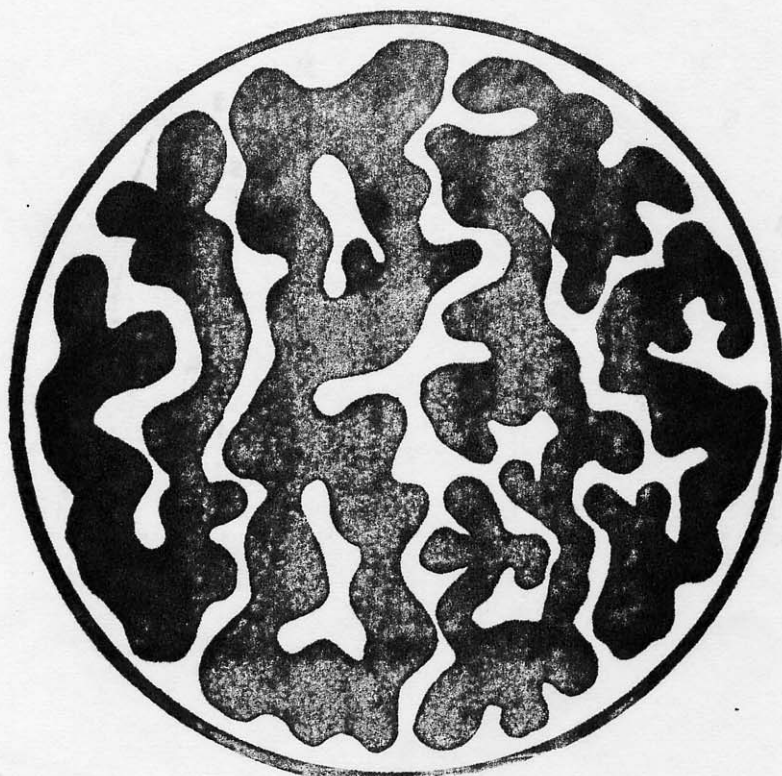


# NEWSLETTER



NEW SERIES NO 2 MAY 1971



1877

W

OBITUARY

Jack Coleman It is with the deepest sorrow that we have to record the death of our Honorary member Mr Jack Coleman, who was killed in a car crash on Monday 19th April. No details are available, but a full tribute will be paid in a more suitable medium later.

Paul Esser. Paul Esser lost his life on Sat 13th Feb 1971 while diving as a member of the CDG in Porth-yr-Ogof. He was however a member of the UBSS and it is as such that this tribute is paid to him. Paul was a 5th year medic at the University, and was President of the U B Underwater Club. A strong swimmer and first class life saver, he took up caving and then cave diving in June 1970. A very experienced sea-diver Paul had exceptional confidence and ability underwater, and it was only a series of partly unforeseeable accidents that accumulated to cause his death in Porth-yr-Ogof.

Paul will always be remembered for his energy, enthusiasm and his good nature. His company will be very greatly missed.

CONTENTS

News bag  
Gibberish  
Idle talk  
More idle talk  
Some caving  
Other, miscellaneous, some of

Page:  
Pages un-numbered, probably out of order anyway, so why don't you read it as it comes.

## CAVING REPORTS.

### Mendip.

The Planned Primrose trip down Eastwater for extra-large members did take place (amidst some speculation) on Feb 2nd. Times taken in the squeeze on the way back were as follows:-

Julian Walford (11stone): 10 minutes

Bob Churcher (14½ st): 25 minutes

Adrian Wilkins (13 stone) 50 minutes

Dick Marsh (12 stone and obviously big bones): 2 hours.

All this (or all these!), on top of getting lost on the way out (not too hard on your first Eastwater trip), and finding the entrance in flood due to melting snow, meant that the trip was a 12 hour one. Some of them plan to go back.

Various other trips down Cuthberts, Swáldons etc have also taken place.

Work proceeds, albeit very infrequent, at Manor Farm, where the entrance connection is still being blasted, and at the Bat Passage dig (now sumped again) in GB.

### Yorkshire.

Jan 30/31 saw a Gaping Gill Disappointment/Bar Pot exchange, on which Alison Smith had a nasty accident when she fell off a short climb, losing two front teeth in the process. She managed very well in getting out under her own steam from Dis.

Easter saw a party of 14 members staying at the Bradford Pothole Club HQ in Horton. Several of the older generation attended the meet. A Dowber Gill through trip was completed, and Alum Pot bottomed. On Sunday some members joined the WSG in a Dis/Flood Entrance exchange in GG while others walked the 3 peaks in blazing sun-shine by a somewhat devious route.

(P.S. The pubs were open all day - local magistrates please note!)

