

THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY CAVE CLUB

No 3.

MAY, 1964.

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EDITORIAL

The most outstanding event of 1963 for the O.U.C.C. was the Oxford-Derbyshire Spelaeological Expedition to North-West Spain, 1963, on which members of the club joined forces with a group of Derbyshire and northern cavers in the Picos de Europa, this being the third annual expedition to this region by the O.U.C.C. Unofficial meets in the vacs. have been enjoyed by many members; on one of these much useful work was done and the survey of Yordas Cave was undertaken.

The start of Michaelmas Term brought with it the harvest of new members. In this we were very fortunate to find many having previous experience of caving, so the usual fall-off in numbers after the first meet was not so noticeable this year. Our novices' meet was to the Burrington (Mendip) area - Goatchurch Cavern, Sidcot Swallet,

and Rod's Pot provided a varied introduction to caving. A fortnight later we were back on Mendips; this time we split into three groups. Most visited Balch's Cave (thanks to Cerberus S.S. for providing the leaders) whilst others bottomed Eastwater Cavern and a small party took photographs in Hunter's Hole. The meet to Agen Allwedd was very enjoyable. Many parties were formed and all tastes catered for, one party being underground for 13 hours. The last meet that term was to Derbyshire where Oxlow Caverns proved a satisfactory choice. Of the indoor meets, a further talk by Reg Howard on the 1962 descent of the Gouffre Berger was popular with the freshers. The talks on Spain 1963 and Biospelaology both given by our own members, were immensely successful and our thanks are tendered to the speakers.

Hilary Term brought the news of fierce exploits by some members in Yorkshire during the vacation, which will form the basis of a future article, but this enthusiasm has not been communicated to the majority of our members, and attendance at meetings and meets has

been rather low. The Caves of the Term evening was poorly attended, but Monty Grainger's entertaining and interesting talk on The Survey of Gaping Gill brought quite a good attendance. At the Annual Dinner and A.G.M. we were able to welcome Graham Stevens as Chairman for 1964 - 5 and Roy Musgrove as Secretary; and wish them and the new Committee all success. It is pleasing to have a young lady on the Committee once again, for members must be reminded that not only is our President, Miss M.M. Sweeting, Ph.D. of the fair sex, but so also was one of our founder members, Miss Carola Anderson, whose presence on the Agen Allwedd meet in Michaelmas Term was a welcome event. A talk has also been given on Caving in Ireland by U.B.S.S. given by Mr. F.H. Nicholson, B.Sc.

Two Mendip meets have been successfully held, to Swildon's and St. Cuthbert's Swallets, and one in S. Wales to Tunnel Cave (again). Regrettably a meet arranged to explore Knotlow (Chapeldale) Mine in Derbyshire was cancelled at the eleventh hour owing to transport failures, but two members took a group of novices from the city into

Hillocks Mine amidst thick blizzards in the middle of February. Other members have visited Aggie again, and Birks Fell Cove in Upper Wharfedale, which it is hoped may be surveyed shortly.

In the past few months the number of caving accidents and incidents has been frighteningly high. At one time there were about eight call-outs in three days. Most have been accidents of the avoidable type, such as lamp-failure, getting wedged and being flooded. Some may consider those latter two are not avoidable, but when four parties are trapped by floods five days after a flood warning by a Rescue Warden was put out in the National Press, then one is probably justified in attaching blame. Getting lost, above and below ground has also been common and should not occur. More alarming, as far as O.U.C.C. is concerned, is the number of University and Technical College clubs that have been involved in these incidents. The fact that most incidents are avoidable suggests that inexperience may be

the cause, and it is true that the transient membership of University and Technical College clubs can lead to a lower proportion of experienced leaders than clubs based on the main northern towns such as Keighley, Skipton (Craven P.C.), Bradford (B.P.C.) etc. It would be interesting to see the "Cave Accident Statistics" of C.R.G. Occasional Publication No. 7 supplemented by recent events, and an analysis made of the type of caver involved. Having traced a cause, we can then look for a solution.

We suspect that many University and Technical College clubs may attract hefty sporty chaps who do not realise that potholing involves technique and judgment as well as fitness. They soon find themselves inveigled to lead "hard" parties which really require that skill and experience to decide which risks are justifiable and which are not, that is only acquired from years of training with an established club such as the two mentioned earlier.

The training such clubs offer is a more gradual and intensive training than that of student groups. There is a constant watchfulness over caving conditions and consideration (so often lacking among the more athletic members of the student fraternity) for the other members of the team. The Dowber Gill Passage always takes a fair number of student caving incidents each year. It seems the ideal cave for the athletic chap as it involves no ladders, and therefore to his way of thinking, no skill. Easegill Caverns likewise make an appeal to clubs lacking large amounts of tackle.

We suggest that the function of student clubs is to provide an adequate training in technique and judgement, not to aim for the most severe of potholes (which usually involves missing out some of those "soppy" potholing classics we were trained on such as Sell Gill Holes, Bull Pot of the Witches etc.), for which harder pots students should be encouraged to join another club (e.g. S.W.C.C., C.P.C., B.P.C., W.P.C., N.P.C., B.S.A.Eldon P.C. etc.). The policy of O.U.C.C. has always been

to provide an adequate ALL-ROUND training in basic technique, basic exploration and expeditioning, and to do some of the classic holes, so as to fit our members for harder things when they join an established club on leaving Oxford. Thanks to this policy the club has never had a major accident, and although we think it serves a useful purpose, it is up to our readers to judge from this and other journals whether the existence of a club run by students for students can be a good thing.

Editorial note Three points have arisen with regard to the article on Dunald Mill Hole in our last issue.

Firstly, the author of "A Guide to the Lakes" is Thomas West. Secondly, the author of the item from this book was Adam Walker. Thirdly, an important article by J. P. Smith, published in 1890 by the Barrow Naturalists Field Club has come to my notice. This article included a survey, which shows certain small discrepancies compared with the new survey. These are being investigated and a report will appear later.

The Oxford-Derbyshire Spelaeological Expedition
to North-West Spain 1963

The expedition had its origins back in 1962 when members of our club were interested in spending a third season in the Spanish Picos de Europa, a range of limestone peaks in the Cordillera Cantabrica. Rumour had it that certain members of the 1962 Gouffre Berger team were also interested in the area, but it was not until after Easter in 1963 that the two teams joined forces and the Oxford-Derbyshire Expedition was born. The Chairman of the expedition was Antony Huntington of the Eldon P.C. and its Secretary Mrs. Margaret Oakley of P.D.M.H.S. The members of U.U.C.C. taking part were T.M. Cooke, R. Cooper, A. Foss, P. Grimwood, M.J. Walker, and a guest of Adrian Foss, Bernard Wilson, B.Sc., who helped with the transport of equipment in his van. Four vehicles, including a Land Rover, carried the tackle and some of the 21 expeditioners. A great deal of ladder,

in fact, some 2,000 feet, was borrowed from the clubs of members taking part, and about 4,500 feet of rope were obtained, which included a gift of 1,440 feet from British Nylon Spinners. As in previous years the refuge by Lago Enel was used as the party's base camp.

As a detailed report is being at present (March 1964) prepared for publication, this article is going to be no more than a sketch of the expedition's activities, and for detailed descriptions of caves and pots, surveys etc., the forthcoming publication should be consulted.

