

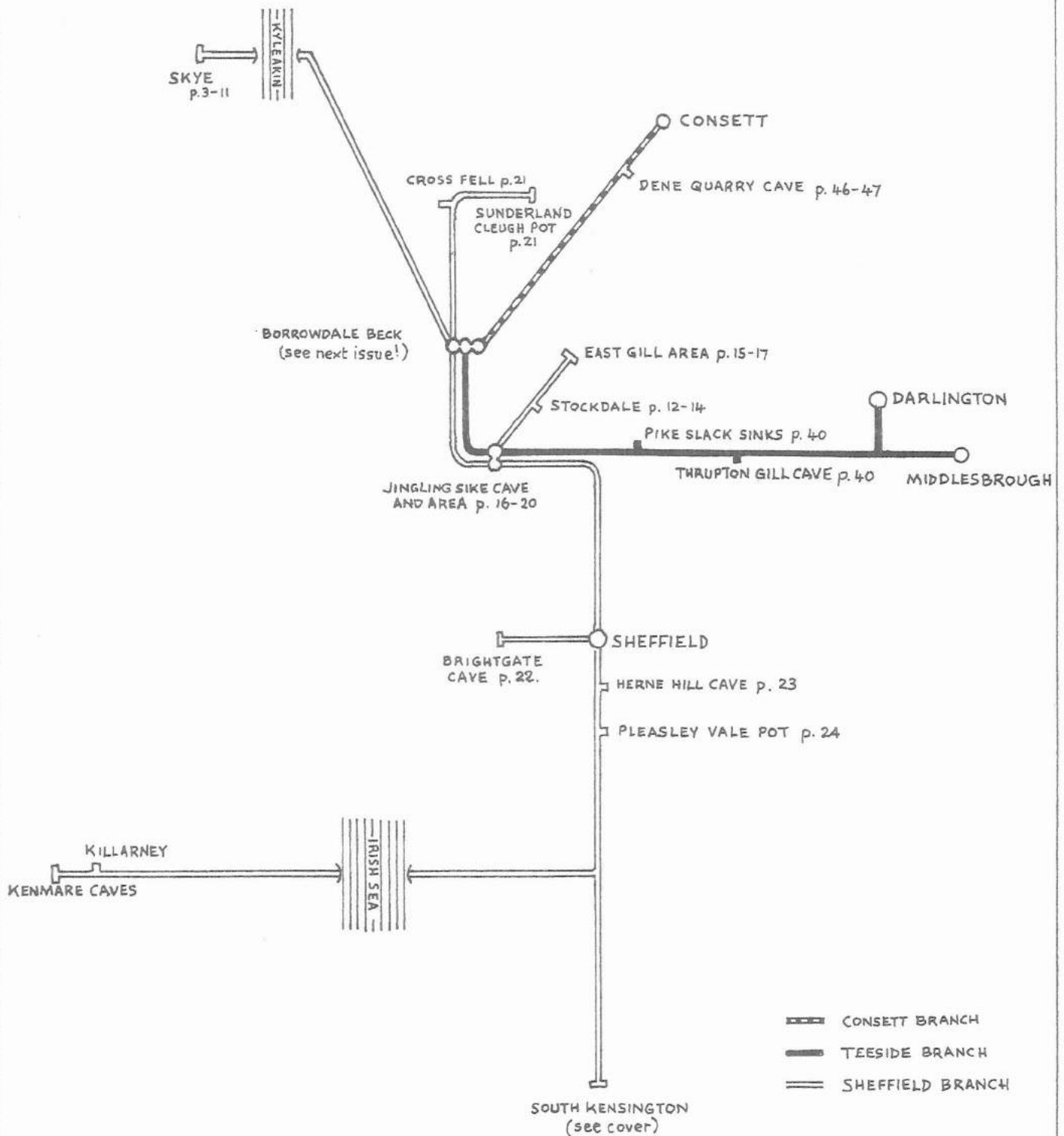
A black and white photograph of a man in a dark jumpsuit and a headlamp, standing in a tunnel. He is holding a small object in his raised right hand. On the wall behind him is a large clock and a rectangular light fixture. The tunnel has a semi-circular archway with a sunburst-like pattern of panels above the entrance. The floor is dark and has a white line running along the side.

**UNDER
GROUND
AGAIN!**

MSG 10

Underground Again

~ The Activities of the Moldywarps Speleo. Group ~
1978 ~ 1979



MOLDYWARFS SPELEOLOGICAL GROUP JOURNAL 10.

