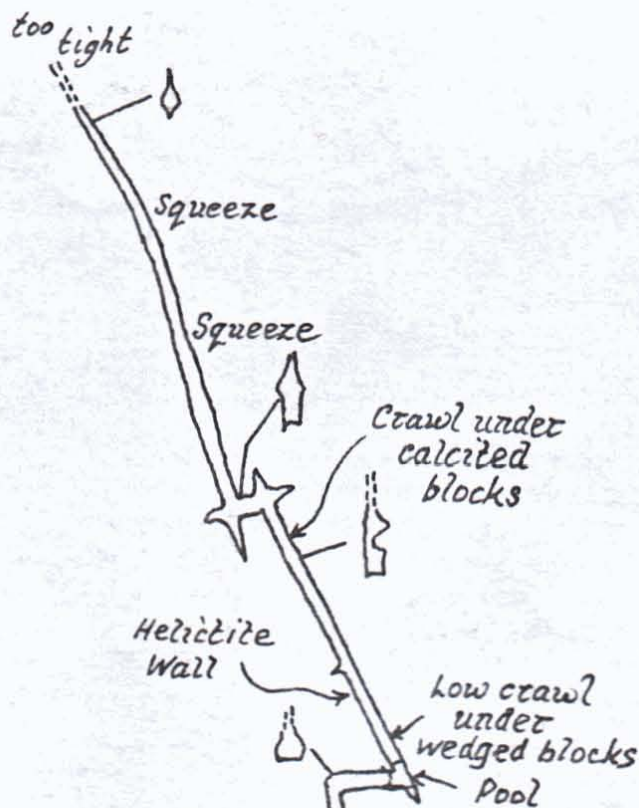


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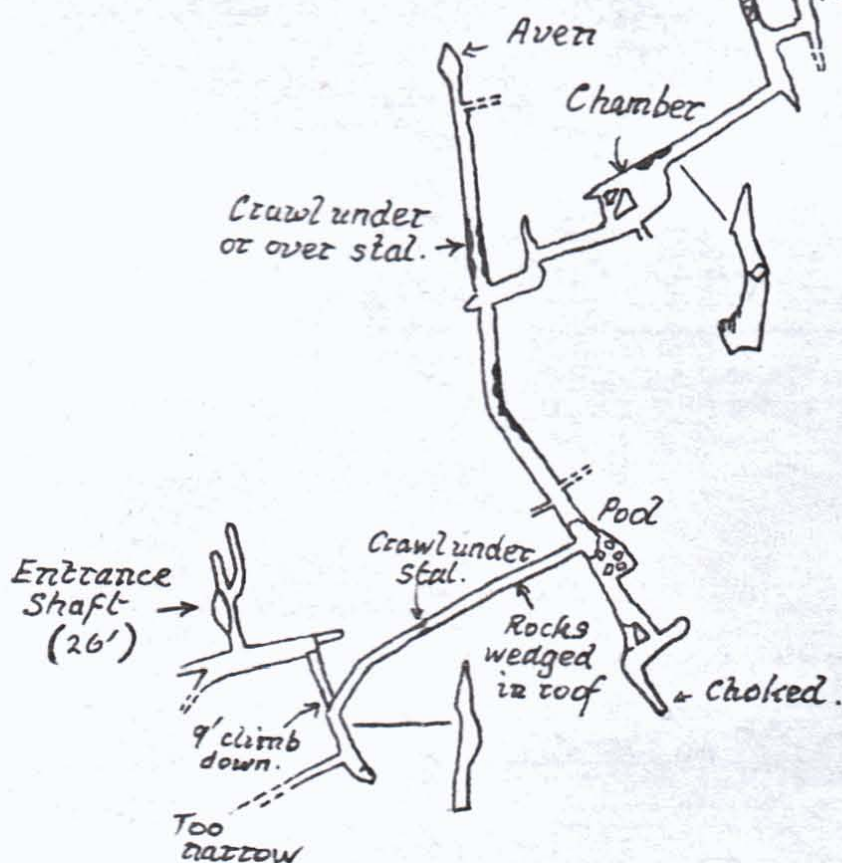
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JOURNAL
1967-



The W.S.R.S. System,
High Hurth Edge, Langdon Beck.

M.S.G. Survey, 13.7.67/19.9.67.



Scale :- 60' - 1"
(sections - 30' - 1").

MOLDYWARPS SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP JOURNAL 1967.

This is the fourth MSG publication, following two reports and a newsletter (Dec. 66, Easter and August 67). Since last Easter there have been many MSG caving meets, some of which are listed, but not reported on, in the 'newsletter'. Foot-and-mouth disease has curtailed speleological activities in the last months of 1967. Printing difficulties have been encountered of more than the usual vehemence in the preparation of this Journal, and apologies are offered for any spelling mistakes etc. This publication was intended to be larger, with details of a September discovery of the MSG, but due to the onset of foot-and-mouth, curtailing exploration work, and the request of the land owner, this article has been omitted (although printed), and mentions of the system deleted. Previous MSG discoveries have been confined to minor extensions to Hard Level Gill, and possibly a rather larger extension to God's Bridge Cave, but this latest 'find' is definately new. Cave hunters may optimistically note that this cave was found and walked into - and is at least a mile in length, with very fine formations throughout.

The summer saw a few MSG members spending a week caving on the Mendips - boosting our "outside-meets secretary's" caving-trip per week average, this year standing at around 1.2. The Mendip week is reported on in this Journal. Tentative plans for MSG activities in 1968 are already being made - suggestions from all members are welcome. It is hoped that more new systems shall be found in the northern dales. Various joint meets are being arranged with the Dales Pothole Club.

The Treasurer sends New Year Greetings to all members who have paid their subscriptions, and a timely reminder to the consciences of those who have not.

This Journal contains the first MSG cave survey, somewhat overdue, of the 'W.S.R.S.' System, above Langdon Beck - to CRG Grade III. Willing surveyors (cavers who will stand around holding non-waterproof compasses, lengths of measuring line or chain, and little note books, while up to their necks in icy water) are reminded that the God's Bridge survey needs completing.

M.S.G. EXPEDITION TO RICHMOND COPPER MINES.

The only MSG meet in the last two months of 1967 - the old copper mines at Richmond are one of the few places of speleological interest accessible without crossing any grazing land, during the foot-and-mouth epidemic.

The Copper Mine is situated on the W. bank of the Swale about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile upstream from Richmond Bridge. There have been two levels, only one of which remains open (although the actual entrance arch has fallen).