High hopes were pinned on a pothole close to the track up to Lago Enel which the previous year's team were only able to peer into, as it had been hoped that it would be associated with the drainage of the lake and with the polje, Vega de Comeya, lying several hundred feet lower down. However, exploration revealed that its depth was a mere 250 feet, and a neighbouring pothole partially explored in the previous year, again did not live up to our expectations. (The system

of numbering caves C1, C2, etc. and of pots P1, P2, etc. adopted in 1961, has been continued, but the final classification of the 1963 discoveries must again be left until the complete paper appears).

Many small caves and pots were visited by the author as well as other members, including the Cueva del Buxu near Onau, which has yielded palaeolithic deposits and reputedly cave paintings, although none could be detected by us. Mention will be omitted of further small holes on account of the interesting major discoveries which were made, and which because of their extent, also precluded return visits to C15 and to Cueva Orandi. One such important hole was the Pozo los Texas in the remote Vega Maor, a dry valley at about 4,500 feet above sea-level above the canyon of the Rio Cares. In previous years we had heard much of this hole from the shepherds, and at first glance it appeared to be a most exciting pot. The entrance was about 150 yards across, and looking down one could detect a bank of snow at the bottom. A party consisting of Tim Cameron, Dave Judson, Dave Shotton, and

Mike Walker put on 200 feet of ladder, which proved inadequate, and the next day a larger party strengthened by Reg Howard and Margaret and Ivor Lawrence bottomed it with a further eighty feet of ladder. A scree slope led down to passages some 600 feet deep, but these soon sumped after less than a quarter of a mile. A nearby pot which was no less than 450 feet deep in a single pitch was equally unproductive, except for a lone hawk unable to fly out which was rescued by the pot's explorer, Tim Cameron.

Closer to Lago Ercina another pothole of about 600 feet in depth was descended by members of the expedition. This had been shown to us by a shepherd, Alfonso, and was appropriately named after him. However, here again a promising start led to disappointment.

More fortunate were those members who joined Antony Huntington, 'Wingnut', in the valley of the Rio Redumana. Wingnut explored a resurgence cave probably the cave shown on our map as "El Burdio la Pena", and which was known to us as Coventry Cathedral Cave on account of the fine main chamber. This cave had an enormous entrance above

the stream and a dry start soon led to the stream passage sinking near the entrance relatively speaking. Complicated traverses ending in a descent to water did not save the explorers from getting wet feet, or rather, hands, since they were wearing neoprene suits. A fine stream passage brilliantly photographed by Paul Thompson, led into the main chambers, after which a climb up a 50 foot waterfall followed by two other climbs of about twenty or thirty feet brought the party into an older part of the system with interesting contorted formations covered with bergmilch. The cave was surveyed by Wingnut and Dr. John Robey of Sheffield University and gave the expedition great sport, especially when Reg Howard with Barney Rosedale, (the team's M.O.) Chris Bishop, Ron Cooper, Paul Grimwood, and the author were caught in the roof series when a freak thunderstorm broke outside. Difficulty in descending the 50 foot waterfall pitch, by then a

torrent, led to loss of several helmets and lamps, but the excellent efforts of Reg and Barney in maintaining morale and order saved the day. As only two members of the party were wearing exposure suits, normally unnecessary in the cave, the other members were suffering considerably by the time they reached the entrance, after delicately traversing the entire stream passage, on account of the torrent it had turned into, and were extremely glad of the hot soup brought over by Wingnut and a relief party.

Wingnut also pioneered with Tim Cooke and other members of the expedition, the Pozo Altiquer to the south-east of the refuge of Vega Redonda. A fine shaft led down about 300 feet, and claims of further shafts gave hope for future exploration, which could not be carried in 1963 on account of the heavy rains which hit the last few days of the expedition's stay. The Jou Cabau on the ridge to the south-west of

the Redonda refuge also appears promising and may well be over 250 feet deep. Another enormous entrance of Alum Pot proportions is here encountered.

As the expedition was as much a holiday as a fierce expedition of explorers at least one day-off was celebrated, when members went to the coast at Ribadesella and tasted the typically Asturian delights of the cidreria and swam under the threat of a rather menacing sky. Even here Reg, Margaret and John Robey could not help exploring a small cave, however! More adventurous spirits roamed further afield, and hit Oviedo where they watched their first corrida. To coin a phrase, A Good Time was Had By All, and we wish every success to Dave Judson, Tim Cameron and Jim Garraty, when they visit the area this summer.

M.J.W.

Whitewell Pot, Bowland, Yorks.

Even the most ardent Lancastrian will admit that, when it comes to potholing, Yorkshire is the supreme county. Mention the word "pothole" to a layman, and Gaping Gill springs to mind. Every potholer worth his salt will sooner or later gravitate to the slopes of Ingleborough, to the long recognised Mecca of spelaeology. But only a few know the caves which lie a few miles further south.

The southern boundary of the Great Scar Limestone in which the Yorkshire caves occur is marked by the Craven Fault system, which passes through Ingleton, Settle and Malham. This line is an important geographical boundary; during the first period of the Carboniferous it was a shoreline, and later, though still within Lower Carboniferous time, it marked the boundary between shallow water to the north and deeper water to the south. The southern deposits are markedly different from those to the north; consisting of calcareous shales and impure limestone on which Karst processes have little effect.

Within the southern area, however, there are some small patches of purer limestone which are more easily affected by processes of solution. These are the deposits of reef-building algae, and at the time of their formation, shales were deposited round them. They have now been exposed by recent erosion, and the shales, being less resistant than the limestones, have been worn away more rapidly, so that the reef deposits stand out as steep-sided craggy hills. The largest concentration of "reef-knolls" lies on both sides of the River Hodder, in the vicinity of Whitewell, and in them there are several small caves. The largest of these is Whitewell Pot.

In "Britain Underground", the pothole is graded as a Difficult Pot, and is described as being 160 feet deep, and lying on the left of the road from Whitewell to Cow Ark. I agree with the grading, but not with the other details. The cave lies on the south side of the road, which is the right hand side, and its depth is 135 feet. The

entrance to Whitewell Pot is a wide funnel-shaped hollow about 20 yards south of the road at an altitude of 530 feet O.D., (O.S. 1/25,000 map Sheet SD 64,N.G.R. 664469). This is on the up-hill side of a small wood, and the hollow itself is planted with young trees. Down the side of the hollow a small stream trickles, to disappear at the foot of a low limestone cliff. Access to the cave is at a point 10 feet to the right of the sink, through a low hole partially blocked by a rotting tree-trunk (see survey).

The entrance gives access to a low chamber which slopes down at a steep angle. About twelve feet in, there are three holes in the floor which give access to a short rift running S.E. to the head of the first pitch (25 ft.). It is possible to climb this pitch with a rope, but a ladder is useful (belay at the top of the three holes), especially as the trickle of water at the top is aimed directly at the back of one's neck! The bottom of the ladder gives on to the boulder

floor of the first chamber, which is a crescent shape, with two 25 foot avens, one for the ladder and one for the stream from the surface. This showers down the right-hand aven and sinks through the boulder floor.