Editorial.

When the MSG ('warps' to initiates and friends') was formed, in the autumn of 1966, there were those who ascribed to it the usual longevity of small caving clubs - two or three years. Now, standing on a hill and looking back over thirteen years and ten journals, they have been proved wrong....

The exploration and survey work still goes on. This year we have turned our attentions, for the first time, to Ireland - and that other "outlying area" of the Northern Dales, the Isle of Skye, gets a few pages in this journal as well. Whilst meanwhile, back in the Askrigg Block, the searching, digging, thrutching and surveying still proceeds, weekend after weekend.

New readers, as yet without mud in their veins and limestone abrasions on their knees, can find out what it is all about by turning to p.43. Other delights include the truth on our surveying methods at last, and a speleo-crossword.

Enjoy it.

Pete Ryder

Warp Personnel.

Secretary: Graham Stevens, 4 Kingston Ave., Green Lane, Acklam, Middlesbrough, Cleveland. Tel. M'bro 83052

Editor: Pete Ryder, 147 Heavycote Road., Sheffield S10 1QF Tel. S.669388

Librarian. John Dale. 72 Hampden Street, South Bank, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS 6 6 IH Tel. M'bro 455034

(to whom all library correspondence should be addressed).

Contents.

Caves in the Isle of Skye 1978-9.	Arthur Champion, John Flewitt, Robin Sermon, Pete Ryder.	p.3-11
New Explorations in the Northern Dales.	Pete Ryder.	12-22
Two Caves in the Magnesian Limestone.	-	23-24
Ireland 1979.	-	25-37
Crossword Answers.		37
Safety Rules O.K?	Arthur Champion	38-39
Two Small Caves in Wensleydale.	John Dale.	40
MSG Surveys - the truth at last!	Graham Stevens.	40-42
What is Oleospelolgy?	Anon.	43-45
Dene Quarry Cave - The Story of a Dig.	Keith Errington.	46-47
Speleocrossword.	Peter Armstrong.	48
MSG publications for sale.		49.

Typing and illustrations Pete Ryder, Printing organisation Peter Armstrong, Thanks to all others who have helped and tolerated, especially,

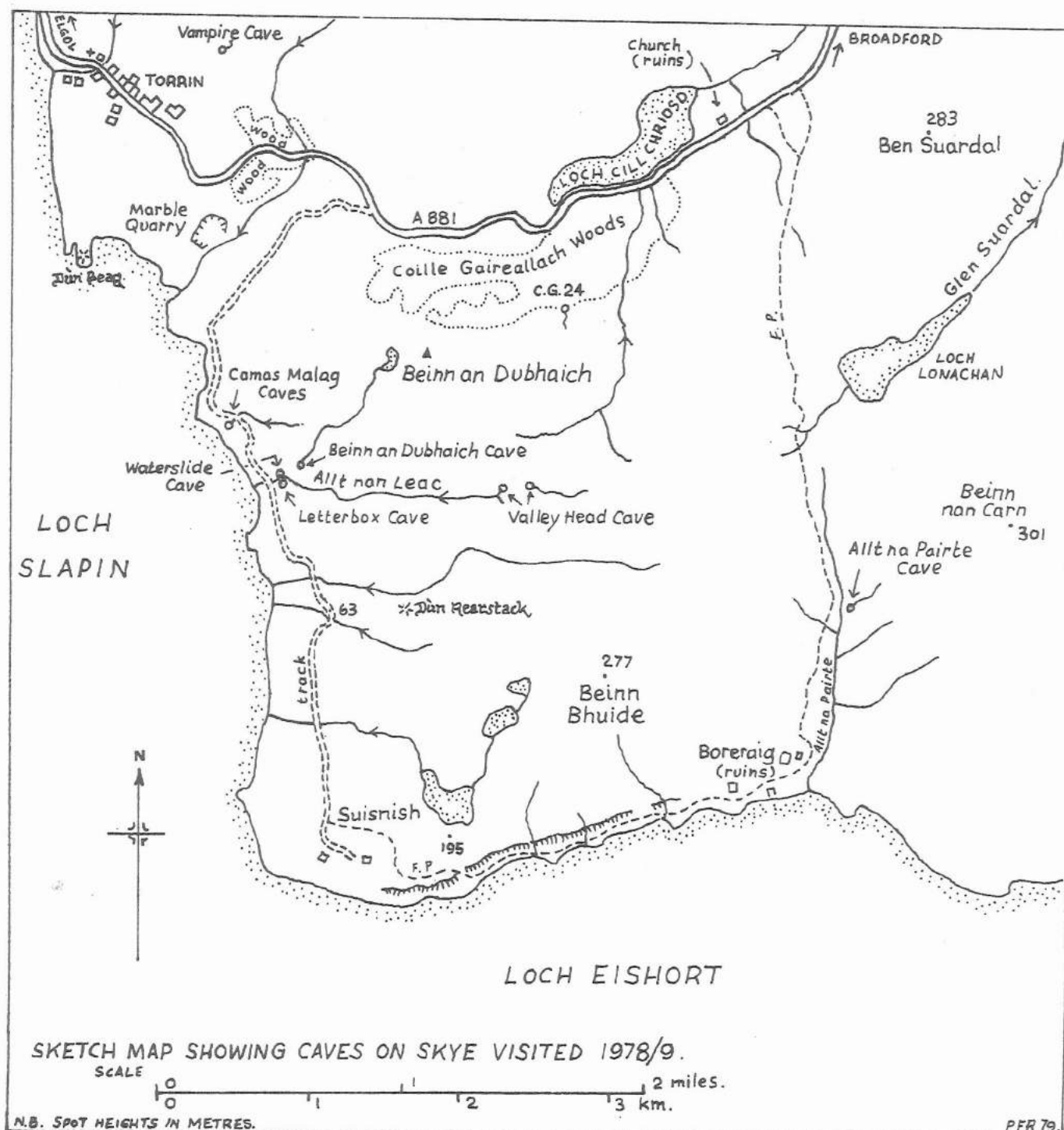
Strange Behaviour in a Tube Station: John Flewitt.