### South Wales.

There is nothing much to report on South Wales Caving, except for the usual tourist trips. OFD, Little Neath, and Porth-yr-Ogof

have once again been the main scenes of our activities. Unknown to Bob Churcher, a duff battery charger was to leave him well inside Cum Durr with three cavers and one pilot bulb. Nevertheless extraction was duly accomplished, to sighs of relief. (We're sure SWCC were ready to come and get us; but don't like to tempt Providence too far.)

Ireland. Easter 1971.

A small party of two cars and 7 cavers once again were irresistably drawn to Co.Clare. The objects of the mini-expedition were two-fold. Firstly to fill in some of the gaps in the water-tracing - which wasn't helped at all by blazing sun-shine for the whole stay. And secondly, exploration of cave "X".

Cave "X" first came to be heard about when Frank Nicholson and wife pushed into a new extension somewhere in Clare last Autumn. The rumours had it that there was a walking-type passage with three open ways on plus the roar of a river not far away. But a sudden flood prompted an impromptu exit. Hence the additional rumour that this new cave filled to the roof in two seconds flat. The majority of us couldn't find out where this cave X was - the reign of UBSS secrecy even omitted its own members from knowing. Hence it was a bit of an anti-climax to find that X stood for Fergus River.

To cut a wearsome story short, the Fergus river cave was 2000ft long, and is now 3000ft long. The extensions lead from the far end of Block Chamber (the furthest point reached till 1970), and then via a series of nasty tight crawls and squeezes and beddingplanes, before finally dropping down to river level. The river (last seen as the Castletown River, some 3 miles due north) could only be followed a few hundred feet upstream before it sumped. There was no apparent way on. So the party were only able to explore a few hundred feet past FHN's limit of exploration. The party (Peter Standing, Adrian Wilkins, and Tim Atkinson) carried out a grade 5 line survey of the extensions before leaving.

To say that the cave fills up in heavy rain immediately is perhaps exaggerated. But what was not appreciated is the time it takes to get out of the place. The previously known 2000ft boast only 4 places where you can stand up, and the whole issue takes a good hour for a fit party. A full report will appear in the next Proceedings (Vol 113).

Ireland (cont).

In addition, there were trips down Pollnagollum, the Coolagh River Cave, the Callauns, and Doolin. On the latter, the party were accompanied by an ancient white-haired "loon", later identified as EKT. He therefore smashed the age-record for the Doolin through trip, and didn't fall far short of smashing the time record either. Sewage in the streamway made sure work of putting Adrian to bed with dysentery for the following fortnight.

SPECIAL ARTICLE ? G.B.CAVE ? ACCESS ? Alias a plea from the Hon Sec.

A recent letter on access highlighted the problems suffered by this cave, where high demand for use has created many problems.

Firstly, the non-return of keys often leaves the secretary without a key for parties already booked on a very tight schedule.

Secondly, and by far the most important, is the amount of deliberate vandalism; the ladder dig, in particular Helictite Grotto, has been utterly wrecked since the removal of the gate at the MRO's recommendation. Bat Passage is almost as bad, and carbide dumps are to be seen every-where, despite the ban on carbide in this part of the cave.

It does not seem fair to restrict access, and keys are at the moment being issued at the rate of 5 per week-end. The result is biological contamination of the wet-way, by litter, clothes, carbide, and urine, reaching disgusting proportions; and deliberate smashing of "pretties".

Any suggestions as to how to encourage good caving practice would be welcome. Meanwhile restriction of access to un-known parties or those breaking the rules, although much disliked, is possible.

The following points should be noted.

1. When applying for access to GB, give at least 1 months notice.
2. Enclose SAE for confirmation and other correspondence
3. Do not take parties down of more than 5 people
4. Do not leave litter.

(Burying litter is no substitute for removal. It soon becomes visible, a further encouragement to leave more litter)

5. Finally, return your key the day after. Failure to do so will mean disappointing someone else - maybe yourself next time.

## Addresses

The more observant of our members will have noted that the address labels used to send out this circular (and all future publications) have been computer typed. This saves the secretaries and librarian a lot of work (500 envelopes twice annually). But because initially the addresses were transcribed from hand-written records, and because some people's hand-writing leaves much to be desired, some errors may have occurred. Will all members and exchange clubs please notify the Hon Librarian if any alterations need be made.

## Computing.

Because the University is selling the small Elliot computer, the Cave Surveying programs have had to be re-written in Fortran for use on the new ICL 475 installation. A suitable increase in speed and capacity has been observed.

Julian Walford has written a Log-book Searching program to enable quick and accurate accessing of any information stored in UBSS log-books. Punching all the data on cards takes time, and is not yet complete, but already it is capable of finding any trip down any cave by any person. It even goes so far as to calculate the UBSS "Caver of the Year", (although criteria for defining such are not yet agreed upon). Altogether this project should provide a useful means of checking up on the activities of previous years.