The way on lies under a rock arch on the south side, and over a bank of pebbles is the head of the second pitch. To call it a pitch, however, is misleading; it is a series of climbs, at a general angle of about 70° with a total drop of 80 feet. There are three small chambers, arranged on top of each other, and a tight hole in the floor of each one leads into the roof of the next. A 120 foot rope, attached to the foot of the ladder, is useful, especially in wet conditions, and this cave, on account of its small size, can be very wet.

At the bottom of this climb is the second chamber, oval in plan, higher (15 ft.) than its greatest width (9 ft.). At the far side the small stream which has collected from various corners on the 80 foot

pitch disappears down a narrow tube which leads to the sump, at the lowest levels of the cave. The tube is never more than two feet in diameter, and often considerably less, and the sharp bends do not help.

When I first visited the cave in April 1958, the sump marked the end of the cave, and it was just about possible to turn round without falling into the shallow scum-covered pool. On my second visit, however, in the summer of 1960, this pool had disappeared, revealing a pebble floor, which was swallowing the stream from the tube quite easily. Not only this; another stream was now apparent, flowing from the far side of the chamber. It was possible to squeeze under a low arch, into a cave passage bigger than any in the first part of the system. The opening up of this recent set of passages, though they do not go any deeper, has trebled the length of the system.

The first part of the passage is of rounded section, about 5 feet wide and 4 feet high. This slopes upwards at an angle of 15° for 35 feet, where it divides. The upper part, from which a small trickle

emerges, slopes steeply upwards to the foot of an aven, where it is possible to climb a further 60 feet upwards into a rift, floored with loose dark boulders, similar to those on the floor of the first chamber. This point is 47 feet below the entrance, and five feet below the floor of the first chamber, but the survey shows it to be nearly 50 feet away. The water coming down this aven is not, therefore, likely to be that which sinks in the first chamber.

The lower series of passages is completely different. In contrast to the rest of the system, it is approximately horizontal, and there are wide banks of sticky mud at the sides of the small stream, which trickles from two very small tubes, too tight to penetrate. A dry passage on the left is the largest passage of the system. It has a mud floor which has been trenched by a stream, on the left side of the passage, at some time in the past. The small trickle which flows in the upper part of this passage disappears down a small tube blocked by

pebbles, and it is therefore independent of the cave's main drainage pattern.

Above the sump there is a sandy chamber, which slopes upwards. This was being dug by a group of potholers at Christmas 1963, and they reported about 10 feet of passage leading eastwards. This is the extent of the system to date.

Unlike the Great Scar Limestone, which generally contains smooth walled cave passages, (except in the area of the Dent Fault), the reef limestone develops a multitude of very sharp edges under solution. Hence this cave is full of razor edges, calculated to tear chunks out of the toughest of boiler suits. The first part of the cave is very clean, but this is more than remedied in the second part. There are very few formations, the only ones of note being a group of clear straw stalactites in one of the avens beyond the Mud Slide.

In the reef limestones bedding and joint planes are poorly

developed and it is difficult therefore to assess the part played by structure in the development of the cave plan. The survey shows two general alignments at an angle of 75° , and these directions, N.W./S.S.E. and E./W., probably follow the major joint pattern. The first part of the system, with chiefly vertical development, is characteristically vadose. The second part, with chiefly horizontal development, apparently cuts across the structure and may have formed as a result of the processes described by Swinnerton's theory of cave formation close to the water table. This is not an isolated fragment of evidence for the existence of a water table at this level; along the Hodder valley on both sides of the Whitewell gorge there are wide level terraces between 350 and 500 feet O.D., marking the former level of the valley floor. The water table associated with this valley must have lain close to the level of the horizontal passages at 410 feet O.D.

The system is apparently of pre-glacial formation. The lower levels of the Hodder valley have a covering of boulder clay pointing to

erosion below the 350 - 400 ft. level in pre-glacial times. The water table would sink in accordance with the trenching of the main valley, and the development of caves, according to Swinnerton's theory, could not take place. At the moment the small streams in the cave are removing a deposit of gravel and boulders, which have choked the system. These were probably washed into the cave during the glacial period.

The water from the cave reappears near Whitewell at a point about 300 yards west of the cave entrance at a level of 370 feet O.D. This rising is quite strong and must contain water from other underground streams on the same hillside. The water emerges under pressure and in order to gain access it would be necessary to blast away the upper part of a rock barrier to lower the water level.

There are three smaller caves and several small sink-holes in the vicinity of Whitewell Pot, and at least three more caves on the west side of the Hodder valley, one of these being Fairy Holes, where archaeological excavations took place about the turn of the century. It is hoped to describe these in a later article in this journal.

W.J. Crompton

Yorkshire Roundabout

During normal caving trips, one often makes minor observations which one thinks could be important. In these, I include such things as belays for pitches, tackle required, possible passsages, formations etc. Each one alone is probably not worth recording, but many such observations fitted together can make an interesting picture. Thus a 10 day caving holiday in Yorkshire resulted in the following.

We wanted to test the efficacy of the Flourescin/Charcoal method of water-tracing. Bullpot of the Witches was chosen and detectors for flourescin (a teaspoonful of coconut charcoal sewn up in a bandage) and Rhodamine B (tanned cotton threads) were put in the northern sump at the end of '49 Cavern (See O.U.C.C. Proc. No. 2). The solo trip to do this took about one hour. The same evening 10 gms. of flourescin were placed in the sinks of Aygill (O.U.C.C. Proc. No. 1). Twenty-four

hours later, 15 gms. of rhodamine B were put in. Three days after this, all the water in '49 Cavern was visibly coloured green, the deep pools near the duck and in the lake providing optimum conditions. The charcoal detector was positive, but the rhodamine B was not. From this I deduce that insufficient time had been allowed for the rhodamine to come through, which suggests that the fluoresein had only just arrived. The estimated distance of travel is about 200 yards, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ days to complete it seems surprisingly long. From the flow entering the northern sump, there must be a large pick-up zone, but the fells around Aygill are fairly dry, with no surface streams. Thus it appears that Bullpot extends N.W. for a good distance beyond the sump and that Aygill, on sinking, flows N.W. to meet the Bullpot drainage channel at depth, and then flows S.E. to the northern sump.

Tip Pot was descended for another attempt on the final rift (O.U.C.C. Proc. No. 2). Hammers, chisels and crowbars, and an

optimistic ladder accompanied us down the extremely awkward ladder pitch known as Guillotine Pot. It is surprising how twenty months of wishful thinking can give a false impression, and the rift was as tight and awkward as before. We retired after a short futile bout of hammering. This is a job for "bang" - if the upper reaches can stand it!