CAVES ON THE ISLE OF SKYE. 1978 - 1979.

Two MSG parties have visited Skye, one of the Group's traditional 'expedition venues' in the last year. Arthur Champion, John and Maggie Flewitt and the Ryders spent a wet and windy six days (October 21st to 26th) there in the late autumn of 1978, leaving behind them some speleological loose ends (notably the survey of the Allt na Pairte Cave). These were tied up when Robin and Chris Sernon spent a few days camping at Camas Malag in June 1979.

New ground was broken, or at any rate surveyed for the first time, in several "sites of speleological interest". These are chronicled below in alphabetical order:



The Allt na Pairte Cave

When an MSG party were camping at Camas Malag in 1973, John and Marilyn Longstaff walked over from the head of the Allt nan Leac valley down the Allt na Pairte to the ruined hamlet of Boreraig on the coast. They reported seeing a "shakehole-like" feature on the east side of the Allt na Pairte, with a waterfall disappearing into it. A quick glance at the geological map showed no limestone, at any rate Durness Limestone (the bed in which virtually all of the Skye caves are found). However, limestone beds are known to occur in the Jurassic strata, which outcrop in this valley, so the site was mentally filed away for a future visit.

This duly came on Wednesday 25th October 1978, when five warps came paddling along the swampy track which runs down the west side of the valley, each with one eye on the path and the other peering across the heather for "shakehole-like" features. The waterfall, when sited, certainly looked promising.

The stream crashed down into quite a large and steep-sided shake, shrouded with vegetation, approximately 50' long, 25' wide and 20' deep. Two levels of cave development had been exposed by the collapse of what must have been quite a large chamber. The stream dropped over boulders and entered the lower level. At first sight this looked most promising, but a closer inspection showed the water flowing into a boulder choke. A few boulders were pulled out and soon a small hole was made, but its size and the volume of water flowing into it made entry out of the question.

We now turned our attention to the older dry level immediately above. The entrance was roughly semicircular, about 10' high in the centre, with a horizontal floor. This continued for 30' with the roof and walls converging towards the floor, and ending in a man-sized orifice. Into this we inserted Arthur, head first, complete with flickering carbide. His call to hold onto his feet came echoing back. Under interrogation from an almost incoherent EFR, he gave those outside an impression of the nave of St Pauls with Niagara falling into it. We pushed him in a bit further until his head and shoulders hung over the pitch, and had more detail added. Arthur was then hauled out and the others had a look.

