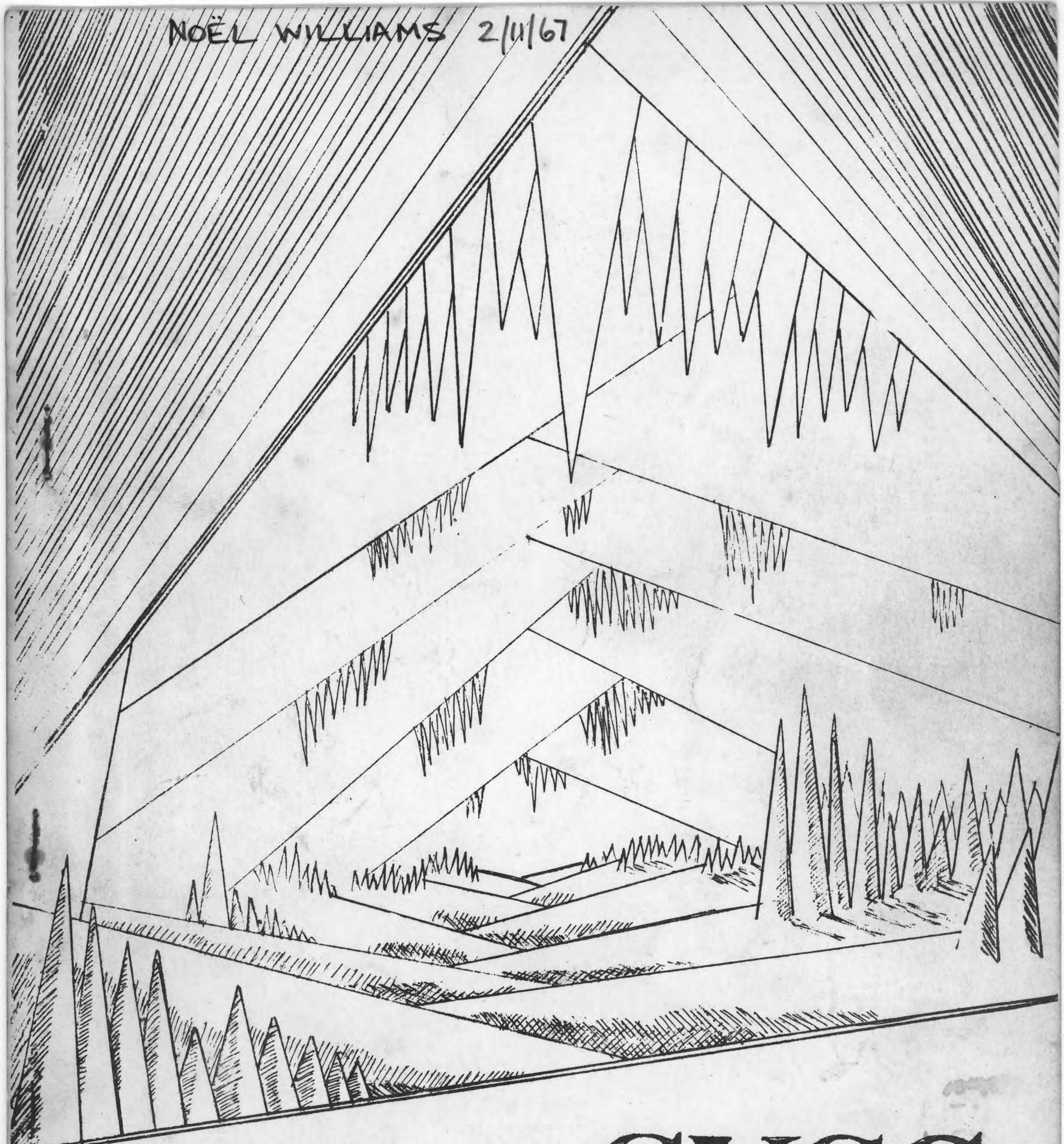


NOËL WILLIAMS 2/11/67



CUCC

OCT 1967

1952-53



1952-53

1952-53

1952-53

1952-53

1952-53

JOURNAL
of the
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CAVING CLUB

Volume I, No. 3

October 1967

CONTENTS :-

| | |
|---|----|
| Physiology of a caving club - Editorial | 2 |
| Presidentorial | 24 |
| <u>Foreign News</u> | |
| Professional caving in Canada by Mike Goodchild | 4 |
| British Expedition to the Cantabrian Mountains by Clive Westlake | 5 |
| CUCC on holiday in the Dordogne 1965 by Gareth Jones | 6 |
| CUCC Irish Expedition 1967 by Mike Richards | 27 |
| Caving in Canada Summer 1967 by Guy Poulton | 31 |
| <u>Recent rescues involving club members</u> | |
| Carlswark Cavern by Clive Westlake | 9 |
| Pent Mawr Pot by Gareth Jones | 11 |
| Swildon's Hole by Richard Babb | 11 |
| <u>Home News</u> | |
| Yorkshire Meet June 1965 by Gareth Jones | 17 |
| Diving in Swildon's 2½ by Pete Bowler | 18 |
| Post Tripos Meet June 1966 by Gareth Jones | 19 |
| Dow/Prov conquered - just! by Pete Hayward | 21 |
| Anyone can swim in a wet-suit by Noel Williams | 22 |
| <u>Technicalities</u> | |
| Ladder building by Frank Morland | 12 |
| A reliable Nife cell catch by Richard Babb | 15 |
| Self-lifeline devices by Gareth Jones | 14 |
| Caving films by Frank Morland | 16 |
| Library lists | 16 |

Produced by :

Cambridge University Caving Club
c/o CUMC
c/o The Wherry Library
St. John's College
CAMBRIDGE.

Devotees of any esoteric sport are always being asked why they do it, and their answers vary from an inarticulate silence to the magnificently enigmatic, "Because its there". The laity have little idea of what a cave is like inside, and even colour slides, that most convincing of media, can convey little of the underground atmosphere. An embarrassed admission of being a devotee of this eccentric activity usually receives the reply, "Oh! I couldn't do that, I get- what do you call it- claustrophobia". Those with at least a superficial idea of Freudian symbology might well belabour this "neurotic retreat from reality into the Womb of the Great Earth Mother", and thence consider our Oedipus complexes, or an even more advanced student might criticise this perverse thrust into the very bowels of the earth, particularly after seeing a photograph of a caver in a muddy crawl.

But is caving anything like this at all? Leisure activities are considered an essential of modern life, and those concerned with the efficient use of recreational land can hardly complain at our sport. Outdoor pursuits are widely practised even by Royalty, and what can be more respectable than a sport that has appeared in a Sunday Colour Supplement?

Caving is essentially a non-technical sport, requiring far fewer special skills than rock-climbing, for example. Most people can easily master the few techniques involved, but are put off by the rigours of this undoubtedly hard sport. You've heard it before, I know, but I would like to make a plea for more women cavers, not only on social grounds, but because their sub-cutaneous fat-layer should protect them from some of the effects of exposure. The exercise of caving may be the answer to modern woman's neurotic concern with her weight, particularly as this is one sport where a woman can be at least as good as a man.

Cambridge caving presents many atypical properties. People from other universities may be shocked to learn that we receive no funds apart from members' subscriptions. Colleges dominate the scene, and there is no Union building (the Cambridge Union is a debating society open to anyone with 12 guineas to spare). College Boat Clubs and Amalgamated Clubs must be held responsible for maintaining this basically immoral situation, which is only now beginning to be rectified. A pathetically small amount of money is soon to be distributed between an incredible number of scrabbling University Clubs.

Minibuses are the only form of transport that we can possibly use, and in the present monopoly situation, prices are impossibly high. The University should set up some system of subsidising our expensive tackle and transport, if necessary hiring out cheap minibuses itself. These are issues the club should be intimately involved with.

Despite the handicap of having to pay perhaps £2 per meet for transport alone, we seem to have done remarkably well as far as the caving itself goes. Two years ago, my predecessor was regretting that trips through Dow/Prov and to the bottom of Penyghent were no longer feasible. By chance, we have done both these trips in the intervening years - both on vac meets when people are not tired by a journey of up to (and sometimes longer than) seven hours to and from the caving areas. My predecessor commented on the several occasions when we had to ask for the assistance of outside organisations. In this journal there are several

accounts of how members have been of some assistance to other cavers. In the past two years we have bought or made some two hundred feet of ladder, six hundred feet of rope, and various belays and pulleys. Further work is in progress to make more ladder. Members now use Nife cells and wet-suits almost exclusively, and all these technical aids have undoubtedly helped our caving. Even the weakest member of our teams is quite fit and experienced, and this has helped our safety record.

However, this has not occurred without the concomitant disadvantage of a drop in membership as beginners are deterred by the high cost of personal equipment and transport, as well as by the high standard of our trips. The majority of the most enjoyable trips in Britain do need a wet-suit. Cavers of the Old School will here be regretting the demise of the days of wool next to the skin (from the local Church jumble sale) and carbide lamps (now little cheaper than Nife cells).

At this stage I must thank the Eldon Pothole Club for their help at a time when we needed it. Members have joined them on trips of all lengths, yea, even to the bottom of Penyghent. This repeats our earlier collusion with Kendal, and could well be fruitful in future.

In the past, our keenest cavers have usually done something before they came up, indicating perhaps that our training of beginners was bad. Now, many members are still keen after their introduction to the sport with us. Several trips have been done where each member of the party learns up part of the survey and leads that section, thus giving everyone a taste of responsibility that is so much better than just following the boots in front.

Vac meets have been resuscitated, and have provided some of our more successful caving. Members have been caving abroad in the Dordogne, in Eire, and in Canada, where our ex-treasurer is doing a caving Ph.D. These outings provide a good cheap holiday, and a greater opportunity for original work than in overcrowded Britain. It is regrettable that the distances we travel preclude any serious work in Britain from Cambridge, and even in the vac we have time to do little more than look at some of the bigger systems. To say that a club must produce surveys and dig is to apply an irrelevant criterion to us.

On the purely social scene, members frequently meet at WOW lunches or at a pub, and this, as well as our more formal "social meets" have enabled people to get to know one another away from the depersonalized rush of a caving trip. Our pre-mortems - a word which lingers from the Bad Old Days - serve a similar function and also help the organisation of a more difficult trip such as an exchange. The club log-book is a splendid institution that is widely read and enjoyed. It has served as a vehicle for attacks on female cavers, cavers too large for squeezes, non-swimmers, etc., etc., and, best of all, has proved to be the major source of material for this journal.

The club is now no more or less than it ought to be : a group of friends with a common interest - the love of a very fine sport.

Gareth Jones.

Despite the immense area of Canada, the country has little to offer in the way of sporting caving. There are a few sea caves in Nova Scotia, and Ontario has some specialist caving to offer in the cracks immediately above the Niagra escarpment. Solutional features are often found in the escarpment, but of limited extent, and there are small caves dotted in the southern part of the province. The newly formed McMaster University Climbing & Caving Club is engaged on a dig south of Georgian Bay, trying to open up one of the two sinkholes of promise in the province, about half a mile back from the escarpment and 300' above the rising. So, although the situation is by no means hopeless, one tends to go south 500 miles to the rich cave country of W. Virginia and Indiana. Here one can discover ten miles of river passage merely by asking where to look.

The Rocky Mountains are really the only area in the country where any good sporting caving is to be found. The Nakimu Caves, in the Rogers Pass in the Selkirk Mountains of BC have been known since 1903, when they were found by a bear trying to avoid an untimely death from a prospector's shotgun. They lie at 5600', about 2 miles from the main CPR line and the cave entrance, although consisting of a hole 90' deep by a few hundred long, was not found until some twenty years after the railway was built.

A river, running off the snow at the head of the Cougar valley, flows through two short caves and finally disappears from view at the end of the gorge mentioned above. It is about the same size as the beck emerging from Ingleborough Cave under normal conditions, and is never more or less than 32° F. It emerges 1000' lower after a horizontal distance of some 3000'. 700' of this drop are in the known cave, and for much of the way the water is running down a slope of 45° or more. For these reasons, the first lesson for the would-be Nakimu explorer is that the streamway is not for you, except in one or two places near the top end.