Armed with P.U. and its suggested tackle, we made our way to Pool Sink. Before us lay a quick route to the Eastgill Master Cave (Joke!). The entrance crawl was quite easy and soon we were making rapid progress to the pitch. The belay is not ideal for wire, but we soon had it rigged, and fifty feet later we were at the bottom, in the streamway. Despite two more pitches in the description, the "required tackle" had been used, so we set off with just a rope downstream. Soon, we reached Chute Pitch and undaunted we did the traverse into the dry passage; we traversed a pot and came to another pitch. A traverse over this seemed possible, but was a bit dodgy. We returned to the top of

the ladder pitch for a spare ladder and belay and with these I descended the pot in the dry passage. This landed me at the foot of Chute Pitch and left me with a further 20' pitch to descent and above it was wedged the old T-piece itself. Thus we were defeated and had to return, stopping to visit the beautiful Magpie Chamber on the way. (On a later visit with more tackle we descended by this route to the T-piece and belayed a 20' ladder to this. Below, the steam passage led to another pitch, with an obvious roof traverse leading nowhere, and using tackle let down off the previous two pitches on a double rope, we descended the 25' pitch (rather wet!) Finding the entrance to a dry passage, we followed it up and back above the streamway towards the T-piece pitch, and although three points of connection with the streamway below were found, none seemed to provide tackle-free routes into or out of the streamway. Below the 25' pitch an obvious downstream route led to the Master Cave at Holbeck Junction. Thus a tackle list for the streamway route down Pool Sink would read:-

1st pitch	50 ft. ladder	20 ft. belay (round choked boulder)
2nd pitch	15 ft. ladder	Sling belay (to eye of rock on far side of pot)
3rd pitch	20 ft. ladder	(to T-piece)
4th pitch (wet)	25 ft. ladder	Sling belay (to flake of rock on R. off head of pitch)

Lancaster Hole is well described in Cave Science No. 6. But should one wish to do certain variations of the circuit formed by Wilf Taylor's, Waterfall and Portcullis Passages, difficulties may be encountered. The ascent from the Master Cave of the waterfall in Waterfall Passage is rather difficult and involves complete soaking. Descent without tackle would be almost impossible for any but a very competent party. The route is to ascent whence the water descends, but there is really no room for both caver and water! After, another short waterfall is climbed on the razor-edged flakes of dubious

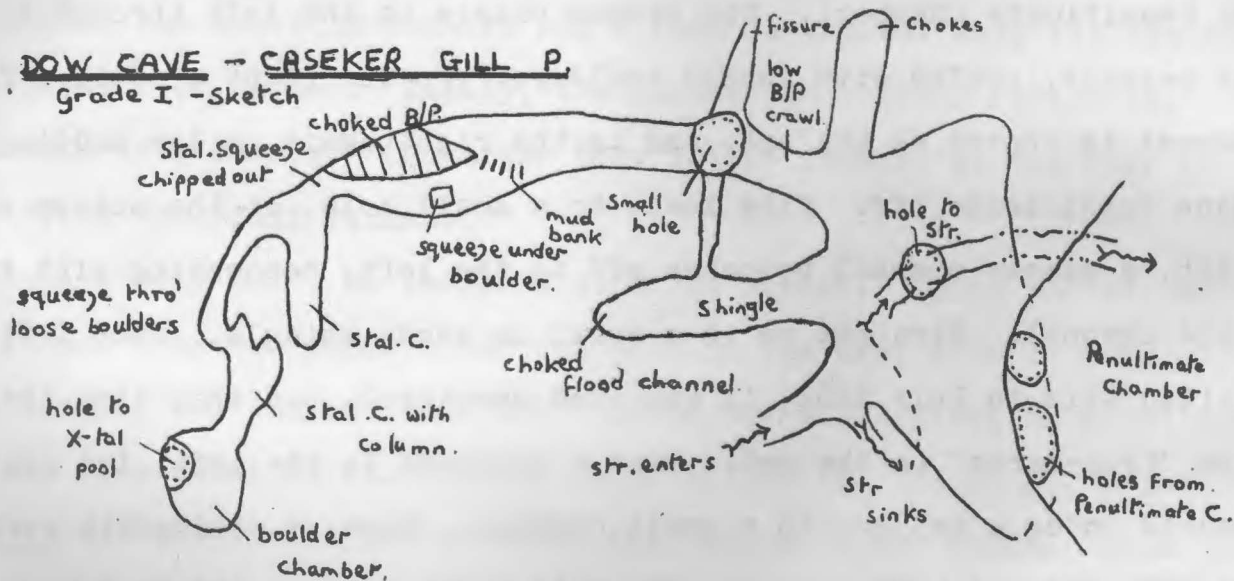
strength that protrude on the left. After that the going is easy to Cross System. Here the stream flows from low tunnels, which get lower and lower! Near the end of the right-hand branch a black sheep bone was found in the shingle. The descent of Wilf Taylor's Passage is alright until Double-Decker Pot is reached. Descent of the lower deck down the arete is awkward and a rope is a great help (it can be retrieved from below). Lastly, the connection between Portcullis and Waterfall Passages (down the hole in the former) is not easy to find from Waterfall Passage.

On a "day off", we laddered Alum Pot direct. Using the second tree back from the edge, along the path on the East side as a belay, and hanging the ladder round the tree on the edge, gives an excellent climb, free after 25 ft., to the ledge at 120 ft. An 18 ft. belay and 175 ft. of ladder suffice to reach the bottom of the pitch. From here the cascades are climable, and the last pitch requires 25 ft. of ladder

and 50 ft. of belay. The ladder should be hung to the right, and a spacer for electron ladder would be a help, since it tends to hug the convex slope at the top and makes climbing awkward.

Our last trip was to the end of Caseker Gill Passage in Dow Cave. Here, various previously-noted possibilities were examined. From the final chamber, four routes lead off (besides the two connecting with the Penultimate Chamber). The stream enters on the left through a low passage, roofed with choked boulders. To the right of this a flood channel is choked at the end, and to the right again, a low bedding plane crawl leads off. This leads to a small hole, at the bottom of which, a narrow channel branches off to the left, connecting with the flood channel. Straight on is a crawl on sandy shingle. When I first visited this in July 1962, it appeared unentered, but this time there were "trog-marks" in the mud. Over a sandbank to the left, led past a squeeze under a boulder to a small chamber. Here, a stalagmite curtain had been chipped away, and an extremely tight squeeze led to a fork.

Up to the left was a small chamber full of stalactites; down to the right, a crawl through muddy pools led to a squeeze up through loose boulders into an unstable boulder chamber. The only exit was a small hole to a crystal pool. After a chasing game with the boulders (I won!) a hasty retreat was made and we left for the exit, meeting about 25 people on the way. (It is getting as bad as Goatchurch!)



Later in the vacation, another visit to Bullpot of the Witches resulted in the finding of a further extension, not described in O.U.C.C.Proc. No. 2. The entrance is in the dry passage running parallel to the streamway, between Cairn Chamber and the final (Southern) sump. Coming from the sump the entrance is on the left, just before the passage starts to descent to Cairn Chamber. A 4 ft. climb up leads to a further climb of about 10 ft. Above a narrow passage leads to an aven. To the right (from the direction of entry) is a climb up the wall for about 15 ft., with loose boulders at the top. Here a boulder floor slopes away to a choked shaft on the right and a hole straight ahead. Through the hole, a 15 ft. drop (care!) leads to a boulder slope entering a chamber. There is a stream on the left, sinking in a narrow fissure, but upstream is a branch passage on the left, and a pool and choke. The inlet passage opens out but ultimately chokes. These chokes are at about the same level as the other "lower

oxbows" near Cairn Chamber.

G.S.

Some Observations on Recent Caving Accidents (1)

During the recent large-scale rescue in Llethrhyd Swallet, a Welsh miner commented that ' it was suicidal down there. There were no foof props or anything!' Two years ago the C.R.G. published an analysis of caving accidents by David Leitch(2). The present article sets out to compare accidents since that study with those included in it, and to prove that caving is not a suicidal sport.