Through the slot was a fairly large chamber with almost completely black walls, which gave poor visibility with the available light. The floor was just visible, and the stream clearly audible, although no sign of it could be seen in the chamber below. Having no tackle with us, exploration had to wait.

A search along the east bank of the main stream soon located the probable resurgence flowing swiftly from rocks beside a pool, 350' from the sink and 50' lower. Twenty minutes digging in the stream bed lowered the water level to give approximately two inches of airspace. Shouting abuse into this provoked a slight echo, enough to whet Arthur's appetite for later. Further searching located a dry bedding cave which appeared to "go", under a small cliff a little further upstream. The earth floor required a little digging to make entry possible.

It was an excited party that arrived back in the cottage at Broadford. Prospects of a through trip and several hundred feet of passage obviously merited a return trip with ladders and surveying equipment. However, the discovery was made towards the end of our week on the island, and the Ryders had to leave the following day. It was decided that Arthur and John should return whilst Maggie remained at the cottage to prepare a welcome in terms of hot baths and a meal after their exertions.

ALLT NA PAIRTE CAVE

Isle of Skye

n.g.r. 626175 — alt. 425 ft.
length 635 ft. depth 43 ft.
M.S.G. survey Oct '78
B.C.R.A. grade 4c

CROSS SECTIONS

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

entrance
shake

mud pools

stream
sinks

PLAN

Nmag

0 50 ft.

0 10 ft.

WILD CAT CAVE

THE RISING

0 ft.

20 ft. pitch

10

20

30

40

50

canal

duck

ELEVATION

AC

The Exploration.

There are two possible approach routes to the cave. We chose the shorter, to attempt the save time - the car was parked at Heast and between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 miles of difficult country crossed. The easier route, which in fact probably proves quicker anyway, is to follow the track from Suardal, a distance of $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Having arrived in a tired and sweaty state (walking from Heast in our wetsuits) we devoured a quick lunch and then surface surveyed from the sinkhole down to the resurgence. Arthur sketched in details of the sinkhole whilst JF inserted a $\frac{3}{8}$ " bolt in the floor of the upper cave 10' back from the head of the pitch.

The pitch was then rigged and descended by JF, an 18' climb into a large (by Skye standards) chamber. Platforms of rock protruded from the walls giving an indication of the dip of the limestone - about 5° to the south-west. The floor was boulder strewn, the ladder dropping to the lowest point. The stream was audible but invisible, and two ways on beckoned. After a quick glance down the r. passage JF lifelined Arthur down the pitch.

The l. passage was then followed, and soon reached a 'T'-junction with the stream. Upstream soon ended in a boulder choke, about 20' from the choked passage in the sinkhole. Downstream a walking sized passage lowered to a crawl into a small chamber. A slot in the roof here allows one to stand up and look into an upper chamber of similar dimensions, the floor between being formed by a bed of limestone more resistant to erosion than its neighbours. The stream continued but the passage rapidly decreased in size making further progress difficult.

We then turned our attentions to the prominent rift passage leading off the Entrance Chamber. This showed evidence of the two levels of development noted in the sinkhole. Following the lower level, the streamway was rejoined below a series of rock steps, containing pools of liquid mud. A very low passage led back upstream, towards the passages already explored, so we set off downstream along an attractive canal passage. Soon the roof rose, and we emerged into a fairly large chamber.

Here the stream flowed along the l. wall, with a 3' high bank of mud and pebbles on the r. Some very interesting formations were found here, consisting of 12" high walls of pebbles cemented by calcite. The streamway continued, quite low at first, with roof and walls delicately adorned with curtains and straws, one or two of which had to be broken to force a way on. 30' further on the stream sank through pebbles in the floor, but an upward squeeze on the r. entered a beautifully decorated chamber, 7' by 4' in plan. From here a sharp l. turn led into a steeply inclined bedding plane, only 10" high, the entrance to which was constricted by a small calcite pillar.

Arthur, rather apprehensive about becoming wedged, half crawled, half slid down this passage for c.20', until a further lowering of the roof prevented further progress. Digging here might allow access to more passage.

Very excited about the progress made, but realising the need to survey and photograph as much of the cave as we could, a quick retreat was made to the Entrance Chamber and our equipment. The cave was surveyed as far as the chamber with the unusual pebble formations, and a few photographs taken.

The Resurgence Cave.

It was almost dark by now, but thoughts of dry clothes and a hot meal were thrust aside as two more open holes remained unexplored.