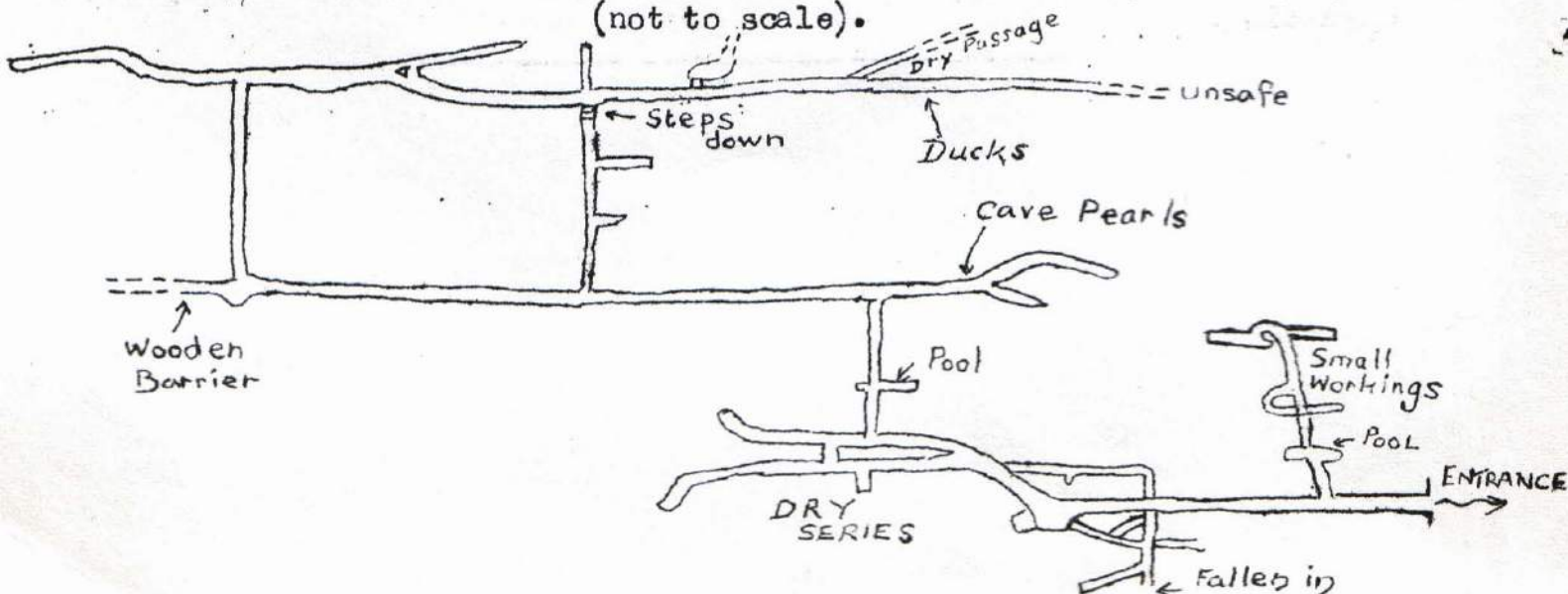
Entering the level, a few yards in, there is a branch passage on the r., from which the small stream which emerges from the level flows. This leads to a pool, with beyond a small rising passage, where the stream appears from rubble. Beyond are some small passages, one a hands-and-knees crawl in water. All soon end.

Continuing up the main level, a rather complex series of dry passages, some interconnecting, of no great length, are found. One passage leads to a 'T'-junction (see sketch plan). On the r. here the passage becomes wet, and ends in an 'aven', with some good cave pearls on a wall shelf nearby. To the l., the passage continues, leading to the 'further reaches' of the mine, incompletely explored by the three wet-suited members of the party. These passages, in places quite large, have chest-deep water, and occasional high rifts in the roof with rotting wooden stemples leading up to higher levels of mine working. What seemed to be the main passage was blocked by wooden boards, the climbing-over or removal of which was deemed unwise due to masses of unstable rock supported on ancient timbers, overhead. The unstable state of the roof terminated exploration of various other passages in this series. In one section of passage (which seemed to be running back towards the totally collapsed mine entrance) was a 'duck', with only a few inches airspace.

Various interesting formations and fungi were noted in the further reaches of the mine, along with profuse bright blue and green staining on the walls due to copper ores.

It was thought unwise to climb into any of the upper levels, as these must be very dangerous, with 'false' rubble floors supported only by timbers in an advanced state of decomposition, over the lower wet levels.

Sketch Plan of Richmond Copper Mine
as far as explored by MSG 27/12/67
(not to scale).



M.S.G. MEETS REPORTS.

A list of MS G meets between February and August 1967 was printed in the August newsletter. In the following pages, accounts of some of these meets, and those later in the year, are printed.

CLIFF BECK.

Expeditions 3/2/67 and 3/4/67.

The 'Buttertubs Pass' road from Hawes to Swaledale descends to Thwaite and Muker along the western edge of the deep and narrow valley of Cliff Beck, a tributary of the Swale. Near the head of the ravine, high on the west side, on either side of the road, are the well known Buttertubs, groups of vertical shafts, up to 60' in depth, some taking small streams.

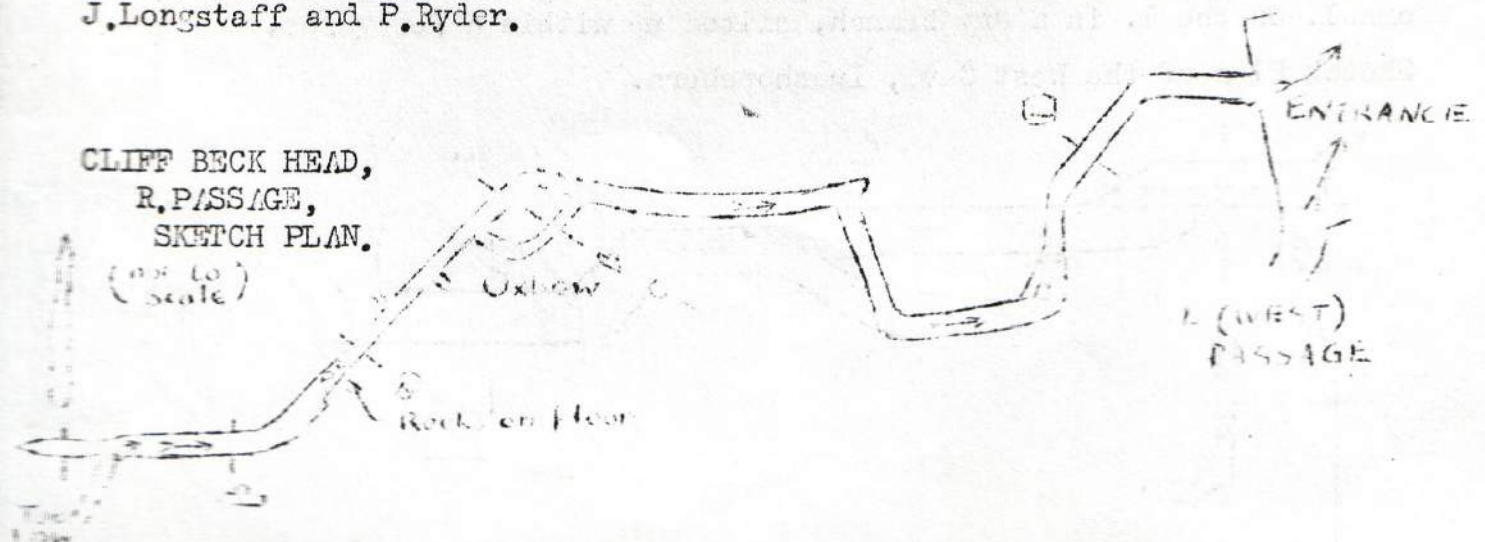
Less well known is the resurgence for these sinks - at the foot of the Main Limestone in the valley bottom. Here a large stream rises, and joins the small stream flowing down the valley (this sinks in dry weather). A hundred yards or so below the confluence, on the east side of the valley, is a second, larger, rising, Cliff Force, which considerably swells the volume of Cliff Beck.