Number of incidents

The number of accidents has unfortunately shown a significant increase. (From 8.7 to 13.0 per annum). This is despite the fact that

the span of table 1 is less than two years, as against Leitch's four and a quarter years. But on the other hand less than a quarter of the incidents now involve risk to life, a difference of 11.1%. These figures confirm the ^rfaily obvious fact that there are an increasing number of inexperienced novices, who are going underground without adequate supervision, and whose "accidents", avoidable as many are, annoy rescue teams and landowners alike. While opposing in principle the gating of caves, I am afraid that the demands of landowners, and the need to prevent such people giving the sport a bad name will force such a solution upon us.

Regional distribution

As Leitch pointed out, the result of such an approach is a reflection of the number of ^rcaves in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, due to their proximity to the industrial cities of the North. Once again Dow Cave stands out from other caves with five incidents (19.2%), many of these being directly or indirectly a result of getting lost. Bar Pot with three incidents (11.5%) and Swildon's Hole and Alderley Edge Mines with

two incidents (7.7%) each also show fairly high accident rates.

Falls

The number of falls has shown a hopeful decrease over the past two years and they occupy nothing like the leading position which they did in Leitch's study. There are too many ladder falls in C.R.O. records, due to failure to use a lifeline (and a double lifeline on pitches exceeding 40 ft.). I suspect the falls in table 1 were of this nature. The temptation for experienced cavers to dispense with lifelines must be resisted; even a twenty foot fall could be fatal

Getting lost

The very nature of this incident suggests that inexperienced people are involved. A small scale survey, carried inside the helmet, and showing merely the correct route at junctions is a useful asset. To those who point out the ease with which U.U.C.C. gets lost, I would point out that failing to reconcile the survey and the cave around you for 10 minutes is very different from having no idea where you are for

10 hours. Some incidents are probably concealed under exhaustion and light failure.

Trapped by rising water

This mishap has recently increased alarmingly. Repeated warnings about respecting weather conditions seem to pass by the foolhardy. The Mendip Rescue Organisation policy of posting warning notices at the entrance of caves liable to flooding appears to be the most that can be done in the circumstances.

Exposure and Exhaustion

The passion for doing hard caves simply because of their reputation may be connected with the rise of exhaustion to the chief cause of accidents. It was relatively minor in Leitch's table. Mossdale and Penygent Pot are for really experienced potholers, not those who have done a few v.diffs. and the odd super severe. The even distribution of severity illustrates the smooth and rapid onset of effects and the

need to get the casualty out quickly, without waiting for the rescue team. Remember, the only "ordinary" death in the table is due to this cause. The familiar principles apply: the speed and scope of the trip must be designed to suit the weakest link in the party; there must be no hesitation about turning back immediately fatigue sets in; and fitness and clothing must be adequate to the trip.

Light failure

This again is usually a beginner's error. Candles should not be relied on - even if the Gritstone Club did manage with them down Washfold Pot in 1933. Although heavy, I consider a Nife cell the best means of illumination, except on very long trips, on account of its reliability. Better still perhaps, is a party with mixed lighting; a spare torch carried by at least one member of the party is really advisable.

A common cause of difficulty with carbide lamps is due to the use of cave water, which carries many solid particles in suspension. A supply of tap water in a small polythene bottle is advisable even in really wet caves. In desperate circumstances certain other "effluents" will react admirably with carbide, a fact which many will no doubt have established for themselves!

Unclassified incidents

Amongst these are included such non-speleological happenings as suicide. Others are the result of inadequate press information. This subject itself merits a lengthy discussion, and I will not enlarge here, except to support recent pleas for better press liaison during rescues. Those members of the club who were involved in incident no.45 will not easily forget the miraculous changes wrought in the layout of Bar Pot by the imaginative correspondent of one national daily.

Other Points

Due to its restricted scale and incomplete coverage etc. the

statistical value of this material is of course limited. Whether it is for reasons of this nature or not, those incidents which involved boulder falls have vanished from the list. Two ideas spring to mind:

(i) The increasing number of cavers has resulted in the increased stability of loose boulder masses. (I can think of more than one cave where this is manifestly not the case).

(ii) That cavers are treating known danger spots with so much more respect that they have eliminated boulder fall accidents (This too seems a little far-fetched).

The disappearance in any case welcome, as it reduces perhaps the biggest calculated risk in caving.

A general perusal of the figures shows on the whole an optimistic picture. Although accidents are increasing, the serious and unavoidable ones are trending in the reverse direction. Nevertheless, if accidents continue to rise at the present rate, (I feel that) restricted access is going to be the answer forced on cavers by landowners. But

it is an ill-wind If one of the consequences of such pressure is a decline in the prevailing anarchical tendencies and club jealousies, speleology as a whole cannot but benefit.

In brief, there is no reason why anyone entering a cave adequately prepared, should ever come into contact with the rescue organisations unless on practices. The fundamental rules of safe caving are dictates of common-sense, and if observed a good deep cave may well be the safest place on earth.

R.K.M.

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- (1) I would like to thank Graham Stevens for the use of his collection of press-cuttings about caving accidents;
 - (2) D. E. Leitch. "Some Cave Accident Statistics"
Occasional Publication No. 7(1962) of the Cave Research Group of Great Britain.

Press Reports of Cave Accidents February 1962 - November 1963
 Table I

36	11.2.62	Pegleg Pot	TW	C
37	11.2.62	Spectacle Pot	U	B
38	5.3.62	Perryfoot Caves	W	A
39	9.7.62	Castleton Mine	F	C
40	9.7.62	Dow Cave	U	A
41	18.9.62	Bar Pot	U	A
42	?	Dow Cave	LF	A
43	10.3.63	Ecton Mine	D	D
44	17.3.63	Eastwater Swallet	E	D
45	20.3.63	Bar Pot	E	B
46	18.5.63	Mardale Rake Mine	U	D
47	21.5.63	Dow Cave	L	A
48	25.6.63	Dow Cave	LF	A
49	5.8.63	Alderley Edge Mines	F	A
50	20.8.63	Alderley Edge Mines	LF	A
51	26.8.63	Ireby Cavern	TW	A
52	20.9.63	Dow Cave	L	A
53	27.10.63	Town Drain	F	B
54	3.10.63	Swildon's	E	C
55	4.11.63	Bar Pot	L	A
56	4.11.63	Dow Cave	E	A
57	5.11.63	Baker's Pit	W	A
58	18.11.63	Hunt Pot	TW	A
59	18.11.63	Little Hull Hole	E	B
60	18.11.63	Marble Steps	U	A
61	18.11.63	Swildon's Hole	TW	A

F	Injured by falling
L	Became Lost
TW	Trapped by rising water
W	Became wedged
FB	Injured by falling boulder(s)
U	Unknown or unclassifiable
TB	Trapped by boulder fall (not injured)
E	Exposure and exhaustion
D	Difficulties whilst swimming
TF	Trapped after falling (not injured)
LF	Lights failed.
D	Fatal
C	Serious injury and danger to life
B	Moderate injury; no danger to life
A	Trivial Injury negligible