Deutschmann, whom we left shooting a bear, descended the gorge by means of a fallen tree, and by 1905, because of the interest shown by the CPR, a wandering geographer named Wheeler was able to survey 5500' of passage. His account talks of Dante's visions and the witches of Macbeth, and such is the impression given by the roaring water and huge dry chaotic passages that during the next 50 years, despite a continual flow of tourists, no-one was willing to follow the passages which led down to "The horrible depths of Mother Earth out of which ascends the continual roar of torrential cataracts like the cries of the damned".

The tourists entered by a crawl and a vertical of 120', and were a hardy lot. Such were the rigours of a trip to Nakimu that the National Parks finally closed the cave to visitors in the 1940's, leaving it cluttered with railings and ladders. Since then, there has been a steady stream of local people poking about with flashlights, and the NSS Los Angeles mob had an expedition in 1958 or so. They seem to have spent all their time getting an accurate fix of the entrance by triangulating up from the road, and what little of the cave they did survey amounts to little more than the 1905 effort.

We spent six weeks working on Nakimu, principally to produce a geomorphological study of the cave. We concentrated first on extending the lower limit of the cave towards the rising, and succeeded in pushing down 350' from the old limit. At this point we could find no more dry passages and would have been forced to enter the streamway, a downright impossibility

at that point. One might, however, push further by pegging down the walls out of the water, or by pushing the cracks in the roof. Still, the cave now has the respectable depth of 650' below the top entrance; and this can be done completely without tackle.

We surveyed a total of nearly 9000' of passage, much of which was totally new; and on the last day found a phreatic system almost independent of the modern streamway, choked full of sediment and of great promise for further work.

Possibly the most exciting find in the area is a resurgence which we called Rasperry Cave - a stream of the same proportions as Nakimu River pouring out of a mountainside on the other side of the Rogers Pass. The mountain above the rising has no large catchment area, and the effluent water has undoubtedly melted off a glacier, from its colour. The only possibility is a glacier snout on the other side of the mountain and more than 2000' higher. We got in 200' or so when we were blocked by a sump. But we have great hopes for crowbar action and chemical persuasion next summer - besides exciting leads in Nakimu. But for the time being, it's back to the grotty dig at Kimberley, or just plain opencast. It's further from here to Nakimu than from here to Swildon's.

Mike Goodchild.

1965 Expedition to the Cantabrian Mountains

Thirty members, a ton of food, three thousand feet of ladder, eleven vehicles, and the backing of the Cave Research Group give some idea of the mammoth scale of the 1965 British Speleological Expedition to the Cantabrian Mountains. Information from the Grupo Espeleologica de Penalba indicated that cave systems of vast proportions were to be found in the area of the Rio Torio, north of Leon. Consequently, this vast assembly of gear, supplied mainly by firms convinced for reasons unknown of our good faith, and men, mainly from Oxford University Caving Club and the Eldon Pothole Club, but representing many other organisations, set off for Spain in late July, convinced that nothing could stop them from unearthing colossal cave systems. I was organising the food, a tedious but eventually rewarding task when no-one suffered from malnutrition.

First reports from our advance party in Spain were not very promising. Our campsite at the village of Valporquero was in the centre of the "caving" area, and a big cave - in fact the only big cave - was called after it. The limestone proved to be a hideous mess of high on vertically bedded rock, pulverised by violent faulting, while our Spanish colleagues turned out to be mere children with no idea how to cave at all. The first week at Valporquero saw everyone becoming gradually disillusioned. A large number of shafts above the Rio Torio gorge were examined, but all were hopelessly choked at a depth of a few hundred feet, often less. A quarter of a mile of passage was discovered in Cueva de las Valle de Marquesas. The cave contained fine formations and ended in a massive boulder choke. Cueva Pozo del Infernio was a resurgence cave involving a few hundred feet of swimming in ice-cold water of Unknown Depth.

Our largest discovery was Ghyrret Caverns, reached by a hair-raising drive and a hard slog up a scree slope. An entrance pitch of 110' led to a series of predominantly phreatic caverns descending to about 500'. This kept a team led by Sheperd and Huntington happy for a couple of days,

but intensive searching soon showed that the area had none of the prospects promised to us. Cueva Valporquero, however, was a cave worthy of the name. It proved to be a through trip of half a mile over a vertical distance of nearly 500'. The high-level passages - sometimes 150' by 150' - contained fine formations, while the stream passage - also on an epic scale - provided a fantastic series of cascades, lakes, short pitches, and canals. It is an adequate gauge of how seriously we misjudged the Spanish cavers that a large party of them took 19 hours to do the through trip, while two of us went through and back in two hours.

No-one likes going on a caving expedition only to find that he has been misled and there are no caves. Thirty people in this position produced an ugly few days in the middle of the trip in which charity was somewhat lacking towards our leaders, the Spanish, and each other. It was decided that the best course of action was to move on to the Picos d'Europa, an area investigated by the Oxford members during the previous few years.

Consequently, the whole outfit staggered optimistically across the Cantabrians and re-established camp by the Rio Sella near Cangas de Onis. The final blow came when the team sent up to the high Picos to look at the Jeu Cabou returned after three mildly shattering days with the information that it was scarcely 500' deep. For me, this week was not very successful personally as I was vaguely ill most of the time.

Then we finally realised that if there weren't any big caves, we'd have to put up with what we'd got. A fair proportion of the expedition had departed in disgust, but for the last week or more of the trip the dozen or so of us left enjoyed some fine weather, large-scale eating, good drinking, and enough caving to keep us happy by our now humbler standards. I was fortunate to be in on the discovery of Cueva Cotozia, a quarter-mile system with some magnificent formations. We ended up by finding Cueva Huelga, a half-mile long cave of intriguing complexity. A very good week all round.

The British Speleological Expedition to the Cantabrian Mountains got through plenty of caving, and most members enjoyed most of the time in Spain. Much of the information gained will be of use to geomorphologists, and speleologists, but so far as I was concerned, the totally misleading reports of the possibilities of the area and the considerable amount of time, money, and energy spent on the expedition were just not quite worth it

Clive Westlake.

CUCC on holiday in the Dordogne - Summer 1965

Our start was blessed by the weather, and we crossed the Channel in good conditions, to the accompaniment of sighs of relief from the one person susceptible to sea-sickness. The traverse was enlivened by the presence of a party of French school-children all wearing labels emblazoned with the letters SSP. Duly impressed, we entered France.

The attention we got from the French people was most touching. This was soon reduced to a bearable intensity when Frank decided to drive on the right. That night, we camped at Chartres to give our stomach ulcers a rest. The next day's drive took us to Limoges, and included a stop of one hour while Frank got the tyre pressures right.

Finally, Richard could stand it no more, and I was forced to take the wheel. A sudden stop caused by a slight confusion between brake and

7.

clutch pedals evoked screams from the back seat, but we continued unperturbed to our destination - Saint Leon sur Vézère. Here some noble members of the French GCU club put up our tent in the rain and we all retired under canvas for a talk. It came as quite a shock to find that we could not understand them, but the old fifth-form French slowly came back, and we established contact.

The next day we all descended Trou du Vent, discovered by Martel in about 1900. Frank, as a consequence of a large breakfast, demonstrated the aptness of the name at the bottom of the entrance shaft (45'), much to the amusement of the French. The main passage was about Agen Allwedd size, but we turned off into a series of crawls and squeezes. Needless to say, I got stuck on the way out and had to dig myself free. We looked at the entrance to the wet series, but as this was almost a sump, did not go through. Several kilometres of hot and thrutchy passage later, we came upon some low crawls in the streamway. The French were most impressed when we plunged in to cool off, because they seem to have an almost pathological dread of getting wet. The air temperature was in the sixties or seventies and we did not feel cold even before the low humidity dried us off. This was caving in style.

The French were very much our masters on the way up their curious ladder with three rungs to the metre (13" spacing). However, they took us to the local café that evening, and bought us some beer, which must have contained about $\frac{1}{4}$ alcohol. The French cavers were mostly under twenty, and being Roman Catholics (except for one or two atheist Communists) were under strict parental control, something which we liberalised British found most strange.

We were taken next day to Domme, a village perched some three hundred feet above the Vézère valley, and possessing a view which tourists come miles to see. The mayor of the town had a garden with a set of steps leading underground, which we found led into a small cave with extensive cave-drawings, which the carbon from our lamps did nothing to improve. By this time the French cavers had remembered enough lycee English to realise that our comments were not favourable towards these curious and obscure sketches under $\frac{1}{2}$ ' of calcite. Our view of caving was sloshing along large stream passages, while theirs was one of a more scientific study.

In the evening we all went to a local village festival in Rouffignac where brass bands marched in full uniform, and the whole town went wild. Emanating from the dance-hall was the music of a piano-accordion, clarinet and drums trio with a folksy, insistent rhythm that we came to associate with that part of France. One disturbing feature was the frequency of punch-ups between the youths of the town and those of the Vézère valley. Their group loyalties seemed to be analagous to those of the Mods and Rockers in Britain. One female proclaimed her membership by the words "La rivière Vézère" printed on a T-shirt stretched attractively over her ventral thoracic pair of mammary glands.

Somewhat bleary-eyed the next morning, we went to a pot at Terrason. This had a fine free surface pitch of 90', and a further pitch of 40' which had a very tight pitch-head. The formations were fine, but there was no stream and we were ill-disposed by two very dead dogs at the entrance pitch.

We British lost further face the next afternoon in a cave called La Manerie, which was a "hot, sweaty little hole with a really tight

8.

squeeze". The French were disgusted at our reaction to this hole, particularly as one large Anglais got stuck for a considerable time, so the day after we were allowed to rest.

This idyllic state of affairs did not last, as an almost spherical Abbe (who, we were warned "liked boys") rolled up at our village, and demanded to see some cave-engravings one of the French called Yann had discovered. Thus we went for the first time to see La Battuserie, only a few miles from Lascaux caves at Montignac. The Abbe was hauled up the hillside on a rope, and somehow oozed through the entrance crawl to a chamber where some scratches on the roof suggested the form of a mammoth. The Abbe, being something of an expert, pronounced the engravings genuine, and so Yann was able to claim a reward of £500 for finding some new cave-art. Who says caving doesn't pay? The result was that we all got our photos in the local rag - "Le Soud-Oeust" - which was very gratifying.

Beyond the entrance hall was a hole we were told was 40 metres deep so we lowered 140' of ladder, and set off fearfully into the unknown. The French, as usual, had been somewhat optimistic, and we reached the bottom at a mere 70', and took some photographs. Late that evening, we were still not feeling too tired, so some of the out-group French persuaded us to go on a midnight trip to Le Blaireau (Badger) Cave. The bedding planes were at least fifteen feet apart in the rather chalky Jurassic limestone of the area (millions of years younger than the British Carboniferous limestone), and the locals had taken advantage of this and had carved out some large, square chambers for growing mushrooms. Driving into the cave on headlights through a narrow entrance was decidedly eerie, so we quickly changed and crawled into the hole where man's excavations had met nature's. The cave had only been discovered a few weeks ago, and the formations were of Easter Grotto standard, and quite untouched. Our way in was terminated somewhat prematurely when the large Anglais failed to pass a squeeze, which the French, starved of the benefits of milk on the NHS, found ridiculously simple. Thus we became even more inferior in their eyes.

Very much later the same morning came our trip to Fontanguilliere. The French went in by a dry entrance, while we wet-suited types tried the wet and superbly sporting alternative. After several hundred feet of passage with limited air-space, we met the others and moved off upstream. The whole cave consisted of three entrances soon joining, and then nine kilometres of unbranched passage to the upstream sump. Needless to say, we got browned off after a few kilometres, and turned back, particularly as the callous French started stoning some bats. After changing, we visited a vineyard to taste the local wine, as did twenty year old Yann, but only because his parents weren't there to stop him.

Another vineyard at Montignac, on the opposite side of the valley to the still-closed Lascaux caves, was the next day's venue. Here, the local farmer hoped to find more cave-paintings, assisted by a piece of brass which he swung on a string. This curious old man had spent years digging holes through solid rock. His latest dig was 40' deep, and had broken into a phreatic tube which he was clearing. Frank ran a Grade 5 line through, but the old man still preferred the accuracy of his pendulum. Frank felt that his professional pride was being insulted, but recovered that night when we all had a sing-song in an old chateau.

