

equipment and techniques. It gives sound advice on choices of cameras, flash guns and the full range accessories and consumables, some of which may be a bit esoteric and elaborate for the majority of underground photographers. Details of working with electronic flashes and bulbs to the best effect are well explained and the lavish underground photographs are complimented with good explanations. One of the most useful additions to this book is the bookmark. It helps on every page by giving a quick reference to the way that Chris identifies his flash positioning in the familiar E1, B4 system (describing electronic or bulb flashes and their position relative to the person carrying the flash). A system easier but not necessarily better than the meticulous way in which Françoise-Marie and Yan Callot detail every photograph with distance, type of flash, film and exposure in *Photographie Sous Terre*. The advanced photography is complimented by even the most basic systems such as automatic cameras. These are well explored, giving the advantages (and many disadvantages) of using automatic cameras but are nevertheless still worth a try if you have nothing else and you can get some good results.

The only thing this book wants for is more colour. Most of the exhibitions and slides shows seen these days are composed mainly, if not solely of colour photographs. The few colour shots are only used for specific reference to certain items and in that respect are not as well composed as those in the rest of the book. It is also worth mentioning some of the other chapters, such as macro photography, alternative lighting (flash powders, carbide, etc.), multiple flash work and composition. All of these are well illustrated and show that sometimes practice, trial and error are what will give the best results. Even bad photographs are used to good effect in the book by analysing them and telling others of mistakes made, to improve their pictures, in the assessing your work section.

Unless you are very good at French, when this book's small amount of information about colour photography can be enlarged by reading *Photographie Sous Terre*, it is without a doubt a must for the new, the keen and the experienced underground photographer.

REF: CALLOT F-M. and CALLOT Y. 1994. *Photographie Sous Terre*. Paris. VM Editions.

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*The Mendip Hills. Nature in Avon* by A. F. Hollowell (editor). *Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists' Society*, vol. 55, Special Issue No. 4, pp. 1-158. Published November, 1997. Obtainable from BNS, 52 Kewstoke Rd., Stoke Bishop, BS9 1HF, £7.00 including postage.

This is a collection of 13 articles by various authors, the majority devoted to botany and zoology. I will mention only five. The article on "Ancient ponds and farm water supplies on Mendip" by our hon. member, William Stanton, is an excellent examples of this author's careful observation and recording. He shows in detail how water supplies were obtained and conserved by farmers on the generally waterless limestone plateau of Mendip. It should be read by everyone interested in the history of the area.

"Recent vegetation history of Black Down, Mendip", by Keith Crabtree, describes the lithological and pollen profiles of a trial pit (or boring?), 1.35 m deep to bedrock, made in 1980 'at the site of a former spring head in the catchment of the East Twin'. The location is not more precisely stated. Radiocarbon dating of the basal deposit gives a slightly surprising age of only 370 yrs BP. Samples were taken at 5 cm intervals and a detailed pollen profile is given and discussed.

While the main purpose of "The biological implications of heavy metals in the Mendips", by M. H. Martin and K. M. Fawcett, is to discuss effects on plants and on human health, it does include a small scale geological map with mineral locations and soil analyses for Cd, Zn, Pb and Cu from 15 sites.

M. J. Simms' "The geological history of the Mendip Hills and their margins" is a summary of the lithological sequence and the tectonic deformations undergone by the rocks in the area. Mineralisation is also covered.

Finally, "The geomorphic evolution of the Mendip Hills" by A. R. Farrant and P. L. Smart is one of the longest articles. After a review of earlier ideas, development of the landscape is discussed in some detail and much use is made of evidence from caves and their deposits. A model is proposed of landscape and drainage development controlled by the progressive removal, from west to east, of the Mesozoic rocks which once covered the area (the 'scarp retreat' of the authors). This accounts for several features, including the predominantly west-flowing underground drainage in the central Mendips (because the hydraulic gradient slopes down from the retreating edge of impermeable cover), the greater maturity of underground drainage (with larger caves) to the west, and perhaps the greater dissection of western Mendip (though this area was already more strongly dissected in Triassic times). The chapter is well worth reading by all interested in the development of Mendip cave systems and landscape.

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