Key to Table I

Distribution of Type and Severity of Incidents
Table II

<u>Type</u>	<u>Type Total</u>	<u>% of Grand Total</u>	<u>Severity</u>				
			A	B	C	D	
F	3	11.5	1	1	1		
L	3	11.5	3				
TW	4	15.5	3		1		
W	2	7.8	2				
FB	-	-					
U	5	19.2	3	1			1
TB	-	-					
E	5	19.2	1	2	1		1
D	1	3.8					1
TF	-	-					
LF	3	11.5	3				
<hr/>			<hr/>				Group Totals
26			16	4	3	3	
<hr/>			<hr/>				% of Grand Total
			61.54	15.38	11.54	11.54	
			<hr/>				

Mean number of incidents per type:

$$(\text{Mean}) = \frac{26}{8} = 3.25$$

Yordas Cave, Kingsdale, Yorks West Riding
(NGR SD705791)

The first description of this former show-cave in Yordas Wood appeared in 1782(1):

"..... Having passed a small brook, which one of the party called the Stygian Lake, we came to the western side of the cave. It is a solid perpendicular rock of black marble embellished with many(!) rude sketches, and names of persons long forgotten, the dates of some being above two hundred years. After we had proceeded twenty or thirty yards northward, the road divided itself into two parts On the right was the Bishop's Throne, and on the left the Chapter House, so called from their resemblance to those appendages of a cathedral. Here we could not but lament the devastation made in the ornaments of these sacred places; some Goths not long since, having defaced both Throne and Chapter House of their pendant petrified works,

which had been some ages in forming." (Familiar lament!) "..... We were shown a low and narrow passage on one of the shelves of the rock near the Chapter House, which we were informed led to a wider path, extending itself into the heart of the mountain; but our curiosity was satisfied without crawling among the rocks besmeared with slime and mud. From the dome of this edifice" (i.e. the Chapter House) "fell a fine and fluent cascade, which served in a peculiar manner to embellish the works of nature, in a style superior to anything we can have in those of art."

Another reference eighteen years later (2) rather unjustifiably compared Fordas to "that remarkable cave in Derbyshire, called Peak's Hole." The same author in another work (3) gave the fullest description of all:

"..... thro' a rude arched opening four yards by seven,..... then we see stones of enormous weight pendant from the roof, apparently

loose, and ready to fall down upon our heads The cave opens into an apartment so spacious and extensive, that, with all the blaze of our elevated candles we could scarcely see either its roof or its walls. On turning to the right, we immediately lose sight of day; the noise of the cataract increases, and we soon find ourselves on the brink of a subterraneous rivulet After passing the brook, and cautiously proceeding thirty or forty yards further, we are under the necessity of climbing over a rugged heap of huge rocks, which had sometime or other, fallen from the roof or the sides of the cave; but now are incrustated over with a smooth, calcareous substance, the high smooth roof and walls were seen distinctly, as well as the curious petrefactions hanging therefrom. On the right we observed, among several other curiously incrustated figures, a projecting one, which our guide called the Bishop's Throne, from its great resemblance to that appendage of a cathedral; on the other side, a seemingly emblematical monument springs from the wall, about three

yards above the floor, with various uncouth representations, of which that of a lion's head is most conspicuous We now enter a narrow passage of five or six yards, where the roof is supported by seven pillars: there is room for only one person in breadth; but the height is very considerable. The internal brook pushes along this crevice, which renders it the most difficult part of our subterraneous excursion, and which, after great rains, effectually excludes a passage we soon reached a cascade it issues from an opening in the rock, and falls about four or five yards into a circular apartment, roofed with a fine dome. This apartment some visitors have named the Chapter House Near the Chapter House there is an opening, through which a person may creep and arrive at other large apartments; but we did not attempt the experiment The whole length of this singular cavern is between fifty and sixty yards; its breadth 13 yards; and height 47 feet - On entering this cave, its area enlarges in every way, and we reach the opposite wall after

walking twenty-three yards: the principal part just described, lies to the right; but it extends also on the other hand, and unfolds some wonderful closets, called Yordas Bedchamber, Yordas Oven, etc. Here also, the brook buries itself still deeper, and proceeds underground to Keldhead."

This picture of the cave was modified somewhat in July 1817 by a water-spout, which deposited in the Main and Entrance Chambers the thick layer of mud shown in the survey. Since then, the stream has been adapting itself to the new conditions. It carried large quantities of surface detritus. Modern exploration was begun by Yorkshire Ramblers Club, who made the first recorded round trip down the waterfalls, on 2nd August 1925 (4). The cave is also still visited by gum-booted, torch-bearing seekers after natural curiosities.

August Bank-Holiday having dawned its usual wet miserable self, two members of the club, G. Stevens and R.K. Musgrove, assembled, a

prismatic compass calibrated in single degrees, a steel tape, and a clinometer (home-made pendulum type), and wearing ordinary clothes, began surveying. We began at the Chapter House. This was fortunate, as at the other end of the Main Chamber, a spot on which one surveyor had been standing relatively dry-shod was found by his colleague to be under calf-deep ~~of~~ water a couple of hours later (much to the former's amusement!) These central regions occupied a day's work and we left the completion of the survey to the following day.

Clad this time in precautionary exposure suits over our clothes, we worked up the surface gorge and slithered down an awkward 8 ft. drop into the Low Waterfall Chamber. A traverse on the left at the far end, with a slight undulation in the floor provided a dry belay for our 20 ft. ladder, landing in a pool in a small chamber which

contained a large dead brach. A left-hand turn brought us to another small fall (5 ft.) down which we slid. (This was somewhat more difficult to climb on the way out). Onwards, a small rectangular passage with a rift in the roof ending with another left hand turn, and clearly joint-determined like the first, led to the Chapter House. This passage, gradually turning into a rift at the Chapter House fall, contained an interesting oxbow and ogival roof passage at its northern end (embryo upper series?). Arriving at the Chapter House, we decided to measure it without descending the very wet pitch and then surveyed back to the entrance.

This complete, we made our way to the Shakehole on the south side of Yordas Wood. A low bedding-plane floored with soil gave an awkward stomach crawl into the lower stream passage. On the left at the foot of this the stream flowed away in an impassable bedding-plane sink. At the end of the low wet oxbow we found what is clearly Yordas Oven. This consists of a low stalagmite bridge undercut by

the stream, with an oven like a chimney above it. The whole stream passage roof in this part of the cave was covered in scummy foam from the previous day's flood, and where the stream left Main Chamber it was choked with vegetable debris. A climb up the mud fall in an oxbow to the right brought us Yordas Bedchamber, a chamber with a curious stalagmite shelf - the Bed. From here we left through the old Show-cave entrance. The prevalence of horizontal development in this lower part of the cave is probably connected with the fact that the cave is only a hundred feet above the rising at Keld Head.

The cave appears to have undergone a considerable change, apart from the waterspout, since the early accounts. The writings on the wall appeared to have vanished under thin flowstone coatings, and named formations, such as the "lion's head" are scarcely recognizable now to even the most fertile imagination. The cave is quite interesting, although small (about 750 ft.), and was certainly worth a visit - if only to get out of the rain!

R.K.M.