The librarian hopes to be able to extend this program to cataloguing the library, which is growing faster than spare shelf space can be found.

## Note to UBSS Members.

The postal strike at the start of this year interfered with the procedure of sending orders to subscribers banks. An outcome of this is that some members who already had bankers orders in force may find that they have been debited with two subscriptions this year. If so, and if they wish to claim a re-fund on one of them, would they please write to E K Tratman (not the treasurer) and this will be arranged.

## COMMENT.

Having just received the latest MNRC newsletter, we are amazed to hear we were down Lamb Leer practicing hand-life lining on Jan 30. Firstly, we do not practice hand life lining (we do it for real). And secondly we were all safely esconced in Gaping Gill at the time, and so was all our tackle. Perhaps a new through trip (Fourteen counties?)

We are also glad to note that GLSW Scouts seemed to have learnt about double life-lining, or at least, to quote: "Run double around something" ...something safe we presume, since one cannot always rely on mythical UBSS parties. Presumably they will include this in their well-known leadership courses.

PS. Where is the upper series in Lamb Leer - a new discovery perchance?

## TACKLE REPORT

During the past year the club has continued its policy of building up a stock of ladder with 10" rung spacing. We now possess some 265 ft of new ladder, in the form of 10x25ft and 1x17ft (an unfortunate accident while crimping. In addition there remains about 350 ft of older ladder with 12" rung spacing that is still in good condition.

Looking to the future, the next job would seem to be to improve and add to our stock of tethers pulleys and lifelines. (Any old rope good enough for noose for MNRC critics -see above)

Tackle left at the UBSS Hut. Many years ago it was resolved that a small supply of tackle adequate for an average Mendip trip be lodged permanently at the hut, for members use when the rest of the tackle is in Ireland or Yorkshire. Following the recent disappearance of this tackle it has been decided to discontinue this practice. Members therefore arriving from afar on spec should notify the tackle warden of their requirements well in advance. 40ft of old ladder is always to be found at Manor Farm (the bottom 10ft of the shaft there has to be freed).



Publication in early May, price £1-00 (U.S. \$3.00)

The following papers will be presented, all available as off-prints at the prices indicated.

1. Overton Down Experimental heartwork, Wiltshire, 1968  
Geomorphology of the Ditch Section, by K.Crabtree  
7pp text, 2 figs, table. Off-print £0-15 No cover.
2. The Hyaena Den, Wookey Hole, Somerset  
E.K. Treatman, D.T. Donovan, John Campbell  
c.24pp text, 9 figs, 3 tables. Off-print £0-50 with cover
3. Dangers of Pollution of Limestone Aquifers, with special reference to the Mendip Hills, Somerset. by T.C. Atkinson  
9pp text, 2 figs, 1 2-colour fold-out map  
Off-print £0.20 No cover
4. Cave Notes, Co Clare.  
This is a collection of articles on the recent work and discoveries in Co Clare, Ireland. It will act as a useful addendum to the book "The Caves of N.W. Clare"  
6pp text, 6 figs, 1 plate. Off-print £0-15 No cover
5. The Little Neath River Cave, 2nd report.  
by P.A. Standing, M.D. Newson, and A.G. Wilkins  
24pp text, 2 figs, 1 2-colour pull-out map, 6pp plates,  
plus 1 large scale survey at 1:1500. Complete with cover £0-75  
survey-only £0-50

Will members who would like copies of these off-prints please order from the Hon. Librarian, the Speleological Society, The University.

It would keep postage costs down if an extra 5p was added to each order please.

Sessional Meetings.

Archaeological meetings have had to be curtailed owing to lack of support, though it is hoped that a future talk by Paddy O'Reilly on surveying in Ogof Ffynon Ddu will be well attended.

Cave Diving.

UBSS members of the CDG have dived at Little Neath, Porth-yr-Ogof, and Wokey where John Parker (Cwmbran C C) has recently made even more important new discoveries, now so far upstream that sherpaping of spare air bottles by divers is now required. Since diving is not part of the UBSS activities as such, readers are refered to the CDG newsletters for full reports.

Oliver Lloyd wishes to invite all members of the society to sherry and cake on the occasion of his 60th birthday in

THE OLD GROTTTO, SWILDONS HOLE. Wed 4th AUG. at 7pm.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Little Neath River Cave, and report by P.A. Standing, M.D. Newton, and A.E. Wilkins. Includes a large scale survey at 1:1500. Complete with cover 10-75 survey only 10-50

All members who would like copies of these off-prints please order from the Hon. Librarian, the Speleological Society, The University.

It would keep postage costs down if an extra 5p was added to each order please.