MSG members first investigated the rising below the Buttertubs - since then known to us as Cliff Beck Head - on 3.2.67 (Party: J.Cooper, A.Holmes, N.Edwards, S.Peaurt, P.Ryder). Directly inside the wide low entrance recess are two passages, the larger on the l. Streams emerge from both passages. The l.hand entrance was first entered - a hands-and-knees crawl, turning r. a few feet in, in about a foot of water. There is one higher section where one may stoop for a yard or two, but beyond, the roof drops again, and exploration was concluded some 70' in, due to lack of airspace.

The second, smaller entrance, at first sight less promising than the first, proved to lead to a greater length of cave. The passage is generally a hands-and-knees, or elbows-and-knees crawl, more a tube than a bedding plane, with a few inches of water. After several sharp turns, some distance from the entrance, a dry but tight ox-bow bypasses an impassably low section of the stream passage. Beyond, the passage narrows, with a very small inlet on the l. Exploration was concluded here, and resumed two months later by J.Longstaff and P.Ryder.

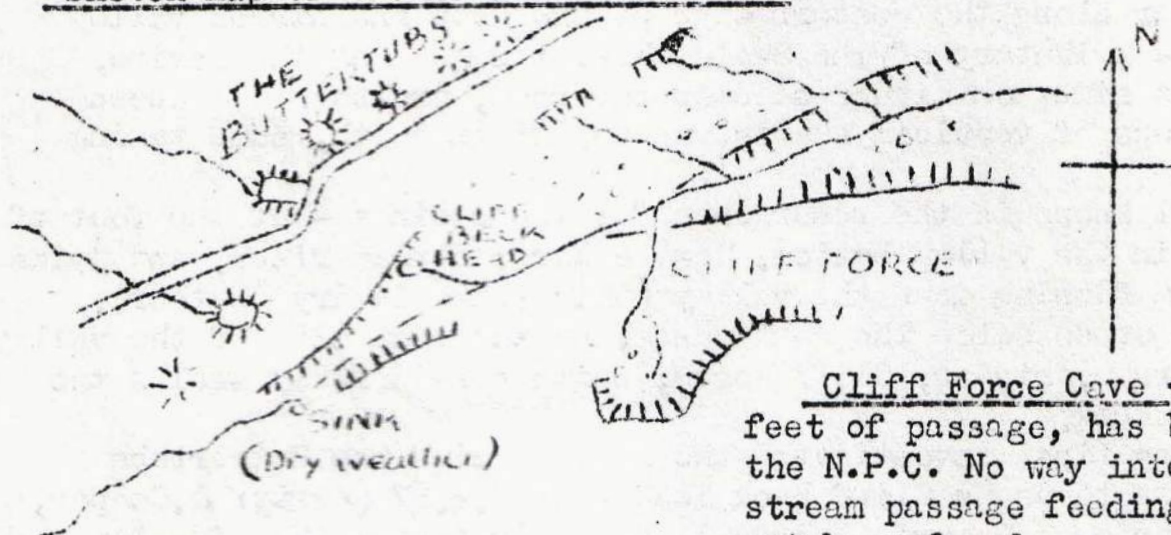
CLIFF BECK HEAD,
R.PASSAGE,
SKETCH PLAN.

(not to
scale)



A large rock lying in the passage forces a tight squeeze, between jagged walls which easily tear boiler suits. The passage then widens, swin s r., and for a few yards is decidedly wet. Beyond, the stream emerges from an impassably low bedding plane on the l., and on the r. is a narrow fissure, which suprisingly opens into a narrow but high aven. This was climbed for some 20', from where it could be seen that it closed down to impassably narrow rifts. The aven is approx. (such estimates must be very rough) 200' from the entrance.

Sketch Map of the Head of Cliff Beck.



Cliff Force Cave - a few hundred feet of passage, has been dug out by the N.P.C. No way into the main stream passage feeding the rising has yet been found.

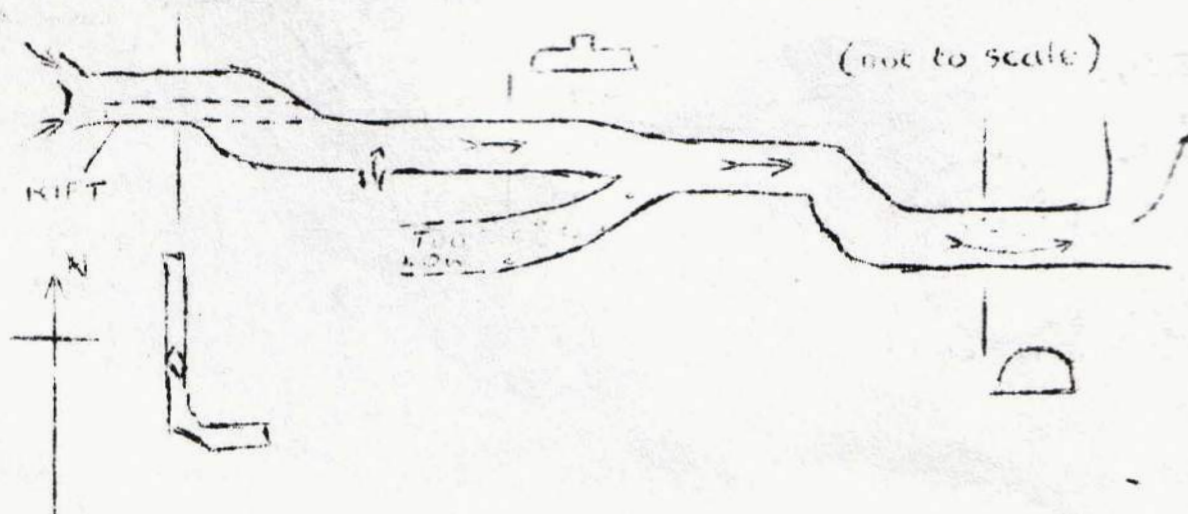
CLINTS CAVES, IRESHOPEBURN.

18/3/67.

One of the headwaters of Ireshopeburn, Grooves Cleugh, plunges over the Great (Main) Limestone as a waterfall, in a narrow gorge (at the south end of Clints Craggs). At either side of the entrance to this little gorge is a small cave entrance, each facing the other, and each discharging a small stream.

The west cave starts off as a low arched tunnel, where one can stoop, somewhat like a mine level, soon lowering to a hands-and-knees crawl. On the l. is a dry branch, silted up within a few yards.

