna in an undisturbed condition. The most conspicuous of these were a number of bat skeletons lying on the floor. Of life there was very little. After some time Aubrey found the wing of a fly. "The fauna does not exactly fly at you", he remarked. After another quarter of an hour's fruitless search Mary Hazelton was heard to say, "I think these bats died of starvation!"

Our next expedition was for a week in Gibraltar, in 1958, accompanied by Lewis Railton and Tratty. We used to get up at six in the morning and sort over the previous day's collection, identifying to which groups specimens belonged and putting them into separate containers duly numbered and recorded. After breakfast we would join the Gibraltar Caving Club in exploring yet more caves, some of them tidal. Full identification of the specimens took a long time and it wasn't until about twelve years later that the results were published.

Lamb Leer was one of Aubrey's favourite digs. He must have been well over seventy when he last climbed that ladder pitch. He was small, strong and wiry and I thought he would never grow old. He hadn't changed in the least when I last saw him, which was in Birmingham at a party given by the Cave Research Group, of which he was President, to celebrate his 80th birthday.

Oliver Lloyd, 3.3.80