References:-

- (1) "A Tour to the Caves in the Environs of Ingleborough and Settle in the West Riding of Yorkshire" by Rev. John Hutton (1782)
- (2) "A Topographical Description of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire" by John Housman (1800)
- (3) "A Guide to the Lakes, Caves and Mountains and other Natural Curiosities in Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and part of the West Riding of Yorkshire" by John Housman (1800)
- (4) Journal of the Yorkshire Ramblers Club Vol. V No. 17 p.241 (1927)

Stop Press

Winter storms have uprooted a tree in a shallow dry valley above and to the south of the wet entrance. This has exposed a 68' pitch which leads into the roof of a high chamber about 20' in diameter with a large pinnacle in it. The pitch is very wet, being watered by the stream flowing out of a passage near the top of the pitch. From the chamber a low (1') wet (3") crawl enters the streamway above the

waterfalls into the Chapter House at the point on the survey marked "Low B/P inlet". Tackle:- 75' ladder 30' belay to a safe tree. This extension has been surveyed and will be added to the survey when it is published as a large-scale sheet, in the near future.

G.S.

Casterton Pot

After a trip down Lancaster Hole, an investigation of the shakeholes in the field north of Bull Pot Farm was made. In the shakehole where the rubbish is dumped was rock overhang which descended for a few feet, being blocked by boulders. (This is probably "Small Pot" marked on Gemmell and Myers' map on p.103 of "Underground Adventure"). One of the party then followed the trickle of water to the other corner of the shakehole, squeezed down

a hole in the boulders and, on moving forward, entered a chamber. The water sank in the floor, and the way forward appeared to be down a narrow angled rift. As boulders could be heard to descend for a considerable distance, it was decided to commence digging at the first opportunity.

Party:- P. Morgan, P. Cotterell, K. Holt, F. Makin.

Saturday, 13th June, 1959

We commenced the attack with lump hammers, crowbars and spades. The rift was widened for about 6 ft.

Sunday, 12th July, 1959

More digging was done until only one rock flake was stopping entry. Most of the tackle had been lost down the slope, christened the "Joyride".

Parties:- As above, and P. Croasdale, S. Honey.

Sunday, 26th July, 1959

P. Croasdale and M. Hartly renewed the attack with a long iron

bar. This was successful and they squeezed their way through. Descending to a small chamber ("second chamber"), they crawled to the top of another larger chamber which they called "Guillotine Pot". This was free climbed to the bottom, and expecting it to go for miles, they pushed forward down a sloping rift to another chamber with a 20' aven. Here a low muddy bedding plane doubled back, which would require much digging.

Sunday, 2nd August 1959

Digging commenced both in the muddy bedding-plane and at the bottom of Guillotine Pot where the water sinks in the boulders. A survey as far as the Fourth Chamber was completed.

Saturday, 22nd August, 1959

P. Morgan and P. Croasdale dug out the bedding-plane to a rock flake sticking into mud and water.

Sunday, 4th September, 1960

After a year's break, work was re-started on Casterton Pot by

P. Croasdale, P. Morgan and J. Morgan. Proceeding to the end of the crawl, we dug the mud from under the flake. This then filled with water making an interesting duck to a small narrow chamber, with a very narrow high stream passage leading off. Next day we tried to force a way along the passage but it would not go - we nearly lost J. Morgan. By squeezing along at roof level, 20 - 25 ft. were gained, but this was about three feet short of where the passage widens out considerably. It took two hours for him to get back to the chamber. Falling water can be heard distinctly.

Further notes

The main digging hopes were centred on the possibility of entering a system running towards Aygill. (Since water tracing has since shown the pot to lie in the Bullpot O.T.W. water shed, this is unlikely. Ed.) The water entering the pot is almost certainly not that encountered at the end of the system. Therefore results

may be obtained from digging in Guillotine Pot. Another possibility is the passage to the right in the Second Chamber. The Pot is in a very dangerous state of collapse. In severe flood, it takes a stream as large as that going down Bull Pot.

P. Morgan (E.P.C.)

Note After the appearance in our last journal of an article entitled Tip Pot. contact was made with the Earby Pothole Club, who kindly offered to let us publish their survey. They had called the pot, Casterton Pot, which now becomes its official name. Some notes on the original exploration by Peter Morgan (E.P.C.) appear above and we would like to acknowledge with thanks the generosity of E.P.C. in allowing us to publish their work;

Editors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editors would like to acknowledge with thanks the work done by the following in helping to produce this journal.

R.K. Musgrove for drawing the maps,

P. Morgan and the Earby Pothole Club for the survey and article on Casterton Pot,

W.J. Crompton for the survey and article on Whitewell Pot,

and finally, all the other members of U.U.C.C. that made this publication possible.

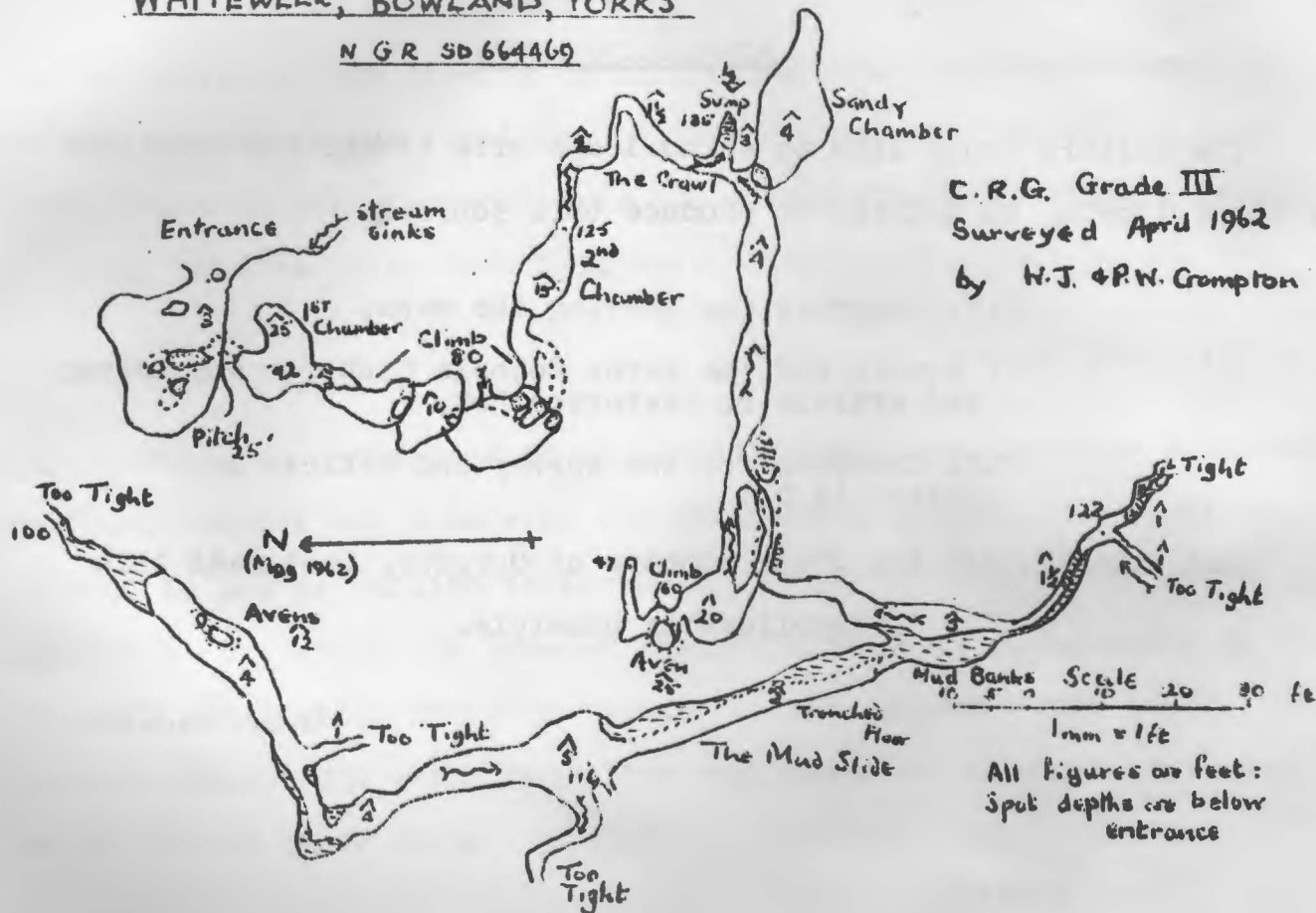
G.S. M.J.W.