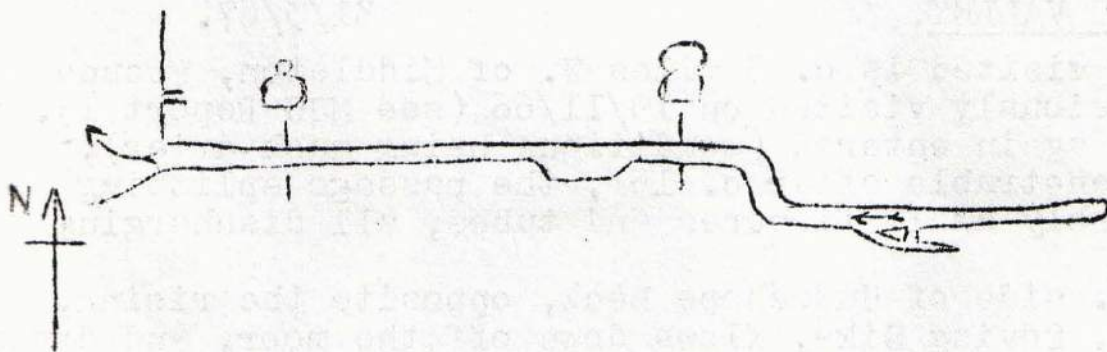
Sketch Plan of the West Cave, Ireshopeburn.



The main passage continues as a wet crawl, with near its end, where it becomes too low, a narrow 15' high rift providing enough space for one or two cavers to stand up out of the water. This is apparently what is referred to as a 'chamber' in 'P.U.'

The east cave is a small stream passage of a different type, with a 'figure of eight' cross-section, compared with the wider low bedding plane of the west cave. The passage becomes a wet crawl, and suddenly ends with the roof dropping into the water. What is doubtless the sink for this cave was found on the limestone plateau above Clints Craggs.

Sketch Plan of the East Cave, Ireshopeburn.



Each of these caves, according to 'P.U.', is 200' long. A third cave, 25' long (dry) is in the bank of Grooves Cleugh above the waterfall was seen but not entered through lack of time.

SWINDALEHEAD CAVE

25, 28/3/67, 3/8/67.

This attractive small cave is not widely known, although several parties from various clubs have explored it.

The entrance to the cave is on the N. side of a small limestone gorge on Swindale Beck (NGR 815.188.), above a rising in the face of the cliff. The entrance leads down into the stream passage, roomy for a few feet, then dropping to a brief but wet crawl under a leaf of rock. Beyond this is a 'stooping' passage - a circular tube with a narrow vadose trench. This lowers, before suddenly opening into a roughly circular chamber 15 - 20' high, with suprisingly fine formations all around. A high rift on the l. ends within a few yards, but on the r. is a low arch, immediately opening into a second chamber, similar in dimensions and formations to the first. A small stream (not the whole stream which rises below the cave, and is seen further on) enters the chamber down a 10' waterfall, easily climbed. Above is a small profusely decorated streamway, lowering and swinging l. to a hands-and-knees crawl in a shallow canal. This ends, and the way on is through a low muddy bedding plane, somewhat obstructed with a forest of

calcite pillars. Beyond these the crawl slopes down to a larger passage, with stream. Downstream (beneath the crawl) is choked. Upstream the roof drops, and one is forced to crawl flat in the stream, which after a few yards can be seen flowing from an impassably low and narrow fissure.

The length of Swindalehead Cave is probably around three or four hundred feet. Nearby is another cave entrance, also discharging a small stream, which, however, can be seen sinking close at hand. This cave is, after a yard or so, a low wet crawl, which has been forced for c.50' (the sink cannot be much further). The sink for the main cave is not apparent near the gorge.

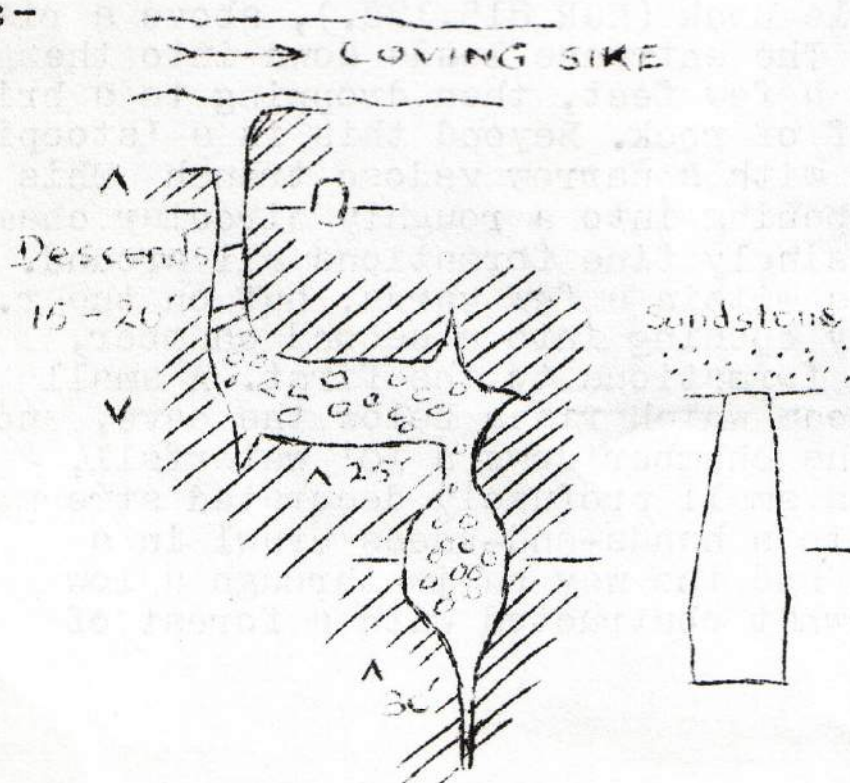
UPPER HUDESHOPE VALLEY.

31/3/67.

The area visited is c. 3 miles N. of Middleton, around the rising previously visited on 19/11/66 (see MSG Report 1). The rising was again entered (conditions being much drier), but proved impenetrable after c. 15', the passage splitting up into impassably small fissures and tubes, all discharging water.

On the W. side of Hudeshope Beck, opposite the rising, a small stream, Coving Sike, flows down off the moor, and drops over the limestone as a 20' waterfall. It was noticed that this was almost dry, with the stream emerging from a variety of tiny cracks and tubes at the base of the fall. The little gorge above the fall was entered, with difficulty, and the Sike was found sinking on its S. bank. The sink consists of a rift, with the stream falling c.8' into a pool, with no way on above water.

A little further upstream, at the top of the limestone, another opening was found on the S. bank - obviously a former sink. This is the entrance to a small cave dubbed Coving Sike Pot:-



COVING SIKE POT
Sketch Plan.

PR/CC.