JF was left with little option anyway as Arthur rapidly disappeared downstream.

As time was short our resources were divided between the two caves. Arthur donned his wetsuit hood and entered the resurgence - the water level here was dropped further by entering feet first and lifting out a few large rocks. An airspace of about 3" resulted, in the roof of a body-sized tubular passage. Several careful approaches and retreats were made before the 12' long duck was passed, into a fissure chamber. A roof crack was impassable, but falling water could be heard round a very tight corner. The surface was regained with great relief.

Wild Cat Cave.

The entrance to the dry cave was a wide slot, 6" high above an earth floor. Energetic scraping by JF produced, after half an hour, an aperture large enough to wriggle through. The cave continued at right angles to the main stream bank for approximately 15', then turned sharp l. and widened slightly. The roof of this section maintained a fairly constant height of c.2', although obstructed by roof pendants.

This section of passage continued parallel to the stream for c.50', before ending too low, with a fairly strong draught blowing out. The floor was littered with animal bones and skulls, and clawed paw prints (presumably wild cat) were very much in evidence - a fact that encouraged a hasty retreat!

J.Flewitt / A.Champion.

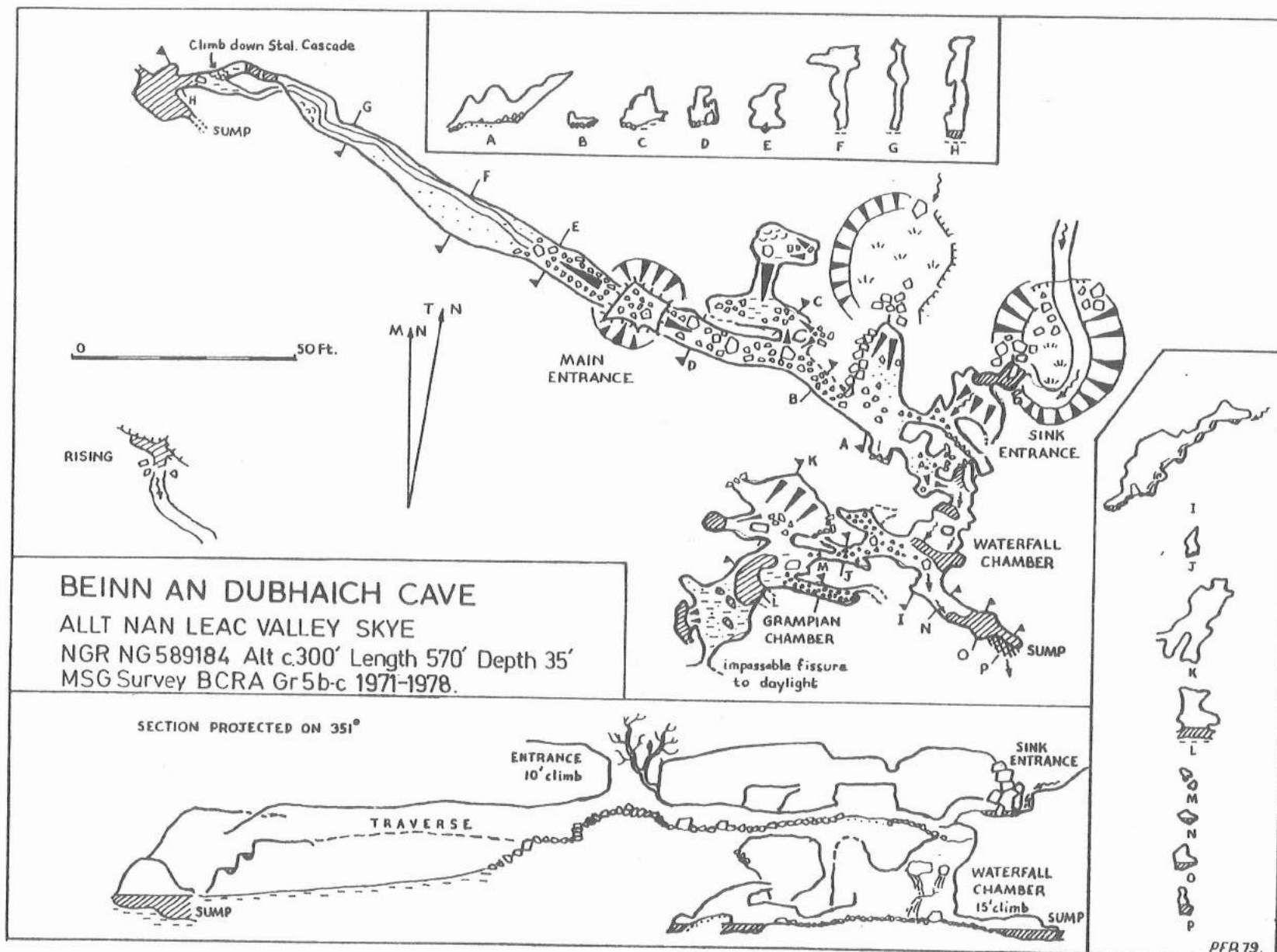
On Friday 22nd June 1979 Robin and Chris Sermon visited the cave. After the pitch had been rigged, and both descended, Robin climbed up to a previously unentered tube 8' above floor level on the opposite side of the Entrance Chamber.