The next few days were spent re-visiting some of the caves we had seen before, including a photographic trip down La Battuserie. While down the latter hole, we pushed a Frenchman by the name of Jean-Claud up a

9.

loose rock face, and entered about 200' of finely decorated high-level passage. Of particular note was a stal cascade, which we ascended in socks alone. The find was duly recorded, photographed, and surveyed; during which process, Frank discovered a grotto that only he was small enough to enter.

The day after, Frank discovered that he had fleas. Having consulted a French dictionary, we went to Perigeux to change some travellers' cheques while Frank asked for some flea-powder in his execrable French. Also, some large French carbide lamps were purchased for conversion into those splendid machines with a separate head-set, and a chamber that contains a whole pound of carbide.

The last couple of days passed in sampling the infamous mud of La Broche. Several greasy chimneys contributed to the sport, but we had to retreat after nearly losing one of the party in the mud. Frank spent a lot of time surveying some small caves near La Batuserie, while Richard and I went to Rouffignac show-cave. The journey inside the cave is two kilometres long, most easily accomplished by sitting on their little electric train. The cave is in chalky limestone with what looks like cherts in it, and contains excellent drawings, overlain by sixteenth-century graffiti.

The journey back to England was quite uneventful, and on the Channel ferry a demonstration was conclusively made that getting drunk on whisky is not a way of avoiding sea-sickness.

Anyone contemplating sporting caving would find it worthwhile to go beyond the Dordogne to Padirac or the Pyrenees. Nonetheless, the Dordogne offers plenty of gentler relaxation in the countryside, the show-caves, and the excellent food (we found that pâté-de-foie was the cheapest source of protein). A good book on the caves is "Le Perigord Souterrain" by Bernard Perot.

Gareth Jones.

Carlswark Rescue

In the late afternoon of Tuesday 7th July 1965, Cadet John Stevens of the Junior Leaders' Regiment, clad in beret, denims, one sweater, and boots, and carrying one candle, dived into the sump in the entrance series of Carlswark Cavern, Stony Middleton. When he did not return, his companions asked for the assistance of the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation. Team C, led by Dave Allsop, turned out from Buxton at 1740 and searched the environs of the sump without success, so Ken Pearce, who was climbing on Stanage Edge with Bob Togood, was summoned by the police to dive the sump. At this juncture, it was assumed that the operation would consist of recovering Stevens' body. Ken dived three times, advancing 70' into the sump to a constriction, but careful searching failed to locate the body. He returned to daylight (150' away), and gave me his bottles to carry. I had just arrived, having heard about the rescue by chance via Hugh Kidd, the Team C Doctor. It was now 2300.

Although no-one believed that Stevens would be alive, Ken's failure to find anything was very puzzling, and the next move was to pump out the sump. Ken and Dave went off to Earle's Cement at Hope to collect an electric pump, while Harold Lord, Bob Togood, and I went to the Mines Research Depot in Sheffield to collect a generator, leaving the rest of Team C to

hang around with the police, fire service, and press. The drive in Bob's van was somewhat desperate, but once in Sheffield we went to Harold's house to collect his Land-Rover for pulling the generator. Harold already knew that the hook was unsuitable so we removed it with an oxacetylene cutter and fitted a proper one. The Land-Rover already contained Harold's own generator, but he did not want to use this as it was untested. We could not unload it, however, because it weighed some $8\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. We drove across Sheffield at about 50 mph and collected the Mines Research generator: this was a massive trailer-mounted machine displacing some $1\frac{3}{4}$ tons. The drive back to Stony Middleton was rather more sedate than the outward journey. We arrived at 0055 Wednesday.

Ken had just surfaced after a fourth dive. This had failed to find Stevens' body and Ken was very cold as he did not have his wet-suit hood. Next an Earle's Cement lorry arrived with two massive electric pumps. We were off-loading these and wondering how to fit them in the cave, when two men arrived from Glebe mine with a small and powerful pump which seemed ideal for the purpose. This was man-handled into the cave while Harold unrolled yards of cable and I found myself carrying loads of 3" canvas fire hose. It was now that I discovered that I had forgotten to bring my helmet, the sort of idiotic simple mistake one is liable to make under stress; however, a spare was forthcoming from a nearby quarry. The problem now was that, despite the ministrations of Harold and violent crankings from Ken, the Mines Research generator wouldn't start. It was decided to ask Oliver Lloyd and two other Mendip divers to stand by for another dive at 1800 if pumping did not succeed.

Eventually, Harold gave up trying with the big generator and turned to his own. It started immediately. Within minutes, a spectacular flood was trundling down the road to Stony Middleton. No speleological or journalistic account of the rescue has given adequate recognition to Harold, without whose technological genius the operation would undoubtedly failed.

At 0400 John Needham and I went down to the sump to check on the water level, not knowing that Dave Allsop and Clive Downhill had just gone down for the same purpose. We were just short of our destination when we heard the shout "He's here and he's alive!" My first feeling was not of relief, because I had not been anxious, merely assuming that boys who dive 70' sumps die. Somehow I felt very insignificant. I phoned through to the surface, asking for dry clothing, hot drinks, and an exposure suit, and more men. Then the pump stopped. This was rather harrowing.

We learnt from Stevens that, being the best swimmer in the regiment he had not had much trouble in diving the sump, though he had to turn round at one stage to recover his beret, which he didn't want to lose as the quartermaster wouldn't be too pleased. Arriving on the far side through a tight squeeze, he discovered that his candle had gone out, so he could not see which way to dive home. He therefore waited to be rescued. Twelve hours later we did just that.

Rescue equipment arrived at the sump and soon Harold had the pump going again. We could see the water dropping and soon Dave, Hugh and Pete Bleakley were through the sump and dressing Stevens in a goon-suit. Although very cold, he was not in a desperate condition and Hugh said that a stretcher was unnecessary. At 0400 we helped him through the entrance passages and emerged into the dazzling lights of the press photographers. He was put into an ambulance which, after a near collision with an escorting police car, drove off into the dawn. We sat down in the road and felt

11.

helpless, even the veterans of twenty rescues agreeing that there had never been a more dramatic call-out.

By the time I had spent two more hours cleaning up at the cave, driven home, cooked the family's breakfast, washed the car, hung up my caving gear to dry, and written a 2,000 word account, I had just sobered down enough to go to bed.

Clive Westlake.

Pant Mawr Rescue

That day I had been down Pant Mawr on a photographic trip with no less than a real, live, professional photographer, and had been mildly worried lowering down the entrance shaft several ammunition boxes containing two Rolleiflexes, a Pentax, and numerous expensive-looking electronic flash-guns. We spent many happy hours descending the pot by the intermittent illumination required by the photographer, and started out a few minutes behind a party of Army cavers.

Death or sudden injury is always shocking, and I felt quite disturbed on arriving at the bottom of the entrance pitch and finding an injured man there. He had attempted to climb out while being double-lifeline from the bottom, but had fallen where the ladder passed under an overhang. His lifeline must have been wrongly tied, for it had come undone, and he had fallen freely for at least thirty feet to land on his back on some sharp rocks. He was badly shocked, but showed no signs of spinal injury, as he was sitting up and expounding loudly on the pain he got in his ribs when he breathed. He weighed about thirteen stone, and it was probable that his fat had saved him from a broken back.

One bod had already started out for Penwyllt to call out a rescue, and had left only one strand of lifeline down the pitch, though firmly anchored at the top. Deciding to take no chances, I climbed out using the Mk. II self-lifeline device described elsewhere in this journal, and helped to carry the rescue equipment from the club. A hauling team of ten was more than enough to lift the patient on a stretcher out of the shakehole. After being transferred to an overland stretcher, he was carried to Clive Jones' Land-Rover on the old tram-road at Pwll Byfre, and taken to hospital.

It turned out that he had broken several ribs, and chipped a few vertebrae. The moral of this tale is that it is considerate to the various rescue organisations to learn how to tie a bowline before going caving, and to lose a few stone if you insist on being rescued regardless.

Gareth Jones.

Swildon's Rescue

July 19/20 1965

On Sunday 19th, Gareth and I retired early to our pits at Willgrove, after devoting the weekend to an attack on Primrose Pot (unsuccessful) and on Lamb Leer (more successful). At 0100 we were rudely awoken by Tim Atkinson (WCC& UBSS) and told that cavers were needed for a rescue in Swildon's. Some time later, we unearthed a shilling in the toe of an anonymous wellington boot, and, in the resulting light, learned the details. A party of four SVCC members had descended at midday on Sunday, to attempt the NE inlet/ Causer's Calamity rout discovered two weeks

12.

previously. When they became overdue, Paul Allen, also of SVCC had searched the upper reaches of the cave and found that the Shatter ladder was still in place; he then alerted the MRO.

On arrival at Priddy Green, hungry, bleary-eyed, and fagless, we found Luke Devenish and Howard Kenney in charge of operations. Soon afterwards, Wells police arrived, equipped with radios and floodlights. The available cavers were issued with spare lights and MRO emergency packs, and organised into three parties to search all possible exits i.e. PR and Double Trouble. There was also the possibility of their making an exit via the streamway sumps. The first, led by Willy Stanton, was to search Shatter Passage, the second consisting of Tim Atkinson and Gareth to search the Damp Link as far as the second static sump. The third, containing myself, was to search I and II, Vicarage Passage, and the Double Trouble Series.

We descended at high speed, having first registered bodies and equipment with a checker at the entrance, a worthy gentleman from Sandhurst. My party found nothing, although the Round Trip backwards has its sporting aspects. We therefore settled down at the head of Blue Pencil to await news. News arrived 40 minutes later in the form of Willy Stanton, who announced that the party had been found stranded in Shatter Passage. Their lights (one Nife, plus an assortment of torches and carbide lamps) had been defeated by the static sumps.

At this stage I was becoming short of both light and energy, so I left the cave with Paul Allen, collecting the Shatter ladder on the way. By now, official MRO teams had entered the cave, and a telephone had been laid to the Water Chamber. These parties also began to withdraw.

I emerged at 0700 Monday to be greeted by a superb smell of Field Kitchen. The last men, including the culprits, were out by 0750.

This rescue was a reassuring demonstration of MRO's efficiency, and at the same time showed the value of getting amateur rescue teams into the cave as fast as possible.

Richard Babb.

Ladder Building

The purpose of this article is to describe briefly how the new CUCC ladders and belays were made. Originally, I had also intended to discuss some of the technical considerations of ladder design, but these have been well aired in the Wessex journal (Nos.103, 104).

One of the misfortunes of the discontinuity of membership in our club is that both the age and origins of the club tackle are rather obscure. The club's need for new tackle was highlighted by Ed Ashcroft's experience in Marble Steps Pot in June 1964, described so succinctly in the last journal. In addition to the shortage of ladder, the club's four nylon ropes were almost worn out; the few belays were in bad condition, of inconvenient lengths, and fitted with shackles rather than C-links; and there were no pulley-blocks at all.

A committee meeting at the beginning of the Michelmias Term 1964 decided that a sizeable portion of the club's income of that year, together with the substantial surplus of cash in the bank from previous years should be devoted to a crash programme of belay and ladder building. Replacement of the ropes would have to wait until further funds were

available. (The club has since purchased 630' of Ulstron. Ed.)

The first problem was to find the most suitable method of ladder construction; we decided on the ferrule method as developed by the South Wales Caving Club as the necessary machinery was readily available. Finding the cheapest source of materials was the second problem.

The first batch of ferrules did not fit the wire by a few thou, although the manufacturers of both asserted that their part was within the specification. I decided that it was more likely to be the wire which was at fault, and adopted the purely arbitrary expedient of returning the wire to the manufacturers. When they heard of this, they were understandably annoyed, and immediately wrote to say that they would return the wire to me as soon as it arrived as it was the ferrules, and not the wire which were at fault. This, I regret to say, was indeed true, for when Ed Ashcroft was able to examine a sample of the ferrules under a travelling microscope at the Engineering Laboratories, he found that nearly all of them were about four thou smaller than the specification. After a month the wire still had not been returned, and the manufacturers said that they they had not yet received the wire, and as it appeared to have gone astray in the post, I had better put in a claim to the GPO. Thus ended the first term of work on the ladder.