About 50 yards east of Blue John Hole, on the surface, the party found a small circular pothole from which could be heard running water - not one of the two holes which connect with the cave. Ladder was about to be sent for when a second small hole was found nearby, which, via a mud slope, led to the bottom of the pothole, and a stream passage, with the stream emerging from a sump (doubtless the downstream end of that previously encountered in the cave - it cannot be very long). The stream passage of this part of the system, 'Blue John II', is rather lower than in the main cave, and continues for c.80' to a second sump.

Further east still is a third opening in the limestone. This is choked with boulders after c.20', and is notable only in that it contains a foot long stalactite.

WINDMORE END CAVE.

3/8/67.

The entrance to this cave, which had on previous occasions been sought in vain, was found in a small hollow near the NE corner of the walled field directly east of Windmore End Farm. A small hole, normally covered by slabs, drops down onto a slope of loose rocks, leading down into a rift passage of impressive proportions. The floor slopes down to a muddy pool, then rises up three steep muddy slopes, to a point where the rift, previously dead straight, bends slightly to the r. The passage widens slightly, with a few short stalactites, and then a 20' chimney down must be negotiated to the floor of the final section of the rift, ending in a mud choke after c.40'.

At several points in the main rift narrow cross-rifts lead off. Two of these, both on the l. side (going in) are penetrable for a few yards before becoming too tight. A third side passage leads off the rift a few yards from the entrance, not at right angles but running diagonally back towards the surface. This passage slopes downhill to a very narrow squeeze (passable by smaller cavers only), then turns l., and ends in a 10' wide chamber, with no further passages.

Windmore End Cave is entirely a cross-rift system, with no trace of any stream passages. This is unfortunate, since the cave lies midway between Swindale Pots and their resurgence. Party: C.Carson, J.Longstaff, P.Robinson, P.Ryder.

In a small shakehole a few feet west of the entrance to Windmore End Cave, a little stream sinks in wet weather. This is seen again drizzling from the roof of one of the impassably narrow cross-rifts.

OTHER EXPEDITIONS.

29/4/67 Mongo Gill Hole - Entered by the North Shaft, a 50' pitch. The system is said to be very complex, and so it proved. A long passage with many, unfortunately rather dirty, stalagmite pillars and other formations, was at length found and explored. Photography was for once successful.

13/5/67 Littondale - Dowkerbottom Cave was found, impressive in the size of its chambers and passages, but not very long. Sleets Gill Cave was inspected with interest - the stream passage was not found - , and one passage of Scoska Cave was followed to its bitter end (this was extremely destructive to knees and general morale). Eight cavers were present on this trip.

10/6/67 Borrowdale Beck Head - Enough was seen of this in two hours to confirm all rumours as to the general tightness and wetness of the cave, though only a fraction of the rumoured length was covered. Dangerous in wet weather.

15/7/67 Kisdon Cave - Ideas of digging the final choke were abandoned, but a previously unknown-to-us passage off the chamber on the l. side of the mine level was found and followed to a large rock, which proved immobile, although the way on beyond could be seen. All very low, muddy and depressing.

30/7/67 Bar Pot - was successfully descended, and various of the passages of the Gaping Ghyll system explored. Normally a dry pot, is not so after heavy rain.

6/8/67 Thackthwaite Beck Cave - a resurgence in the Undersett limestone. After a chamber with some formations is a maze of boulder chokes, in which it is very easy to become lost. Length about 2000'.

12/8/67 Swinale Potts.

13/8/67 Alum Pot and Long Churn. Alum Pot was descended, via Lower Long Churn, and Upper Long Churn was explored.

17/8/67 Mallerstang - Jingling Sike Cave was 'found' - without knowing that it was first explored a year or so ago by the N.P.C. A week later two members returned and enjoyed a trip through (or rather, in and out at both ends of) this little through system - which for 90% of the way is a flat crawl in icy water over jagged stones.

18/8/67 Swinnergill - Exploration in ramifications of old mine workings.

20/8/67 Simpsons Pot - Descended to the top of Aven Pot, the last pitch.

26/8/67. Swindale Pots.

Week on Mendip - see separate report.

14/9/67. Kingsdale Master Cave - using the new entrance, quite an impressive cave, no difficulties (one 17' pitch).

22/9/67 and assorted later dates, Beck Cave. for further details see elsewhere.

HOPE LEVEL FOUR FATHOM MINE CAVE, STANHOPE.

An MSG trip to this cave was held on 4th April 1967. A fortnight or so later two members returned, to retrieve a hammer dropped in the cave, and found that a Cambridge University Party were installing a laser-beam seismograph in the mine level, and were gating the entrance. Access to the cave, for the time being, is extremely difficult.

Hope Level is entered through an arched portal in a blockhouse-like structure, from which a stream flows. The first section of the level is arched in stonework, but further in the level is cut in the solid rock, and much roomier than the average lead level.

A little over 2,000' in, the level has cut through a stream passage cave in the Four Fathom (Undersett) Limestone. The stream now emerges from a hole c.4' up in the l. wall of the level, and almost opposite, at a similar height, is the now dry downstream passage. Beyond the cave the level continues, then splits up. All the branches soon end, some in high rifts with rotting wooden ladders rising into the gloom above.

Entering the 'upstream' active part of the cave, by scrambling up through a muddy hole, a narrow but high (c.20') passage is found. The stream flows quietly over the floor, between muddy walls, and there are no formations. As one continues along this passage, more and more boulder piles, and huge leaning rock flakes, are met. Some of the boulder piles are climbed over, and one walks c.15' above the stream. After several easy climbs up and down, a rather more difficult 15' climb (a rope is helpful on the return journey) is met, opening into a wide chamber, flat-roofed, and floored with boulders. Here there are a few small stalactites.

Beyond the chamber is another scramble down to the stream again, and the passage continues to another chamber, this time at stream level, where mineral veinlets are seen. The stream passage then swings r., and becomes smaller, in places necessitating hands-and-knees crawling. Further on the passage becomes more roomy again, but wider and lower than before, with mudbanks on either side of the stream.

This part of the cave suddenly ends where the stream flows out of a very low bedding plane. The larger passage, mud-floored, continues for a short distance further, with at its end the only

way on being down a small hole in the floor, not very inviting, into a wide and low wet crawl (also enterable by following the stream). This crawl soon ends in a higher narrower passage again. Beyond, walking and stooping alternate with short flat-out crawls in the water. The third section of crawling is longer, and contains a right-angled bend. An easier crawl floored by shallower water follows, with one low arch, opening suddenly into the final chamber of the cave, bestrewn with large boulders.

At the far end of the chamber an opening leads up into 'The Glory Hole', a small dome-like chamber formed in the shale above the limestone. One wall of this chamber is adorned with a magnificent cascade of translucent orange and red streaked flowstone, with colourful stalactites above.

In the chamber from which the 'Glory Hole' opens, the stream emerges from a low opening in the r. wall. This leads to a flat crawl, which must be done on ones back, due to lack of airspace. After a few yards it enlarges somewhat, and ends in a constricted sump - too tight to pass, although airspace can be felt beyond. On the l. is a dry low crawl. This runs back towards the 'Glory Hole', with which it connects by a tiny fissure. The crawl then becomes too low, although a slope leading down to water, presumably the stream beyond the sump, can be seen ahead. A little work here might yield an extension.

