

OBITUARIES

R.A.J. PEARCE MB, ChB, LRCP, MRCGP
28.01.22 - 21.10.01



With the death of Rod Pearce, we have lost the last member of the Society to have a cave named after him, that being, of course, Rod's Pot, close by the Society's Burrington H.Q.

The son of a GPO executive and a schoolteacher, Rod came up to Bristol in 1939 and graduated MB ChB in 1945. He spent the following year at the Bristol Royal Infirmary and Bristol General Hospital before embarking on a career in general practice, firstly in Highworth, Wiltshire (1946-7) and Nether Stowey in Somerset (1947-8) before finally settling in Trowbridge where he worked until retirement in 1979. Although having been a prominent and active member of the community in Trowbridge, he was a founder of the local Rotary Club and was its President in 1961-2, he moved again after retirement, settling in Devizes where he stayed to the end of his life.

Soon after arriving in Bristol Rod joined the Society and became one of its most active members, being involved in the exploration of East Twin Swallet and, especially, G.B. Cavern as well as the eponymous Rod's Pot. He was secretary from 1942 to 1945 and steered the Society through the difficult war years, helping to ensure not just that it might survive after the damage done to the Library and Museum during the air raids of November 1940, but that it should prosper, by using the discovery of the magnificent G.B. Cavern to widely publicise its work in the national press and in such journals as the *Illustrated London News*.

When he left Bristol, in 1946, he did not leave behind his interest in caves and caving and he was closely involved in the formation of both the South Wales Caving Club and the Cave Diving Group. He was also involved in the revival of the Mendip Rescue Organisation and the formation of the South Wales Cave Rescue Organisation in the post-war years, serving

as Medical Officer to both these bodies. He also contributed sections to Balch's 1948 edition of *The Caves of Mendip* and Johnson's 1967 *The History of Mendip Caving*. Marriage, to Cecilia, whom he met whilst traveling in South America, and a growing family curtailed any active involvement in caving, but his interest never went away and when his daughter, Tessa, came up to Bristol in the 1970s and joined the Society he had a ready made excuse to go underground once more, accompanying Tessa and other members of the Society on several trips to South Wales. Sadly, increasing ill-health finally put a stop to this, though he never ceased his membership of the Society and was always pleased to discuss old times.

His ashes are to be scattered on Blackdown, above the Society's H.Q., which so often featured in his memories of happy times past.

G.J. Mullan