By the beginning of the Easter term, all the aluminium tubing had been cut and drilled for the rungs, and long lengths of chain had been reduced to C-links, and we had at last obtained a second reel of wire and a satisfactory batch of new ferrules. Dramatic progress was made when Ed announced that he had finished cutting up the thicker wire into belays with his spectacular electric wire-cutting machine, and these were the first part of the new tackle to go into use. In spite of the ever approaching threat of examinations, the rest of the preliminary work on the ladders was completed including the manufacture of the ferrule die.

The credit for the work involved in the final assembly of the ladder belongs once more to a small group of members who slaved away for many days after their examinations in order to have the ladder ready for the end-of-term Craven Meet. The pressing of the ferrules was carried out on a flypress at the Engineering Dept. in an astonishingly short space of time and without the loss of any fingers either! Banham's boatyard finished off the job quickly and efficiently with the Talurit splicing of the ends, so that all the tackle was ready in time to go to Yorkshire.

In addition to the 217½ft of new ladder, two ladders totalling 84½ feet were repaired, and two pulley-blocks were purchased from Simperts. The new ladder was used on several trips in England in the summer before going to France with us for more use there. It seems to have withstood all this satisfactorily, and to date there have been no slipped or bent rungs, wirefraying or other signs of abnormal wear. Thus, I think, the club may congratulate itself on a job well done, and perhaps start planning for the next lot.

There is an unexpected postscript to this story. In August 1965, some six months after it had gone astray, the first reel of wire was found by the manufacturers who allowed us full credit on it. Although this means that the GPO compensation must now be repaid, an unexpected bonus still remains.

(The Craven Meet is reported on page 17 as the Yorkshire Meet
June 1965. Ed.)

14.

Technical Notes

Materials, suppliers, and prices:

Wire (for ladder):- from Wrights Ropes Ltd. , Birmingham 9. 500' of 10cwt. galvanised preformed aircraft cable to specification W9, steel cored, constructed 7X14 @317/- per 1000ft. £7-18-6

Thimbles (for above):- from Wrights Ropes Ltd. 36 zinc plated brass thimbles type AGS136/a @ 4d, each 12-0

Wire (for belays):- from Wrights Ropes Ltd. 120' of 15cwt aircraft cable to specification W9, 7X19 @ 418/- per 1000' £2-10-2

Thimbles (for above):- from Wrights Ropes Ltd. 62 zinc plated brass thimbles, type AGS136/B @ 4d each £1-0-8

Alloy tubing:- from Alreco Ltd., Fulton Road, Wembley, Middx. 11 lengths X 12ft of $\frac{1}{2}$ " OD X18 swg alloy HT14T (11 lb at 12/10 per lb) £7-1-2

Ferrules:- from Hon Sec SWCC, as supplied, 1075 @ 1d each £4-9-7

Chain:- from Mark Priest and Sons Ltd, Franklyn St, Bristol 2. 62 links (4'10") of 5/16" BS 1663 chain 15-0

Talurits:- (for belays) from Simperts Ropeworks Ltd, Cambridge 18 no. 4 splices @3/- each £2-14-0

Talurits (for ladder) from Banhams Boatyard, Cambridge. 44 splices £3-5-0

Pulleys from Simperts 2 eye-pulleys @ 7/6 15/0

Total £30-12-0

Acknowledgements

The club gratefully acknowledges the advice and help of many individuals and organisations outside the club in building this new tackle, and in particular Norman Lloyd of SWCC, G E Norris of the Aluminium Federation, Dr. Black, and the University Engineering Laboratories.

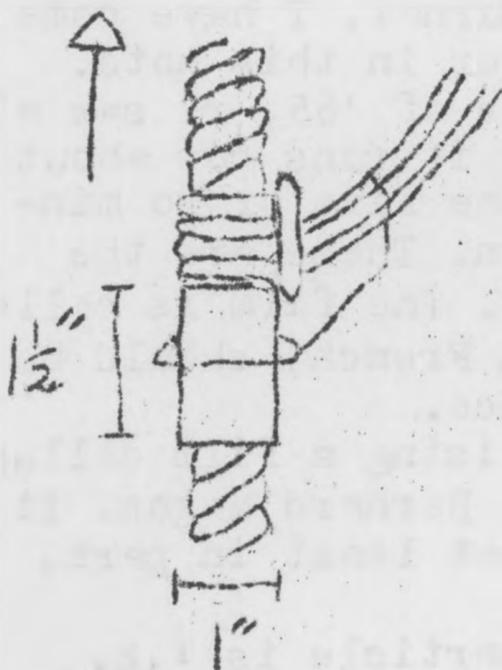
Frank Morland.

Self-lifeline devices

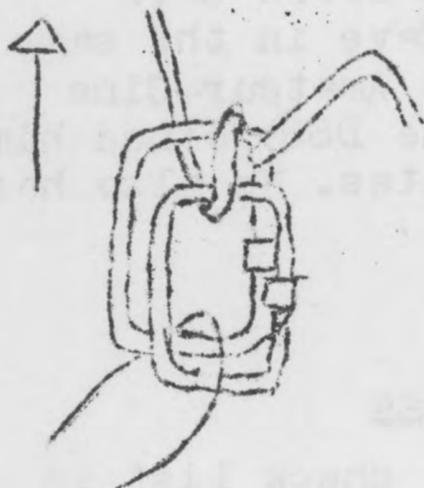
that have so far been invented suffer from an inherent degree of complexity that makes them both difficult to construct, and heavy and bulky to carry. If the mechanical requirements are reduced to a minimum, all that is needed is a device that slides one way along a rope, and locks when pulled in the other direction. This is sufficient to safeguard a man climbing up a ladder, for he can abseil down in perfect safety.

The first device consists of a prussik knot tied with $\frac{5}{8}$ " nylon or preferably hemp. Below it is a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " length of 1" tubing attached to the prussik sling by a piece of string. If this string is made short enough, then an upwards pull on the waistlength by the man climbing tightens not

the prussik knot, but the string. This then pulls up the tube, which in turn slides up the knot with little friction.



The second device uses equipment that most caving parties have with them, and is thus particularly useful in minor emergencies such as when a double lifeline jams, an occurrence which has been lamentably frequent in my experience. All that is necessary is a pair of identical screw-gated karabiners, ideally 12mm Stubaais. If these are clipped on a tight waist-length, and the lifeline threaded as shown, we once again have a one-way device. Both need a weight at the bottom of the rope, for though the first slides at about 1 lb pull, the second needs about 4 lbs on quite a new rope, and hence should only be used by strong ladder climbers.

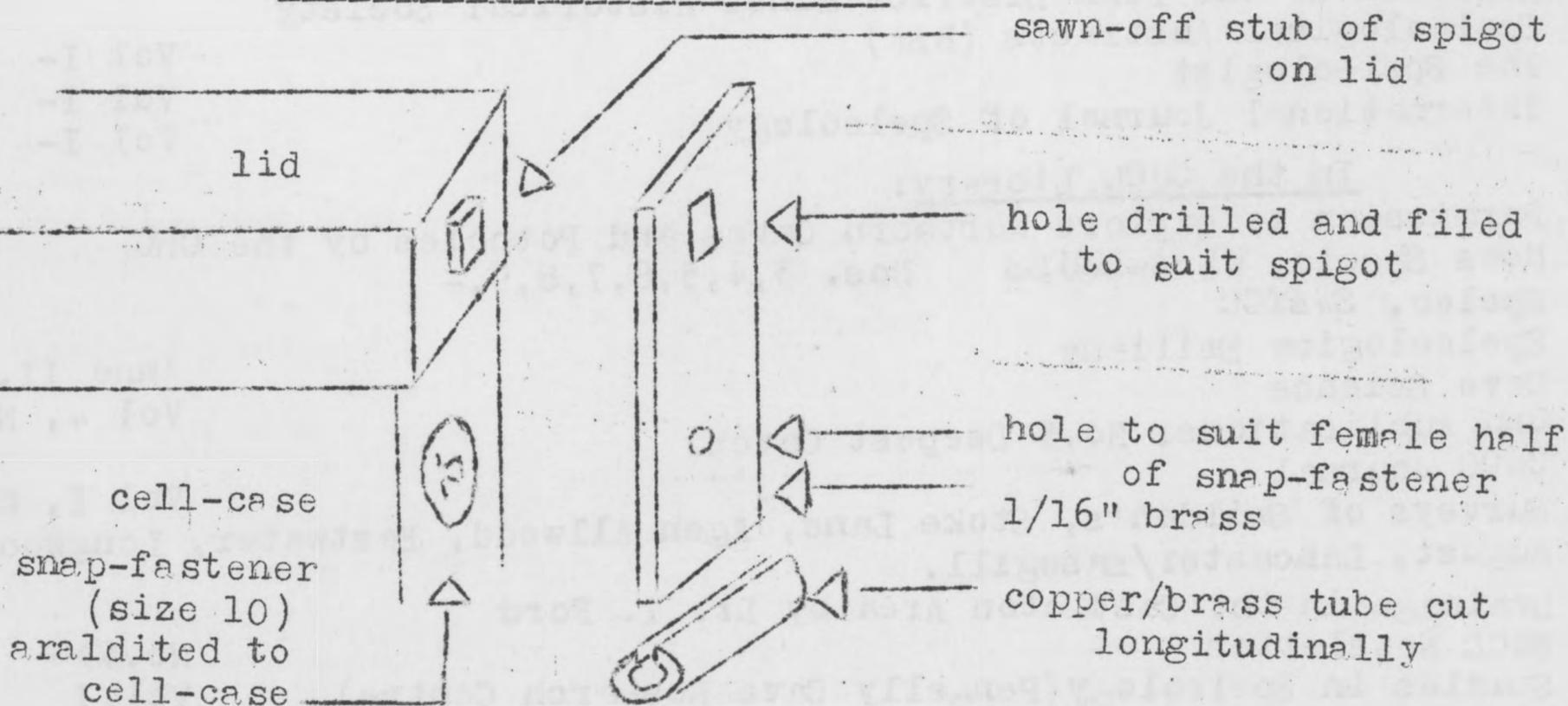


The first device is virtually fool-proof, but the second does need a tight waist-length to prevent the karabiners crossing and jamming each other. Of course, it is vitally necessary to use any device on the surface before using it underground.

For general remarks on the operation of self-lifeline devices, see the CRG Publication No. 11, "Some technical Aids for Cave Exploration".

Gareth Jones.

A reliable Nife-cell catch



Original hinge-pins and brackets used. All joints sweated if not otherwise stated.

Richard Babb.

Since my article on this subject in the last journal, I have come across more information which I have collected together in this note.

While staying in the Dordogne during the summer of '65, we saw a short tourist film in colour about the region. In all it runs for about 20 minutes, but by far the most interesting part is the five or so minutes devoted to the underground beauties of the region. These are the best colour sequences of caving film I have ever seen. The film is called "Si tu viens en Perigord", and enquiries about it (in French) should be made to M. le Maire de Sarlat, SARLAT, Dordogne, France.

Also in France, I came across a leaflet advertising a film called "La Nuit des Abimes", presented by Pierre d'Ursel and Bernard Magos. It is in black and white with colour stills, and seems, at least in part, to be concerned with the exploration of La Cigalère.

A British film-maker whom I missed in my first article is T.E. Morland who did his first underground filming in Baker's Pit (Buckfastleigh) in 1955. He followed this with a film taken in Radford Cave (Buckfastleigh) at Easter 1956, and another of Reed's Cave in the same year. The latter film won him a minor award in the 1956 Amateur Cine World's 'Best 10' competition. Later John Hopper and the DSS joined him to make 'How to explore a cave', which runs for 20 minutes. He also has done some filming of bat-ringing activities.

Frank Morland.