Returning to the mine level - the upstream part of the cave is a little over 2,000' long - the downstream passage can be entered. This is at first roomy and dry, but soon becomes increasingly choked, with low muddy crawls under unstable boulder piles. The limit of exploration seems to be little over a hundred yards from the level.

The former resurgence of the cave stream - it now flows out of the level - is unknown. A well known authority on northern caves suggests that the water may have reappeared in the bed of the Wear between Stanhope and Frosterley, where the Four Fathom Limestone dips below ground level.

The cave was surveyed by the N.P.C. in 1954 up to the upstream crawls. These were dug out and explored in 1959 by members of the Durham Cave Club.

In general, this is an interesting system, the general lack of formations being compensated for by the magnificent little 'Glory Hole' at the far end. The MSG party (C.Carson, N.Edwards, J.Longstaff, S.Peaurt, P.Robinson, P.Ryder, B.Talbot and J.Wilson, transport J.Cooper) were underground for 5½ hours. The only parts of the cave which present any difficulty or unpleasantness are the 15' climb, and the final wet crawls.

The length of the cave is c.35' and the depth c.25'. The passage is quite roomy before suddenly closing to a slit.

THE W.S.R.S. SYSTEM, LANGDON BECK.

The first visit to this cave was made on 22/4/67, and later trips, for surveying purposes, have been on 13/7/67 and 19/9/67. The stream seen in the cave is that which emerges below, and is seen in, Moking Hurth. The sink (impenetrable) is at the edge of the limestone plateau.

A shallow shakehole, beside a larger rocky one, contains the entrance, a narrow 26' shaft. A ladder is perhaps not absolutely essential, but is a great help. Descending, one lands in a rift passage, closing down to the north, and a yard or two to the south forming a 't'-junction with a second rift. To the r. here is too narrow (daylight is visible), and to the l. soon ends, but before it does so there is a tube in the r. (south) wall. This, a short muddy crawl, opens out into the side of the stream passage, where there is an easy 10' descent to the stream. Downstream the stream flows away, after a few yards, through an impassably small fissure, but at a higher level is a passage, which soon becomes too tight.

Upstream, the passage is high but narrow, and a large stalagmite flow forces one to crawl in the stream for a few feet, before another 'T'-junction is reached. To the r. is a fairly roomy passage which soon ends, after splitting into two. To the l., upstream, the passage continues, spacious, with attractive formations. At one point the streamway swings r., and straight ahead there is an inlet, almost blocked by stalgmite, which continues for c.50' to an aven, where a little water enters, probably from the surface.

Further up the stream passage is a small chamber, with more formations. Soon after this the passage becomes a hands and knees crawl, with in places crawls through and under wedged blocks. After c.200', and some interesting little helictites, there is a short higher section. Beyond this is the final passage, almost straight, with one or two very low sections, awkward on the return journey, which must be made feet first. The passage ends impassably narrow.

The total length of this attractive little system is a little over 600' - and there is no feature meriting a grade higher than 'Moderate', or perhaps 'Difficult' for larger cavers who have just fought their way back up the narrow and jagged sided entrance shaft.

TAILBRIGG POTS AND BLUE JOHN HOLE.

22/7/67.

Tailbrigg Pots lie along the east edge of the plateau of the Main Limestone, north of Hollow Mill Cross and the Keld - Kirkby Stephen road, just west of the Eden/Swale watershed. Some of the pots are sinks, taking small streams flowing off Lamps Moss.

The main sink of the group (very little water goes down) is known as Hollow Mill Pot. The first pitch mentioned in 'P.U.', 22', can be bypassed by a simple scramble down the open pot. From here a water-polished rock chute leads down to the main pitch, a somewhat spiral shaft, providing a ladder climb of about 75', with no particular difficulty. The only passage at the base of the pot is a very narrow rift, ending in mud and gravel after c.30'.

The pothole due north of Hollow Mill Pot was also descended. The main shaft, in a large rocky shakehole, provides a mostly free-hanging 65' ladder pitch, onto a pile of boulders, sheep remains, and other assorted debris. There are no lateral passages, except a smaller shaft in the same shakehole which joins the main one halfway down.

At the north end of the Tailbrigg limestone plateau is the deeply incised valley of Dunkerdale, through which flows Rigg Beck. Where the Beck flows onto the limestone it sinks in its bed, and resurges at the foot of the limestone cliff at the head of the ravine-like part of the valley. The resurgence is from a scree slope (as is another, possibly that for Tailbrigg Pots, nearby), but, in the rock above, are two or three small cave entrances. These proved disappointing, merely interconnecting in a few yards of small passage, with the stream audible somewhere below. On the north flank of Dunkerdale, above the cliffs, are some small impenetrable sinks.

Blue John Hole lies on the Swaledale side of the watershed, about 150' lower than and half a mile SE of Tailbrigg Pots. A largish stream flows onto a small inlier of the Main Limestone, and cascades over boulders into a large cave mouth. The cave consists of a well-developed stream passage, the first part lit by two openings from the surface (a sheep found in the cave, and rescued, must have fallen down one of these). The passage, somewhat winding, suddenly ends in a small chamber, and a few yards of wide lower passage, with 4' deep water, to a sump. A small passage in the wall of the chamber above the sump merely leads to a small muddy aven. The length of this part of the cave is c.150'.

Other New Discoveries in the Northern Dales.

Various other caving clubs, notably the Northern Pennine, have been at work in areas to the north of the 'classic' area of Craven. The M.S.G. have received their copy of the Northern Pennine Club 'Journal', Summer 1967, which contains reports on the discovery and exploration of the following caves, north of Wensleydale

Great Sleddale Pots. 827.988. In a rather inaccessible region of the headwaters of the Swale. One of the pots is c.70' deep. All the sinks resurge nearby.

Ackrey Gill Cave (Cotterdale) 820.951. Shaft N. of the sink of the Gill, 50' pitch. Over 800' of narrow stream passage.

Dry Gill Cave. 821.944. Length 300'+.

Needlehouse Gill Risings. 738.972. On the western slopes of Wild Boar Fell. Length c.100', loose blocks.

Featherbed Pot 750.997. Length c.50'.

Chert Cave. 734.971. Length 1571'. In jagged rock, partly crawling.

Green Rigg Pot. 736.989. Length 500'+. 50' entrance pitch, low crawls connect large chambers, then small stream passage.

Eden Sike Cave. 782.970. Length c.1500'. On Mallerstang. Resurgence cave, in places tight and jagged.

Jingling Sike Cave. 787.966. Length c. 1000'. A 'through trip', all but a few yards being low, wet and uncomfortable.

On the eastern flank of Mallerstang, north of these caves, are several small sinks and pots in the Main Limestone (also investigated by M.S.G. members). Their resurgence is choked, but one pothole is c.40' deep (best done on a 25' ladder).