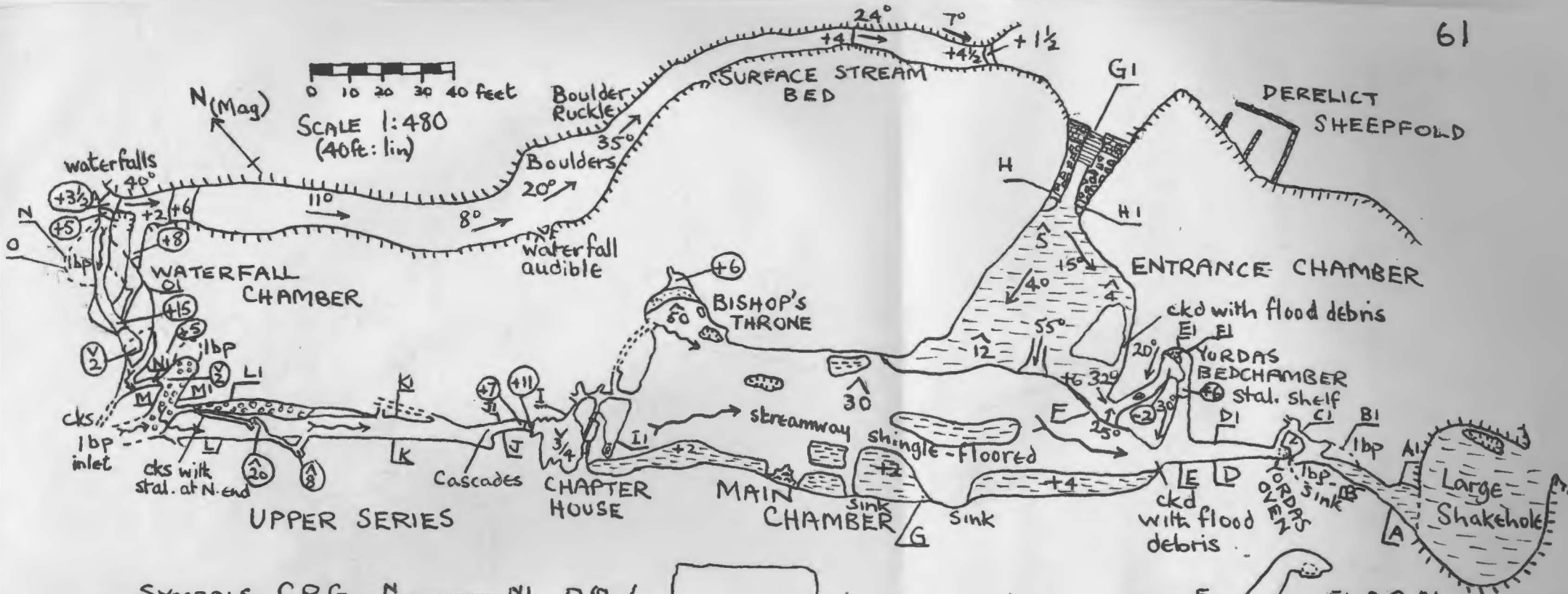
WHITEWELL POT


60

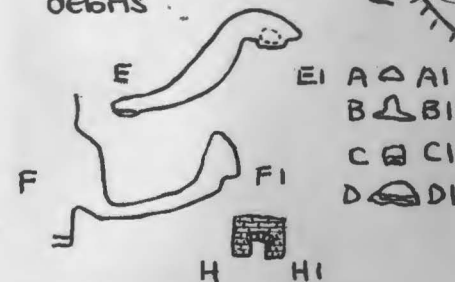
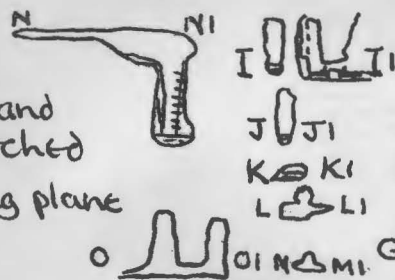
WHITEWELL, BOWLAND, YORKS

N G R SD 664469





SYMBOLS CRG  N
STANDARD
Surface features and
large boulders hatched
lb p = low bedding plane
cks = chokes



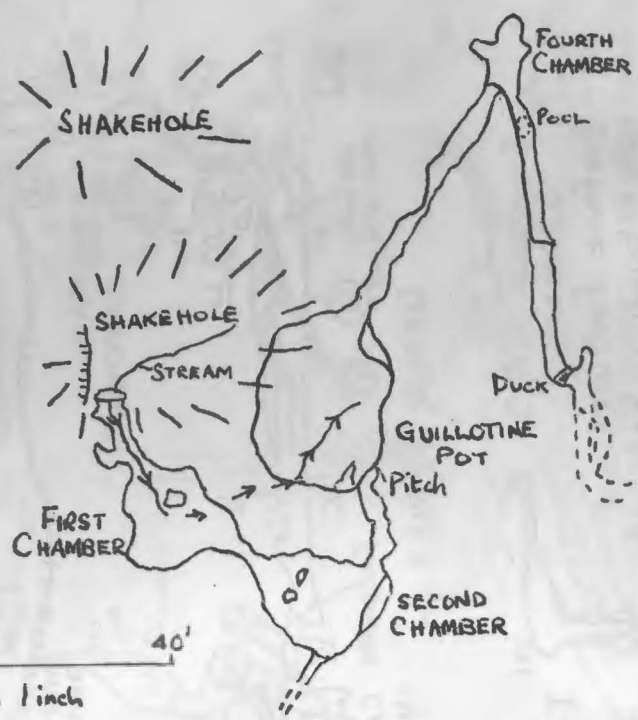
CRG Gde IV

Surveyed by G. Stevens and
R. K. Musgrove August 1963.

YORDAS CAVE, KINGS DALE

N. G. R. SD705791

PLAN



0' 5' 10' 20' 40'
 SCALE 20ft to 1 inch

PROJECTED
 ELEVATION
 Facing North



60'
 40'
 20'
 10'
 5'
 0'

CASTERTON POT
CASTERTON FELL, YORKS.

NGR SD663815 LENGTH APP 140' DEPTH APP 100'

Peter Morgan
 2

EARBY POTHOLE CLUB SURVEY CRG Gde II & III