Check List of Caving Literature in Cambridge

The following additions have been noted since the check list in the last journal:

In the University Library:

| | | |
|--|--------|-------|
| Bulletin of the Peak District Mines Historical Society | | |
| Speleological Abstracts (BSA) | Vol I- | 1962- |
| The Speleologist | Vol I- | 1965- |
| International Journal of Speleology | Vol I- | 1964- |

In the CUCC Library:

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| Permission to explore Northern Caves and Potholes by the CRO | | |
| News Sheets, ULSA&LUUSS Nos. 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,- | | 1965- |
| Speleo, SWETCC | | 1965- |
| Speleologica Emiliana | Anno II, No.2 | |
| Cave Science | Vol 4, No 29 | |
| CRG Publications: No.5 Deepest Caves | | 1961 |
| CUCC Journal | Vol I, No 2&3 | |
| Surveys of Swildon's, Stoke Lane, Agen Allwedd, Eastwater, Longwood/ August, Lancaster/Easegill. | | |
| Drainage in the Castleton Area by Dr. T. Ford | | |
| SWCC Newsletter | No.53- | 1966- |
| Studies in Speleology(Pengelly Cave Research Centre) | Vol.I | 1965 |
| EPC Journal | Vol 7No1 | 1966 |
| Exeter USS Newsletter | Vol2, No1 | 1966 |

The librarian acknowledges his debt to the clubs and individuals who presented the above material.

Tuesday Dave Selkirk, Graham Wright, Mike Woodchild, Gareth Jones.

The road to Kettlewell from Brackenbottom is not an easy one. Having overcome the formidable barrier of some seventeen gates, we wound our weary way up the valley to Providence Pot. A dishevelled camper told us the hole was blocked, but we trogged on disbelievingly, only to find his words were true. An hour's digging did not produce a man-sized hole, and an astute observer could soon afterwards have seen four weary grots plodding across to Dow Cave.

With renewed enthusiasm we plunged in, and got as far as halfway across the Terrible Traverse before turning back, as time was pressing. It would be extremely difficult to over-rate this traverse, and I know that I felt fundamentally insecure during the whole manoeuvre. Briefly, the traverse is in a smooth-walled rift about two feet wide. The only sensible way to tackle it seems to be to slide down until the rift narrows sufficiently to enable you to rest your weight on a tranverse boot-jam. The alternative of friction-jamming with elbows and knees is far more strenuous, and results in a slow but inexorable slide as you chimney along.

For those who intend to do this trip, I can only recommend a training meet in Tunnel Cave, S.Wales. All the problems of moving at a choice of levels occur, and you soon get used to chimneying with a large drop below you (exposed, as the mountaineers say).

A verical section of this cave would be of inestimable value, as the position of places like Hardy's Horror is hard to ascertain.

Guy Poulton, Richard Babb, Dave Burton, Simon Rothstein, descended the dreaded hole of Low Douk. Simon incurred a cut on the palm of his hand which later required three stitches, but fortunately his standard of driving was not impaired.

Wednesday Dave Selkirk, Richard Babb, Graham Wright, Dave Burton, squelched their way to Bar Pot. No, it was not raining; in fact the sun was shining, and the temperature was well into the seventies. You are puzzled about the squelching sounds? Well, wearing a wet-suit does have its disadvantages.

These hardmen descended the aforementioned pot without incident, at the same time testing the new club ladder. Having previously studied the survey, they trailed through New Hensler's to the Main Drain, and thence out via Disappointment Pot.

Meanwhile, Gareth and Mike had laddered in through Dis. Imagine our surprise at seeing four paraplegics grovelling in the pellucid waters of the Main Drain, surrounded by the steam from their exertions. After exchanging curses at the hot and dry nature of the hole, Mike and I pressed on for Old Hensler's.

Our tempers were not improved by the notice pointing down our route, saying "Mugs this way". The crawl isn't interminable. It just feels like it. We paused only to hold an inaugural meeting of the masochists' Society. New members may only join at the AGM, which the constitution states shall be held halfway through the crawl.

Quarter of a mile and fifty minutes later, we staggered to our feet, and greatly marvelling at this mode of progression, arrived at the Main Chamber. For lovers of contrast, I can but recommend this best of all ways of seeing the Hall of the Ginds. Gazing upwards, our admiration of the little circle of daylight tacked to the ceiling by some mischievous

18.

maypole was only tempered by the knowledge that we must make yet further efforts to regain our full ration of daylight.

Several minor mistakes later, we arrived at the foot of Bar Pot. The big pitch, normally a pleasing climb, was a supreme effort at this stage, and the short thrutch at the top a near impossibility.

After four and a half hours in the underworld, we got to the surface to be greeted by the other party, who had got out before us. Tired by a good day's caving, we all retired to the pub for a pie and a pint.

Thursday Paul Key, Frank Morland, Graham Wright, set out to find Xmas Pot. One member surprised them by walking backwards up Crow Gill. Said he, "I'm walking backwards to Xmas".

Undeterred by this sick start, and by the omen of the porridge not thickening, they trogged on quite cheerfully. Hours later, after investigating Silva, Marble, and other pots, their minds strayed back to the morning's porridge, and realising that the gods were against them, gracefully retired to the pub.

Mike Goodchild, Richard Babb, and Gareth Jones had meanwhile descended Grange Rigg Pot to the bottom of the Xmas Pot aven, and sat there awaiting the coming of the herald angels (or was it Godot?). Lacking the tackle to bottom the pot, we waited for an hour and a half, amusing ourselves by free-climbing the fifth pitch, and the aven as far as an overhang. Finally deciding that the porridge was inallible, we surfaced and wound our weary way across the darkening moor to the pub.

Dave Burton, Paul Sweeney, Graham Jordan, went down Bull Holes and emerged at Browgill Cave, completing the only successful through trip of the day. They had eaten a different pan of porridge.

Friday The scientific cavers Frank Morland, Richard Babb, Graham Jordan surveyed some 600' of Calf Holes to Grade 0 in 4 hours to the usual accompaniment of threats of mutiny.

Paul Key visited the far reaches of Ingleborough Cav with a Bradford hardman, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Gareth Jones.

Diving in Swildon's 2¹

or how to catch exposure in five easy stages.

Arriving early on Mendip much merriment was made at the Hunter's during lunchtime; also while teetering to the Shepton Hut on the back of a Honda 50 with full kit. By 4.p.m. the normal inefficiency revealed that prospective cavers possessed a total of nearly 2 lights between them. Finally at last, with one R.Haskett I descended to the nether regions. We were heading for Shatter - a nice warm place - and consequently I only wore the top part of my wet suit. At the twenty we encountered another party, intending to dive two. At this my companion left at high speed for the surface, abandoning me to my fate. After "jumping" down the twenty so that proceedings should not be delayed, I discovered that the art of photography was to be pursued. After a long wait it was announced that the Swildon's mud had again triumphed, so we eagerly sped on to the climax of

15.

the afternoon, p using only to gaze at one gentleman clad in the manner of a Boy Scout.

There it was, shimmering in the darkness, water lapping the solemn greyness of the fateful pool. I glanced at my companion, now clad in a full wet suit (16'), hood, mask, flippers, and bearing a ring of lead about his middle. Enthusiasm leapt into me and I turned calmly and said, "After you". I managed to borrow a mask from one of the non-divers, and, fully equipped with weights, realised that my last excuse had gone, so I followed my companion into the water. I was so put off by being able to see under water for the first time (even if it was just a murky brownness) that I soon found myself rising and then to my surprise I broke the surface. That was simple I thought; very short! But wait, where WAS my companion I shouted - and lo and behold an answering shout came from the II direction.

After much thought my water-laden mind realised the truth - I was in Little Bell. Then another thought arrived - where was the line? I examined the circumstances that I found myself in. Little Bell is a true bell, about 6' in diameter and 10' high including 4' of water. There was a small recess in one corner, not large enough for human habitation. John (the other diver) was in III waiting for me. We were in II or Little Bell waiting for John to return, so that he could dive to me with the line (which normally passes from Little Bell). After 10 minutes or so when my brain returned to its normal function (and my legs gave up any pretence of warmth) an inspiration hit me, why not get my friends in II, who were in aural contact with me, to signal to John that I had backed out (oh, that I had!). Thirteen pulls on the rope, that was what we had agreed. I saw a light pass through the murkiness at a distance of 3'. Then, after a further 5 minutes which he spent tying on spare lifelines etc. etc., John at last arrived where the best people always rest when diving sump II. Then freedom came at last (and thoughts of sump I) and a slow pace was adopted on the way. At Barne's loop I was surprised to discover that my legs were still able to supply feeling when I hit my knee on the beehive; and also the climb up the twenty revealed that my fingers still hurt if placed between ladder and rock, with weight on the ladder. So finished another grand and glorious expedition to my favourite cave. The moral of this story? Never go caving without the MRC

Pete Bowler.

Post-Tripods Meet

June 7-9th 1966

The meet really began with the six pints, half-bottle of wine and the four hours sleep the night before, but this misadventure starts on:-

Tuesday when Pete Hayward, Graham Wright, Paul Kev, and Gareth Jones slid down the tighter than-ever Providence Pot. Three-quarters of an hour were lost in a maze below 54 Cavern, but we eventually found our way into Dowber Gill Passage. Things were relatively straight forward until we made a mistake soon after 800 Yards Chamber. We traversed in the roof about 30' above the stream for a distance that felt like quarter of a mile. Finally, we gave up in desperation and dropped into the stream. Pressing on by brute force and ignorance, we by-passed the Terrible Traverse (though we did not know it at the time) by a unique route involving a duck

20.

a very tight squeeze and a two-foot sump (which is not the Syphon.) The stream narrowed to some three inches, but a really desperate climb brought us up halfway along Gypsum Traverse. We knew our way out from here, and soon arrived at Dow Cave after six shattering hours, rejoicing at having wreaked vengeance on the system.

Wednesday brought another car-load of people, and so six people by the names of Dave Selkirk, Paul Key, Dave Burton, Graham Wright, Gareth Jones, and Mike Richards, toiled up the slopes of Gragareth, at which name one bod was mightily pleased. Simpson's Pot was the venue for the day, and, together with the stream, we gurgled down the Five Steps, and sighed over the pit. Rather stupidly, we missed the dry traverse, and laddered Shale Pot, making nine ladder and three rope pitches in all. The Blasted Hole provided a welcome cooling, and made our descent of the series of pitches ending at Slit Pot frenetic. The chamber before the pitch contained some mud that was perfect for dam-building, so that our descent of the 80' was dry. The final pitch of Swinsto turned out to be refreshingly wet. Normally the bottom of a pot is an anticlimax, being generally a dismal sump or an impenetrable crevice. The final boulder chamber is a place of the most magnificent scale, with many tempting places for a dig. (The finding of the Master Cave is by now well known. Ed.)

Returning through the Slit proved to be entertaining and exhilarating, if not actually frightening. The two six-foot members, in particular, had great fun. The long grind upwards was quite uneventful, and we got to the surface in 6½ hours. The landlord of the Flying Horseshoe sprayed us with disinfectant, which prevented an epidemic of Simpsitis. Revenge for a previous unsuccessful attempt.

Thursday saw the beginning of a successful mutiny, brought on by sore knees and a state of general shatter. Eventually, however, a party for Grange Rigg was made up including both the president and the secretary-elect - a most noteworthy event. The walk up from Crumrack Farm is far more pleasant than that from Trow Gill, but lulled us into a false sense of security, for one member (who shall remain nameless, for personal reasons) opened his rucksack at the pot and found a lack of a wet-suit. Undaunted, the party bottomed the pot, except the man without a wet-suit, who balked at the Drainpipe. The surface was regained with few incidents, except much pleasure gained on the short, wet pitches. Revenge for last year's unsuccessful attempt.

Meanwhile, great things were going on in the Calf Holes area, where Dave Selkirk and Paul Key had pushed the Keyhole to 300'. Attempts to link it with a Calf Holes inlet led to failure, one bloated dead sheep, and a tangle of barbed wire.

Gareth Jones.

Dow/Prov conquered - just!

or how to cave Chelsea style, all brawn and no brains.

We should have guessed that it was going to be one of those days when we left the Senate House only fifteen minutes late, almost unprecedented in the club. By noon we were in Yorkshire and for the sake of our peace of mind decided not to calculate the average speed. After an excellent meal in Ilkley we made our way to Kinsey to ask the farmer for permission. Commendably, he didn't flinch when he heard we were CUCC (despite two rescues) and just told us to keep to the footpaths.