Cliffe Force Cave. 882.960. Near the 'Buttertubs'. For details see M.S.G. Expedition reports. Extensively dug by N.P.C., with no real success. Now about 400' of passage.

GOD'S BRIDGE CAVES, GRETADALE

God's Bridge Caves (also described in MSG Newsletter, Aug. 67), are situated beside the River Greta about two and a half miles wet (upstream) of Bowes. God's Bridge is a natural limestone arch over the river bed (across which passes the Pennine Way), a relic of the roof of a former cave.

In wet weather the Greta flows entirely on the surface, beneath the Bridge. In drier conditions the river sinks in its bed, into gravel, three hundred yards or so upstream from the Bridge, and appears again a similar distance downstream from the Bridge, from tumbled blocks beneath a low crag. Three or four hundred yards further downstream the Greta sinks again, into various narrow and choked fissures in its bed. The second resurgence, at the base of the limestone, is about a quarter of a mile nearer Bowes, and is from beneath grass and tree roots on the south side of the river bed.

There are two entrances to the cave through which the Greta, on the western of its two subterranean sections, flows. This is God's Bridge, first explored by the Durham Cave Club - with an extension claimed by the M.S.G.

The eastern of the cave entrances is in the western corner of a small disused quarry on the N. bank of the Greta, about two hundred yards east of God's Bridge. The small entrance drops down into a low chamber, with beyond c. 200' of low, wide and extremely filthy crawl, ending in a narrower section, and a 'T'-junction with a large passage, c. 15' wide and c. 4' high, through which flows the River. Downstream (to the r.) the passage lowers to a wet crawl (first passed by MSG members?), which probably sumps in wet weather. Beyond the roof rises again, and the passage continues, very winding, and often high enough to permit easy walking. There are assorted complex ox-bows, side passages and avens. After a few hundred feet the passage ends in a sump.

Upstream from the entrance crawl the streamway continues, wide but only high enough for stooping, with more complicated ox-bows, and occasional narrow avens (probably beneath the shake-holes in the field above). A low bedding plane on the l. leads into a winding flat-out crawl, which, after a tight upward squeeze and a small chamber, opens via another squeeze onto the river bank a few yards from the Bridge - the second entrance. Continuing upstream, on the l. is a crawl up a shingle bank into a small chamber, or broad aven, with two suprising slender stalagnites. The stream flows from beneath a low rock curtain, with beyond a hands-and-knees crawl in a wide but low cave, which soon becomes higher again. On the l. here is a tight tubular passage leading to a small aven. The stream passage suddenly ends in a rock wall, with the stream flowing from a narrow and very wet fissure on the l., which can be followed for a few yards, via a duck and two sharp bends, until it sumps.

The total length of the cave must be over a thousand feet. In wet conditions, when the Greta is flowing on the surface, the cave may still be enterable, via the tight western entrance, but most of the stream passage will be flooded to the roof (as will the eastern entrance crawl). The cave, especially the downstream reaches, may be dangerous in unsettled weather.

In the same disused quarry as the eastern entrance of the cave is a second, rather larger opening, which leads into a series of mostly dry mud-floored passages, mainly hands-and-knees crawls, which have a second entrance in the river-bank near the resurgence. One crawl leads to a section of low streamway directly behind the resurgence, which terminates upstream in a sump.

Other Caves.

A few feet upstream from the Bridge, on the south side of the river bed, is a small cave entrance, which in wet weather discharges a considerable flow of water, but in dry weather only a trickle, if at all. This cave, low, narrow and wet, has been forced for c. 90', until it became too low (by MSG members messrs. Carson and Wilson).

A hundred yards or so further SW, some distance from the river bank, is a very tight fissure (passable by small cavers only) which leads into a small stream passage, doubtless part of the same system as the cave mentioned above. Upstream, this divides into a dry and a wet branch, both becoming too low. Downstream the passage was not forced.

There are no entrances to the second underground section of the Greta.

M.S.G. MENDIP HOLIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3-9, 1967.

Report by C.Carson.

Sunday Sept. 3rd. G.B. CAVE.

This cave provided a pleasant introduction to Mendip caving. After changing in a barn - unaccustomed luxury by Yorkshire standards - the twin locked doors on the entrance blockhouse were opened. The Mud Passage route, sloping steeply downwards, gave easy access to the Gorge, where a hasty sortie was made upstream to see the Tynings Swallet stream entering the cave from a boulder choke. The Gorge was then descended to the Main Chamber, the dimensions and formations of which impressed us all. The Chamber, however, flatters only to deceive, and soon we were in the narrow Sump Dig Extension and the end of the passage. Upon return from this point we made straight for the Ladder Dig Extension - again having to unlock twin padlocks! A devious route through a boulder choke and a little searching eventually resulted in our finding Bat Passage, where we were all overcome by the pure whiteness and profusion of the formations, and spent a considerable time in taking photographs. After retracing our steps a little way a tight upward climb gave access to the Main Chamber of the Extension - again impressive in both size, and wealth of formations. Upon return, about three quarters of an hour were spent in attempting to find a route out from the boulder choke into the 'old cave'. The route is now indelibly fixed on all our minds. Party: C.Carson, G.Langthorne, P.Robinson, J.Wilson.

Monday Sept. 4th. SWILDONS I, IV & II.

Wet suits were donned in Maines Barn, and our shillings paid to Mr Maine the farmer, who was interested to hear that we were from the north, and expressed his doubts as to our route finding ability. I assured him that I was well acquainted with our route, and we set off across the fields to the pleasantly situated swallet entrance.

The Wet Way gave speedy access to the Water Rift, and the 40' Pot. Alas, the famous pipe had been removed, and O.C.Lloyd, we later heard, had blasted a hole above the pitch so that the water sank and reappeared 10' from the bottom - except in winter when the water level is higher. The 20' Pot was easily negotiated, as were the Double Pots, into which unfortunately no-one fell. We all then admired the flowstone of Barne's Loop, and pressed on to Tratman's Temple, and into St Paul's Series. The water level in Mud Sump was fairly low, and Paradise Regained was easily accessible. En route to Blue Pencil Passage, Shatter Pot was noted, and the Greasy Chimney climbed by all (eventually). Fault chamber was visited, and then the very constricted and awkward Blue Pencil Passage was descended, and the party attained Swildons IV, and wallowed in its delights. After looking at Sumps III and IV a snack was taken before Blue Pencil was reascended.

A traverse above the head of Blue Pencil Passage brought us to the Double Troubles (two static sumps) which took about twenty minutes to

syphon and bale. Once through, the somewhat muddied formations of Doomed Grotto and Crystal Passage were admired. After almost losing two of the party in Birthday Squeeze, Vicarage Passage was entered, and the Pit, with rawlbolt and handline leading down to the Landing in Swildons II, was negotiated by abseil. Here my electric failed, and a few minutes were spent in lighting a carbide with a wet flint. Sump II was looked at, and then Sump I was dived by all. After relighting my carbide we all made for the surface again - getting lost at the top of Jacob's Ladder on the Short Dry Way, and finding our way to the top of the Wet Way via Kenney's Dig.