No-one seemed to know if Providence Pot was blocked, and even the Kettlewell Constabulary asked to be enlightened when we returned. A rescue was arranged for midnight and after essential cave rations were purchased we set off on the final leg of the journey. The car was left in a very convenient lay-by, and when changed, the party walked the quarter mile or so to Dow Cave.

Using this as a reference point, we set off in what we hoped would be the direction of Providence Pot, and found the entrance without too much difficulty. People had elected to wear wet suit bottoms, and as the walk up the fells had left us more than warm, we looked forward to getting underground.

But was the pot blocked? The entrance shaft was a fifteen foot, head first descent, reputed to be impossible to reverse. GW went first and reported that all was well. The rest followed and we were all underground by 1600 BST.

About 100ft. in, intent on going down, we ran out of passage. A labyrinth of crawls between boulders was investigated, and at 1645 we were still 100ft. in. Then GHJ hit on the idea of going up and discovered the entrance to Blasted Crawl. We all followed into a really enjoyable flat-out crawl, well lubricated by pools of liquid mud. On the downhill sections one could slide for several feet. It was great fun.

Dowber Gill passage was entered and we turned downstream. The first few thousand feet were relatively easy going, but it proved impossible to locate any of the landmarks mentioned in the references, so we were not very certain of our progress.

Eventually the passage became very narrow and after a squeeze negotiated by lying flat-out in the stream we decided to try traversing above it. Once up we didn't really consider returning to the stream but continued to traverse about 30-50ft. up on good ledges, bad ledges, nonexistent ledges, and over sections that belled out below, in front, or all at once. After about 800ft. a rockfall barred the way. There did not appear to be a way over it or under it, but in the end a way was found through it. GHJ and PH, being short, slipped through the double rightangle, but GW and PK had considerable difficulty, especially as the rocks were very loose. Attempts to move some of the offending boulders threatened to dislodge the lot and an urgent request to stop was made by GW in the squeeze.

At last they got through, and after some more hair-raising traversing we decided to rejoin the stream. The going was reasonable for 100ft. or so until a boulder blocked the way. Another unexpected obstacle. "I'll dive first," said GHJ and we all followed, only to find the way completely

blocked about 50ft. further on. We were now very wet and cold, and standing for some time in waist deep water trying to find a way up the smooth walls did nothing to improve our body temperatures or energy stores. Back tracking a few feet, a possible way was found. It proved to be a difficult climb in our rather tired state, but with much pushing and pulling, and hauling on waistlines we all managed to reach a false boulder floor — Gypsum Traverse! In retrospect, it appears that we were up when we should have been in the stream, and in the stream when we should have been traversing.

A Horlicks fudge was passed round and we soon recovered. Proceeding along Gypsum Traverse we reached the Stemple, and bounced off this piece of wood about 2" X 1" jammed across the passage. Soon the roof came down to the boulder floor. Through a narrow fissure in the boulders, a rope could be seen hanging down to the stream, about 20ft. below. "It's impossible," murmured GHJ. "I'll go", said PH and before he could think better of it, entered the crack. This rapidly became what may be politely described as a crutch-jam, but after sundry wriggling, he freed himself and sped streamwards — only to become equally rapidly arrested in an inverted position tied up with rope and telephone wire. A very large boulder was luckily present (see later) to provide a resting place while things were untangled and the final 12 ft. covered in a barely controlled manner.

GHJ and GW decided to backtrack to try and find a route down, but PH ventured into the fissure. His descent was even more spectacular. For reasons beyond his control, he dispensed with the assistance of the rope and made the descent under gravity alone. Luckily some 3ft. of water broke his fall, but the splash was worth seeing.

It had by this time become obvious that the rope was intended as an aid to ascending the large boulder and not for descending from the traverse. PH and PK were soon joined by the others, who, much to their chagrin reported having found the usual easy way down. The last 1,500ft. were uneventful, and very rapidly came out into daylight. It was only 2200 hrs BST and despite the exotic route we had only been down six hours.

Pete Hayward.

Anyone can swim in a wet-suit.

I have always enjoyed clowning about in water provided I am not out of my depth. In just over five feet of water I have an unpleasant tendency to drown. This has led to a few disturbing moments in my caving.

The first time I was completely immersed in water was on my fourth trip underground negotiating the little sump in Stoke. I remember, whilst crouched underwater, with my helmet banging against rock and frantically pulling at someone's hand, thinking what a damn fool sport caving was and vowing never again to do a sump. Sincere though this vow was, I had not considered that the sump had to be repassed on the way out. The repeat performance, I was amazed to find, was about ten times less frightening than the first. For a few days I felt quite a hard, having done a sump. With sumping, familiarity breeds some degree of contempt; this is not the case with drowning.

On becoming the proud owner of a wet-suit, I was informed by my ex-friends that, "ANYONE can swim in a wet-suit." I was unfortunately able to prove them wrong. One of the rewards of bottoming Giant's Hole is a couple of lengths in its 80ft. deep canal. Not wishing to forego this treat, and having on my drownproof wet-suit, I plunged gaily into the water, on my first visit there.

At first I didn't try any strokes, expecting to float with just my head out of water. Due perhaps to the angle of my entry, I found that my feet started floating up behind me, and that my head was being forced underwater. In an attempt to correct this state of affairs, I started thrashing with my arms and jerking my head. Somehow my feet began to sink. Not being exactly delighted with my position all the same, I decided to get out of the water.

Unfortunately, my feet could not touch the bottom. I was also having trouble with my breathing because my nose was only above water when I made violent upward thrusts. Trying hard to control a rising panic, I decided to make for the mudbank, but despite all my thrashing and kicking, I couldn't actually propel myself in any direction. Swimmers may not be very sympathetic with my difficulties, but I was quite clueless about making strokes.

Meanwhile, back at the mudbank, two of my companions were engaged in conversation, oblivious to my difficulties. Not wishing to "sound" panic-stricken, I decided not to scream "Help" just yet (and anyway my mouth was rarely above water), so I started thrusting one arm at them frantically. When they eventually saw me they seemed to think I was waving at them. After what seemed an age they realised that at any moment I might involuntarily slip from view, and an outstretched hand gripped mine and I was hauled to safety.

Some time passed before I was quite so adventurous/stupid again. On what might have been my last birthday I did my first through trip in Lancaster/Easegill. Now Lancaster is a dry hole, and with a wet-suit on, I was begging for a drenching by the time we reached Fall Pot, the entrance to the Master Cave. I therefore readily joined those of my companions who climbed down to venture upstream for a while. The water in the passage was flowing very fast and it was great fun trying to make progress as the passage got narrower, because unless one's feet were firmly on the bottom it was quite a fight to stop them being whipped away downstream. Eventually, deep pools began to appear in places, and I had to go around the edge of them where they weren't so deep, all the time fighting against a considerable force of water. Soon we reached a whirlpool into which a torrent of water was gushing from a narrow passage on the right, a bit above the level of the pool.

This looked like as far as we could go and I was about to return when I heard yells of delight coming from this passage. Not wanting to miss anything, I ventured into the pool, holding onto the wall and going with the current towards the passage. Somehow I was pushed and pulled up into the passage by my companions without being swept off my feet. Then I knew what all the yells had been about. The water was going so fast in the narrow passage that you only had to sit down in it and you were washed

along at great speed. It seemed just like an aquatic version of the Cresta run, because at the bends the water took you halfway up the wall. It was really fun, but then came the return. As it was impossible to climb back the way we had come, you just had to sit in the water and be shot out into the whirlpool by the stream. My swimming companions enjoyed a few circuits in the pool before grabbing a handy rock and getting washed out over the edge of the pool.

I quickly followed suit, taking a deep breath as I was projected over the pool. I sank below the surface and was rather disturbed to find that my feet still hadn't touched the bottom. Then I started to come up again and my eyes were clearing the water - but that was all - and I couldn't get myself to the wall as the current was just taking me round and round. Visions of being whirled round till my breath ran out were soon dispelled when a friend grabbed me and I got hauled out of the pool.

I sat down to recover for a while, then set off back down the passage. One of the pools I had edged around before I now fell into, and this just about clinched it - I definitely can NOT swim even in a wet-suit. I am now learning this noble art (and can now boast half a width of our local pool), and only when I can swim properly will I again savour Giant's type treats and water tobogganning.

Noël Williams.

Presidential. No - Presidentorial. (Sorriv.)

I gather that a Presidentorial is not supposed to be an exposition in heroic style of the sterling qualities of our noble speleological fellowship, but a write-up of what we've been doing for the last couple of years.

The club log-book was first defiled with ink at about the same time as Vol I No 2 was published so this records our caving since then. In the summer of 1965 we were struggling to re-establish ourselves after a disastrous previous year in which we had been involved in two rescues and done a fair number of other silly things. The Post-Trip Meet was held in Craven (see p.17. Ed.), and was reasonably successful, except for the difficulty in finding Christmas Pot.

Later on in June Gareth Jones and Frank Morland had such a successful trip down Tunnel Cave that they went down again the day after, when they failed to persuade Eileen Davies through Chisel Rift. A week later they went up to Yorkshire with Clive Westlake and hordes of Spanish Expedition and Eldon Pothole Club people. Notts Pot was bottomed via the Left and Centre Series on Saturday and on Sunday Gareth and Clive went from Lancaster Hole to County Pot via various passages in Easegill where they met Frank and several score other cavers. The following weekend Frank came up to Derbyshire with Gramam Wright and successfully explored New Oxlow Caverns with Clive and various other Eldon men. A trip to Eldon Hole the following day was utter shambles, for which we blame Eldon, not ourselves for once.

The next meet was in Mendip and by now Frank had visited the four main caving areas on successive weekends. This time he was accompanied by Gareth and Richard Babb on an epic nine hour trip down Primrose

Pot in Eastwater. Only the "heroic Jones, undressed to the limit of decency" could get through the squeeze and a jammed lifeline stopped him at the second ledge. Sunday was spent relaxing down Lamb Lair, but at 0100hrs Monday Gareth and Richard were hauled from their beds to go to rescue a Severn Valley Club party overdue on the Long Round Trip in Swildon's. Although neither saw the victims, Gareth went and bailed Gloop Sump in Swildon's VI, and Richard did the Double Trouble Round Trip backwards. Gareth was back down Swildon's the following weekend! This time high water prevented him and Frank from going beyond the PR Mud Sump.

The Michelmas Term 1965 started with a beginners' meet down P8, which didn't deter too many of them from coming again. Next we went to Mendip, where Richard Babb led a highly successful Stoke Lane II trip. Clive Westlake, Bob Fellowes, and Graham Wright all took unexpectedly excellent photographs of the outstanding Throne Room. Meanwhile, Frank took another party down Swildon's where they were much held up by hordes of dying cavers on the pipeless Forty. In fact, on the following day, a Swildon's II party spent some time on the way home hauling up cold and wet covers on this pitch. The last meet of the term was to Derbyshire and proved to be a good example of controlled lunacy. Upon arrival at Buxton, Clive and Gareth were met by Paul Deakin, George Cooper and Pam Hicken of Eldon, who whisked them away to Giant's Hole, which was descended in a raging blizzard at 0020 hours Saturday in company with high floods. After 3½ hours violent caving the team returned to Buxton, then one party led by Frank went off to ladder Oxlow Cavern while Bill Morris took another to Carleswark Cavern. The night Giant's party woke up at midday and went off to deladder Oxlow. On Sunday one team went to Eldon Hole, where Gareth discovered that women can climb ladders. Another went to Giant's, which was very wet as the snow had melted.

Gareth and Clive joined an Eldon trip to Yorkshire a fortnight later when Alum Pot was descended direct. Bull Pot was also bottomed and a somewhat unorthodox examination made of Turbery Pot while looking for Swinsto. On New Year's Day 1966 Dave Selkirk, Paul Key, and Clive took part in an epic Eldon descent of Penyghent Pot, which was turned back by very high water at the Main Shaft. The Club's vacation meet now followed. First a day was spent festering in the caves of the Birkwith area, then Frank Morland, Pete Hayward, Dave Selkirk, Bob Fellowes, and Paul Key had a very enjoyable trip down Disappointment Pot and a visit to Hensler's Passage and Gaping Gill Main Chamber.