Party: C.Carson, G.Langthorne, P.Robinson, J.Wilson.

Tuesday Sept. 5th. LAMB LEER.

On Monday evening we were joined by our secretary, and his account of Tuesday's trip follows:-

After a search in thick bracken, a small railed enclosure around an iron plate set in the ground was discovered, with a little notice informing us that this was Lamb Leer Cavern. Complicated manoeuvres culminated in the triumphant unlocking of a hidden padlock, and the disclosure of a dark hole beneath the iron plate. The party safely descended this mined shaft, with the aid of a 60' fixed ladder, into a small muddy mined chamber, with three passages radiating off, only the largest being natural. This large winding passage was followed downhill to a chamber containing a large and now muddied stalagmite boss, known as the 'Beehive'. Here a muddy side passage was briefly explored, and the party then returned to the main route. This roomy tunnel suprisingly ends in an old winch platform, a '30 m.p.h.' sign, with a black void beyond. 75' of ladder were belayed to the platform, and thrown down into the darkness. One by one the party descended the swaying ladder, their lights casting flickering shadows across the tiers of stalactites which adorn the walls of this, the largest cavern in the Mendips. The pitch is about 70', and the ladder hangs free all the way. After solid ground, in the form of the sloping boulder floor of the dome-like cavern, had been attained by all, various side passages were explored. One, a muddy crawl at the head of 20' of fixed iron ladder, was hastily vacated on suspicion of bad air. Another, at the top of a ramshackle erection of ancient scaffolding and rotting wooden ladders, leads to a steep slope down into a large chamber, named the 'Cave of Falling Waters', and inappropriately dry. Here muddy calcite flows compelled further photography - several members had been submitted to the indignity of having their picture taken on the 70' pitch.

A return was made to the Main Chamber, and the 70' pitch swiftly ascended, with the aid of an enthusiastic party winding in the lifeline onto the winch. After each climber had been forcibly dragged up, off the ladder and halfway round the winch drum, breath was recovered, and within quarter of an hour the surface, and a pouring wet evening, were reached.

Party: C.Carson, G.Langthorne, P.Robinson, P.Ryder, J.Wilson.

Wednesday Sept 6th. (i) 2.00 am. PINETREE POT.

Geoff Langthorne and myself, after in just suggesting an early morning Pinetree trip, called each others' bluff, and found ourselves getting tackle together at 1.00 am. The huge shakehole entrance was soon found in the moonlight, and the twin-oildrum entrance pitch laddered. Pine Pitch was laddered and double-lined - quite a pleasant and impressive 36' pitch. Rumble Pitch, the Main Series and a tight squeeze are negotiated before 'Easy Street' - a tight and arduous crawl of 200'+, is reached. Geoff gave up in despair, but I pressed on to the third aven, before returning. We returned via the Wallow to Pine Pitch, and soon reached the surface, at about 3.30 am - the best trip of the whole week! Party: C.Carson, G.Langthorne.

(ii) pm. LONGWOOD/AUGUST SYSTEM.

After a morning ride to Stoke Lane, which was in spate and unenterable, we returned to Western Mendip and made for the Longwood Valley. After paying our shillings, and showing our Charterhouse permits to Mr Young, the tenant of the Lower Farm, we walked up the valley to the cave entrance. The entrance chimney was easily negotiated, but the L-shaped bedding plane squeeze annoyed those who had not been there before. Once down the Ten Foot Verticals we turned r. to the Boulder Chamber, towards August Series. Although there had been two days of heavy rain, the dreaded Wet Chimney turned out to be dry. The steeply descending stream passage - depleted of stream - which is so typical of Mendip, opens out into Fault Chamber, which descends for over 100' at a very steep angle to a junction with the Main Stream Passage. We went upstream first, and visited both Dry and Wet Galleries - the water providing a relief to previously dry wet-suited cavers - where water enters from the surface. Downstream, quite wet, is a very sporting passage with fine formations, small waterfalls and deep pools. A pleasant traverse adds to the variety. A quick sortie was made up Tributary Passage - a water connection with Longwood Series. Pressing on downstream, we all descended the 17' chimney to Reynold's Passage, tight and tortous, and accessible for some 200' or so dependant on ones girth.

A return was made upstream, up Fault Pitch, and up the 12' waterfall into Christmas Crawl - the connection with the Longwood Series Main Chamber. A traverse out of the Chamber took us to the foot of a tight upward climb which brought us out under the Showerbath in the Great Rift - which leads along to the Ten Foot Verticals, and the Entrance Series again. Party: C.Carson, G.Langthorne, P.Robinson, J.Wilson.

Friday Sept. 8th STOKE LANE SLOCKER.

After spending Thursday in the tourist-packed Cheddar Gorge, and leaving Geoff Langthorne in Bristol, we felt fit enough for another trip on Friday.

Three Axbridge C.G. members offered to lead us down Stoke Lane, assuring us that the route was difficult to find. They proved their point by taking fifteen minutes to find Browne's Passage which gives access to Sump I. After the delights of the plughole type entrance, the duck, and the Nutmeg Grater, we were faced with the Sump. Contrary to general expectations (Jim Eyre's article in the Speleologist had been read), the Sump was easily negotiated with instructions from our Axbridge friends, and Stoke II was reached.

From the Changing Room we climbed up into C.B. Chamber, and then passed through into Main Chamber - very impressive for its proportions and the size of its formations. The Traverse we found quite easy, and soon reached the Throne Room where gasps of incredulity and clicks of camera shutters were heard for some time. A squeeze then brought us into Boulder Chamber - again large and well decorated. After looking at the Charcoal stained boulder we descended rapidly to rejoin the Streamway at Sump II and Pool Chamber. A return was then made, and a snack of sardines consumed in the Main Chamber. A very refreshing trip.
Party: C. Carson, P. Robinson, J. Wilson.

Saturday Sept. 9th. ST CUTHBERT'S SWALLET.

Under our Bristol Exploration Club leader, Dave Irwin, we set off at a rapid pace down the tight entrance rift, then along a high rift passage to Arete Pitch, with a 20' fixed ladder, from which the two Ledge Pitches, also equipped with fixed ladders, lead down. Then follows the steeply descending Wire Rift at the end of which a 15' drop leads to the floor of Upper Mud Hall. Here we stopped for a breather, and discussed where to go, as this was to be a photographic trip. After seeing and photographing Pillar Chamber, Boulder Chamber, the Railway Tunnel, the Fingers and the Cascade, we descended to Sewer Passage and Plantation Junction, where the two active streams meet. Downstream via Beehive Chamber and Gour Hall we reached Gour Rift and The Duck. After a few more photographs a hasty return was made to the surface.

In all, a very pleasant week was had on Mendip, and our thanks must go to the Mendip Caving Group in whose cottage we were very comfortably housed. Also our gratitude must be expressed to Tony Knibbs - Meets Secretary of the M.C.G., who arranged Charterhouse Permits for us, and the trip down G.B. Cave.