The Lent term began with a meet at Ogof Agen Allwedd. Gareth tore round the Inner Circle in five hours with Paul Key, Mike Richards, Tony Good, Guy Poulton, and Graham Wright. Another more leisurely party visited the upstream sump of Turkey Passage. Only Guy Poulton and Pete Hayward fell in Turkey Pool. The next trip was on a Lancaster Hole and Cow Pot exchange with an Eldon party. The most noticeable feature of this weekend was the exceedingly spectacular Fall Pot ladder pitch and the very alarming incident when George Cooper of Eldon was very nearly washed away into the terminal sump of the Master Cave. Just after the end of term Clive and Gareth joined an Eldon trip to the bottom of Penyghent Pot. One of the party was Oliver Lloyd, aged.... well, a good deal older than us. CUCC members also turned up for another Eldon Meet at Aggy and though there

were innumerable cavers around and many trips were done, only one qualifies for notice here (i.e. two or more CUCC present). This was an Inner Circle trip with rather high water in the Main Stream and Turkey Passage.

Exam fever prevents much activity in the summer, but one trip was managed to Swildon's Double Trouble. This was wholly uneventful and completely efficient, a quite staggering state of affairs for those who had caved with CUCC a couple of years before. Again the Post-Trip meet provided some very successful caving. (Report on p.19 with a special feature on Dow/Prov on p.21. Ed.)

The only meet in the summer vacation was in Derbyshire, which began as a CUCC descent of Giant's Hole, and ended with Gareth's joining a Chelsea BS party and coming out of Oxlow Cavern via the new connection dug out by Eldon. This feat was all the more notable for his attempt to drain the pool in the tight squeeze by swallowing.

The Micheltoms Term 1966 began with another P8 beginners' meet. Though rather less successful than last year's because of high water and too many other cavers, most members seemed to enjoy it, especially Bob Fellowes, who passed away the time at the head of the pitch cutting himself Pate sandwiches. The next trip to Aggy was marred by the non-arrival of some of the party owing to a car breakdown, but Pete Hayward led a very successful trip to the fringes of Summertime. Meanwhile, Trev Faulkner, Pat Brown, Joe Duxbury, Mike Richards, and Gareth Jones spent 11½ hours down Southern Stream Passage, three of the party reaching the Fifth Boulder Choke. On the last meet we visited GB Cavern, where a large party was conducted round by Peter Kay (UBSS) and Fish Jean-maire and James Cobbett. Sadly the leader was unable to find the Ladder dig series extension. Eight members survived the club's (i.e. Kate's) Xmas dinner that night and descended Stoke Lane II on Sunday.

Just before the New Year vacation meet in Yorkshire, Gareth joined Clive Westlake and Eldon in yet another Penyghent epic on New Year's Eve. Spectacular flooding turned the team back at the Twelfth Pitch. Eight CUCC completed an uneventful descent of Marble Steps Pot, but the most successful trip was the Kingsdale Master Cave via Simpson's Pot, when eight of ten reached the final sump in seven hours.

We began the Lent term in Derbyshire with a very highly planned expedition in Giant's/Oxlow, which hadn't made provision for Mike Richards spending 2¼ hours getting stuck in the squeeze. The most notable feature of this incident was Mike's complete equanimity as he was dug out of the tight bit. Eventually only Clive made the through-trip. Four members could face the Sunday trip which was the first useful work CUCC have done for a long time, as the party acted as Sherpas for Ken Pearce and John Sinclair diving the terminal sump of P8.

Next we went to Mendip, and inevitably Swildon's Hole. This was one of the most successful trips as eight members reached Swildon's IV via Blue Pencil Passage, then Pete Bowler led Noel Williamd, Guv Wilkinson, Bob Fellowes, Graham Wright, and Clive Westlake through to Swildon's VI. The return was via Double Trouble series, but in Swildon's I Noel contracted "Cam Disease", a strange malaise suffered by all those who had practised for Sump 4 in the River Cam. Fortunately, Noel recovered and made

made his own way out of the cave. At the same time Trev Faulkner led four more members to North West Stream Passage, which he had discovered a year before with a SWETCC party. Only three members survived Cam disease and the Hunters to do August/Longwood in rather high water on Sunday. We ended up by going to Yorkshire for the last meet of the term. One team descended Lancaster Hole and much to their surprise met up with the County Pot party at Stop Pot. On the Sunday six descended Ireby Fell Cavern at some hideous hour of the morning and had a fast and enjoyable journey to the bottom and back, of the type that seems to be increasingly common in Cambridge caving.

At Easter, half a dozen members joined an Agen Alleedd assault with an army of about fifty Eldon, BSA, and also Hereford cavers, some of whom had been on the original explorations ten years before. Clive Westlake, Noël Williams, and Joe Duxbury did a Double Circles trip in six hours with a motley crew of others, carrying Ken Pearce's and John Sinclair's diving gear as far as Summertime Passage. Mike Richards and Trev Faulkner repeated the same trip, but without the sub-aquatic payload. Whilst Mike and Bob ended up with a 3rd. Boulder Choke, Noël, Joe, and Clive ambled down Southern Stream with the usual strange collection of cavers: five clubs were represented. Eleven hours were profitably whiled away gapping at and photographing the Main Stream Passage.

Again the summer term was unambitious, the only trip being an enjoyable Giant's trip, with a P8 photographic trip in the Long Vac. This ended the year on a note of quiet efficiency, which we have been gradually trying to achieve over the last couple of years. We have noticed a difference in our caving, and we can only hope that other cavers have also.

Clive Westlake.

Expedition to Ireland, Summer 1967

There was much discussion in the club over the destination of our expedition this year, Norway and the Pyrenees both having their protagonists. Ireland prevailed, however, and on August 22nd Pete Hayward, Noël Williams, and Mike Richards left London and travelled to Bristol, where we collected Richard Babb. The next day we picked up Gareth Jones in Swansea, and travelled on to the ferry.

We arrived at our destination, Lisdoonvarna in Co. Clare, the following afternoon and eventually found a campsite not too liable to flooding and cows, where we pitched the large tent we had borrowed.

The next day we went to Doolin for a swim and stroll on the limestone cliffs. The bare flat surfaces, closely criss-crossed with joints, are most impressive. Noël, our tame geologist, spent ages bashing away with his hammer, and actually produced some quite fine fossils. After we returned to camp some of us also walked up Slieve Elva, the local mountain, which, being on a layer of impervious shale, is a large surface catchment area with streams sinking all around its base. We found several sinks on the south side, some of which did not appear to be marked on the UBSS map, and traces of an old sink some 250 yards south of the present line, indicating a recession of the shale cap as postulated by JC Coleman in his "Caves of Ireland" to explain the large entrances to Pollnagollum and

Pollelva, situated on the east side of Slieve Elva, but again some three hundred yards from the present line of sinks.

Our first trip underground was the through trip from St. Cath's I to Fisherstreet Pot. It is necessary to first rig Fisherstreet Pot, which needs 50 feet of ladder belayed to a tree. We found St. Cath's I after an abortive thrutch in II, which no longer connects, and set off down the streamway. Though a little awkward at first, with a fair amount of hands and knees, it soon opens out and just goes on getting bigger and bigger. Going downstream one often doesn't see the best route, and in two or three places finds oneself crawling in deep water, and then being able to stand up and see an overhead route behind. Our impression of the cave was that it is really rather grey: though we didn't visit the Aran View Tributary so we can't denigrate the whole system.

An army captain, Shane Lucas, turned up at our camp the next day to ask our help: it seemed that he had been leading a party from RMA Sandhurst in Poulomega a couple of weeks before, when they had been trapped by flood water at the end of the cave, due to a sudden thunderstorm. The locals had turned out and dug a channel to divert the stream which entered the cave, and the army emerged after being stuck six or seven hours. They had left their tackle in, however, and Shane asked if we would go in and fetch it. We agreed to do this the next day, but Shane had discovered by then that another party had collected it, so we did the Pollelva/Pollnagollum through trip instead. I quote Gareth's entry in the log:

"Driving rain made the walk from the road to Pollelva very unpleasant: jolly unsporting to get wet on the surface! Pollelva had a terrific stream crashing down it, but our 97ft. pitch hung only in the spray. The pitch was interrupted by a gonking ledge, where our President's descent was stopped by a violent attack of diarrhoea. Placing the unfortunate fellow at the back of the party, we progressed up Craven Canyon to the amazing Maze.

"Shane knew the way, where a short but tight crawl led to the magnificent main stream passage of Pollnagollum. Soon we came to a 12ft. wide bedding plane some 2ft. high with 1ft. of water. The roof soon rises again though, and after a swim or two we came to a very fine inlet waterfall, surpassed by the next (the First Waterfall). The mega and mini carbides were not put out by this, and the only lighting trouble of the whole trip was caused by Mike's Nife cell suffering contactitis.

"Exit was made via the moonmilky passage of Gunman's Cave, and daylight and the cow's skeleton at the bottom of Pollnagollum were reached 1½ hours after leaving the Pollelva pot-hole. Getting out of the pot was a slightly tricky climb - a fine end to a very fine through-trip.

"While Pete, Gareth, and Shane went back to meet the rescue deadline, the other sweaty sods provided a meaty insect meal when retrieving the ladder and line from Pollelva."

Our campsite was about a mile and a half east of Lisdoonvarna, by a dry streambed. Following the streambed down leads to St. Brendan's Well, a resurgence for most of the sinks in the area. The other way leads to Upper St. Brendan's Well, which only flows under fairly wet conditions. We had been blessed with fine weather hitherto, and our return from

Pollnagollum was the first occasion when we saw water in the streambed. It rose from Upper St. Brendan's, flowed for about 150 yards and then sank near our tent. As the level got higher, it started to go further down the streambed, and then sank a hundred yards further down. We followed this with great interest, and found about ten sinks, the stream reaching further and further as it rose, eventually getting about two-thirds of the way to St. Brendan's.

Several days were spent during the remainder of our stay digging in the stream and around it, trying to get into the very large system which must certainly be there. We did find about fifty feet of rift cave (which some of us found considerably easier to enter than to leave) but a chat with the farmer revealed that it had already been entered.

By the time we had spent about nine days in the tent things were beginning to get a bit sordid, especially since the weather had deteriorated. It culminated in a terrific squall one night, when it was blowing a full gale at sea (and the sea was not very far away). The flysheet was slightly damaged and we began to feel that a change of accommodation was desirable. There was a cottage about a mile and a half further east, belonging to a Mr. Casey, and known as Casey's Cottage, which he was willing to rent at about a pound a night; we moved in and were soon very comfortable.

Parties from Sheffield and Kendal were also in the area at this time, and some of the Sheffield people joined us in the cottage for a night. They had come better equipped for digging than we had, and we borrowed a bucket and a shovel from them for an assault on our most promising dig. This was a shakehole by the dry streambed and about 150 yards north of St. Brendan's. We had previously made a couple of not very effective efforts, and had put a barbed wire fence around it to placate the farmer. The dig was in shale and in a very damp place, and this caused the sides to be rather unstable. We dug on undaunted, however, and after opening a gaping void about twelve feet deep Noel could just get into a bedding plane which developed into a passage about eighteen inches high. We followed it for about fifty feet, apparently towards the roar of water which could be heard from the surface.

We didn't visit the dig the next day, but, on the principle that anticipation flavours the delight, visited Coolagh River Cave instead. This has two entrances, about a quarter of a mile apart, called Poll-donough and Polldonough South. There was a lot of water about so we entered by the South entrance, which is supposed to be an escape route in case of flood. After about 100ft. of crawling in water, the airspace diminished to a couple of inches in the fast-flowing streamway, so we retreated and tried the North entrance. This was taking the most impressive Coolagh river but we managed to follow it down to the second bedding cave where again the airspace became minimal. We failed to find the entrance to Gour Passage, which bypasses the second bedding cave.

Our return to the dig was a day of unprecedented disaster. On arrival we found that a small collapse had occurred - not a great amount but as we were now reduced to one entrenching tool and a bucket it was a job to clear it. We did try to borrow a shovel, but all we could get was a long-handled potato lifting spade, which was quite useless. The ground

was very wet and digging was hampered by water trickling in on the uphill side, so we cut a drainage channel around one side of the hole. This was a great mistake, for in fact it was the surface vegetation which was holding things together, and a block of earth about six feet long, and three feet by three feet, tumbled into the hole. It buried our entrenching tool and almost buried the man in the hole, who just got up the ladder in time. Water and earth were not our only troubles though, for about a million gnats had decided that the hole was a good place to get out of the wind, and were feasting off anyone who got within ten feet of it. We did try moving some boulders in the neighbouring shakehole, but it soon became apparent that this was subject to the same dangers. We replaced the barbed wire and retreated, chastened. The dig was not mentioned again.

We could now get down to some serious caving, and our next trip was to Faunarooska, which is on the hillside overlooking Galway Bay. It consists of a long streamway rather like Giant's Crabwalk, but with sharp scalloping and protrusions designed to tear boilersuits to shreds. It took about an hour to get along the streamway, and we went down the Wet Pitch series. This is a narrow rift, of which there is a longitudinal section on the UB/S/RAF survey. The route down the rift is not exactly that apparent from the survey, as it is necessary to traverse along it in one or two places to get a climable pitch. In fact, we found six pitches while Colman only lists five. The sump at the end, like all the Irish sumps we saw, is filled with what looks like Guinness. We have staked our claim for the first-ever Guinness mine.

We had two further trips down Coolagh River Cave. On the first the water was considerably lower than before and we managed to get through Polldonough South. After the low airspace bit this develops into a rift passage about twelve feet high, which is most easily negotiated by traversing half way up it. This leads into Column Chamber, a small muddy chamber with some rather grotty calcite. It has been recommended as a flood refuge, but we saw debris quite high up it. A short mud slope under the wall leads into the second bedding cave, and crawling along here one soon gets to Gour Passage which comes out in the wall of the Main Drain. A ladder is needed here really, or at least a rope. We found our thin nylon waistlength rather desperate on the return! Downstream from Gour Passage, the Main Drain is a most magnificently spectacular streamway with several waterchutes and a deep pool which requires swimming for about fifty feet. The cave ends in a tall rift, which seems to have a bedding cave at the bottom, for it is just possible to get under one wall into a low chamber, almost completely filled with water. Just upstream of Gour Passage is a very fine waterchute about twelve feet long, ending in a two foot drop into a very deep pool called Balcombe's Pot. It is very difficult to get upstream without a rope belayed at the top end of the chute (where there is a convenient piton), and it provides much amusement if one tries to do so and is repeatedly washed down into the pool.

As one of the party was a non-swimmer we had to retreat via Gour Passage rather than continue up the Main Drain and out by the north entrance. We managed to get everyone up into Gour Passage, and set off for the second bedding cave. By crawling straight on one comes out in the main

Coolagh River passage, at the limit of our previous exploration from the north. It had been our intention to go out via Column Chamber and Poll-donough South, but half the party lost its way and went straight through. A verbal battle ensued, won by the Coolagh River school, and we all left by the north entrance after an extremely sporting and enjoyable trip.

Crossing a field on the way back to the car, we met the farmer, who showed us a round hole about two feet across which had appeared in his field when a horse, pulling a cart, had put his foot on it, to the great consternation of the horse and of the driver, who had been thrown off the cart.

Our second trip into Coolagh River was a photographic trip, which has subsequently been proved completely abortive, as none of the pictures taken underground came out. So much for our careful nursing of the ammo-box, careful posing in elegant positions, and terrifying climbing into desperate places.

Our only other trip of note was into Poulomega, the hole which had been the army's undoing. This has a very awkward entrance passage of about eight hundred feet, followed by a forty foot pitch, then a seventy in a rift. Only two bottomed this hole: the others found the pitch head too tight. Pol-an-Ionian was also visited, and provided some photographs of the largest stalactite in the British Isles.

Our last two or three days were spent swimming and climbing on the cliffs by the coast road. Altogether it was a very enjoyable stay, especially enhanced by the unexpected social attractions of Lisdoonvarna, which must be easily the most swinging town west of Dublin. We hope to make a rather better equipped expedition next year, as the possibilities for digging are very definite.

Mike Richards.

Caving in Canada Summer 1967

The sport of caving is only in its infancy in Canada: few Canadians participate, the majority being English immigrants or Americans. In the US caving is eagerly followed, but by relatively few considering its population. It is highly organised (on a national scale), but even so there is only one cave rescue organisation in the whole of North America - this has the use of the presidential number two plane to get it places.

I was fortunate enough to spend this long vacation with the McMaster Cave Group (MCG McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario). This is predominantly English: the leader being Dr. Derek Ford, with such other stalwarts as Tich Morris (Chelsea SS), our own Mike Gaudchild, Mike Boon, of cave diving fame, Peter Thompson (who has done Do./Prov in 55 minutes), and a Canadian called Charlie (Flower Power) Brown.

We spent ten weeks in the Canadian Rockies, exploring, and mapping any caves that we found. These mountains are mostly limestone, so that we expected a lot of action - and after four weeks we got it. Our base was in Jasper National Park, where there are many ill-developed karst systems, mainly because of their youth, following the last Ice Age (5,000 years ago). We found evidence of old caves, but these were invariably blocked by

glacial debris after 100ft or so. There were many sinking lakes, with risings several miles away. The one we were especially interested in was Medicine Lake - inflow 100 million gallons daily - without a visible exit. The water rose in 70 odd places 9 miles away, 900ft below lake level. These risings were sumped, so we tried to get down in the middle. This we failed to do, and came to the conclusion that the whole system was still phreatic, and probably airless - great sport in 10,000 years time.

Our major find was in Banff National Park 90 miles south of Base Camp, where we heard reports of an entrance 12 miles from the road, and these stimulated us to investigate.

The cave entrance - a dry resurgence 12ft by 20ft wide situated at the end of a valley as it was intersected by another - was situated at 6,500ft, and was reached by a 12 mile tramp, climbing 3,000 feet up a glacier, and then dropping another 1,500feet down the valley. Water sunk over a wide area at the col four miles from the resurgence, and the system was fed by glacier and snow meltwater. Sink to rising 1,600ft. The present active resurgence is 150ft below the dry entrance, and constricted

Mike Goodchild and Rod Sykes made a preliminary investigation, and found a 25ft drop 250ft in. Not having tackle (in a resurgence system) they pulled out with glowing reports of potentially Canada's biggest known cave. I went in a week later with Dr. Ford, Mike Boon, Peter, and an American Donnie Staniford, and in three days we laddered the 25ft pitch, explored a mile of passage to an 80ft drop, laddered it and pushed 2,000ft beyond. In no place did we find flowing water of any significance, although indications were that one section (the first 2,000ft of cave) were prone to flooding. This includes an area we called the "duck", the lowest point of the cave, two feet high, 26ft long, with a foot of standing water.

In a second sixday trip (carrying 60lbs of clobber to the cave each), Donnie and I surveyed to the 80 - 5,800ft. It was very cold (35° F air, 32° F water) and even wearing wetsuits with socks, gloves, and hats, six hours surveying daily was enough. It took us three days. On day 1, Pete and Mike Boon pushed three miles beyond the 80 in 10½ hours, reporting big cave still going. They also found a large stream passage, which could have been the Main Stream. On the fourth day Donnie and I rested while Mike and Pete went down for a do or die 24hour push. This day was the first day of superb weather - previously it had been overcast - so I effectively added to my tan, little suspecting the drama to follow. Derek plus two others arrived that evening, and we awaited the others' return about 10 am the next day - the second day of sunshine.

By midday we were very worried, so leaving elaborate rescue instructions (helicopter lifts, etc.) at the surface, Derek, Donnie, and I went in to find Pete and Mike. This we did - they were bivouaced beyond the duck, which apparently they had reached at 7 am, to find it sumped. It was normal when we came through at 1230:pm. Evidently the fine weather had melted more snow than the constricted rising could cope with, and water had filled the duck area. It had then subsided corresponding with the previous night's freeze (roughly a 12 hour delay for water from sink to resurgence). Not expecting it to rise immediately, Donnie and I went on to retrieve tackle from the 80 (½ mile further in) while Dr. Ford led the two heroes

out. On arrival at the duck a half hour later, Donnie and I found water pouring down a side passage which was previously dry. We had previously nicknamed this passage "Boon's Blunder" when Mike took the wrong turn and went up it, thinking it was the way to the 80ft. Evidently it links up with the mainstream passage somewhere beyond. Hastening our pace - by now a crawl - and a little anxious about all this water, we reached the duck area - only it wasn't there. A two foot deep pool had formed 200ft from the duck, in a place usually dry. Water gushing from this to the duck made us even more fleet of belly. On reaching the duck proper, we couldn't find it for a moment, but on seeing a mark on the wall, there it was, a slit of air 3 inches high to the right. Half diving through it, we made it out of the final 100ft in record time. 2½ hours later, water had appeared at the cave entrance - having flooded 100ft of walking height passage, and rising thirty two feet. Estimated volume: five million gallons a day - thirty times that of the permanent rising 130ft below. It stayed flooded like this for at least two weeks, corresponding with a spell of very fine weather - Donnie and I had made it with only minutes to spare.

Now, back to the big push. Mike Boon and Peter Thompson had gone an estimated 7 miles into the cave, heading upstream, not exploring any side passages. They encountered large passages; avents at least 100ft high; large waterfalls; and several major side passages, one two miles long. They turned back only on encountering increasingly dangerous boulder chokes in a high slit passage. They estimated 12/15 miles of passage total Canada's biggest cave by ten miles.

Dr. Ford's comment to the press - "a big dangerous baby". Subsequent expeditions will be equipped to stay down at least a month, should they become trapped. A fortnight later Tich Morris, Rod Sykes, Mike Goodchild, myself and others went back, trying to find a flood-proof entrance in the sink area. In two days we found 50 holes, 27 of them wet, with shafts up to 130ft deep. Most are blocked at the bottom, but two or three were tight but promising, so will be banged next summer.

Two hundred and fifty miles south, on the eastern edge of the Rockies, members of the expedition found a 600ft long cave at 8,000ft. This cave kept the most fantastic ice formations any of us had ever seen. Ice crystals (hexagonal plates) 14 inches in diameter were abundant, and there were some interesting ice flowers - crystals growing at the rock/crystal interface, producing flower-like formations (cf gypsum flowers). Needless to say, many photogs were taken. A truly magnificent cave - if not sportwise. The ice formations are probably permanent, but so delicate that the heat from six bodies brought many crashing to the floor. There are still plenty left for future parties to enjoy, but if it does become over-visited, the plate crystals will certainly disappear. Luckily the cave is 60 miles from the nearest village, but only half a mile from a car track.

By this time, our sojourn in the Rockies was nearly over, so for the last three days a party went to Glacier National Park, British Columbia, and revisited the Nakimu (Red Indian for "spirit sounds") caves which the MCG had previously explored fully and mapped in '65 and '66. This was previously Canada's biggest - 17,000ft of passage, 900ft sink to rising. It is hoped to open the system to tourists, mainly due to its technical easiness, and the outstanding beauty of its passages. Although

there are a few stal formations, moonmilk grows inches thick on most walls giving a pure white appearance to the passages (moonmilk is an excretion of calcium carbonate by a low temperature bacterium). These are probably the best moonmilk accretions in the world. In addition, one chamber - the Witches' Ballroom - has splendid ice formations in winter and spring, and it is hoped to refrigerate the chamber artificially during the summer to preserve them for the sightseers (access can only be gained in summer as the main entrance is under 30ft of snow in winter). The cave does have its sporting sections, in the depths beyond the tourist part. In all, a grand system, chilly and a bit wet.

There are a few other caves at present in Canada, but these are all small and without enough merit for special mention. Undoubtedly there are a lot more big'uns just waiting to be discovered. The majority of the Canadian Rockies and Shield area above the Great Lakes is limestone, so with a few more intrepid spelunkers - as our American colleagues would call themselves - Canada could become a major caving country.

Guy Poulton.