An awkward crawl over friable ledges led after 30' to a difficult r. and then l. bend. After a squeeze past stalagmite formations the passage continues small but well decorated, to a letterbox dropping into the roof a chamber - this is the chamber on the streamway with calcited pebble bank formations. The descent into the chamber was deemed unwise, as the ledges which would have had to have been used as footholds looked very friable. Total length of the passage is c.70' - it was not surveyed as the going was a little awkward for Chris, who was still recovering from a motorcycle accident.

The continuation of the downstream survey was curtailed by lamp failure, but was completed on Sunday 24th June.

The total length of the Allt na Pairte Cave is 535', and depth a little over 40'. Pushing various small tubes and crawls around the Entrance Chamber may yield a few more feet of passage. The Resurgence Cave is 40' long and the dry Wild Cat Cave 60', ending only 50' from the downstream end of the main cave - digging might yet allow a through trip.

The cave is noteworthy for a variety of reasons. Few caves are known in Jurassic limestones, especially active stream caves. The wealth of formations in the Allt na Pairte Cave excels anything else on Skye..... and there must be few places left on the British Isles where one can 'discover' a very obvious sinkhole 50' long and 25' wide, with a 10' high passage leading off into the unknown.



Beinn an Dubhaich Cave.

This cave, on the north flank of the Allt nan Leac valley, is one of the most interesting on Skye. The system was surveyed by MSG in April 1971, and found to consist of a series of passages, now mostly 'dry', developed on the granite/limestone contact, with several sheets or 'dykes' of granite running parallel with the edge of the main igneous mass complicating matters. There were two entrances, the main one an obvious square hole with a tree growing out of it, and the other an active sink 80' further east. The sinking stream was only seen in the first few yards of cave from the Sink Entrance, and then flowed into a choked bedding, to reappear at a pool 200' to the west of and 35' lower than the Sink Entrance.

In September 1971, on a rather wet day, PFR made a solo visit and cleared a choked passage off the large chamber between the Sink and Main Entrances, down which the stream could be heard. After moving some small boulders he entered a steeply descending 'ramp' down which the stream crashed, which dropped into the impressive Waterfall Chamber. Here the stream rushed off into an impassably low bedding, and the only other way on was a tight rift with froth and flood debris. After a quick mental survey the explorer exited, and the chamber was added as a Grade 1 sketch to the main drawing.

Accounts and a survey of the cave at this stage of exploration appeared in MSG Journal 5 (p.19-20) and Trans. BCRA Vol 1. No.2 p. 106-108 (April 1974).

At Easter 1974, Trevor Faulkner of SWETCCC dived the resurgence pool below the cave. The underwater passage was followed down a boulder slope at 45° magnetic for 10' where it swung to the r. and continued at 90° for 30' to enter the side of a larger underwater passage, which was not pursued any further (C.D.G. Newsletter No. p.)

The Edinburgh May holiday weekend of 1978 saw Peter Branney and Ivan Young of the Grampian Speleo. Group visit the cave in dry weather conditions. They descended Waterfall Chamber, and found the 'tight rift' quite passable, and to lead under a flake into a previously unreported chamber with some short passages leading off.

At the 1978 BCRA Conference GSG and MSG heads were put together on the subject of the cave, and it was decided that the chamber off Waterfall Chamber was probably "new". The GSG had only made a Grade 1 sketch, so a full survey of the Waterfall Chamber Series became one of the priorities for the October expedition.

Since detailed accounts of the remainder of the cave have been published (see above), the following description only deals with the Waterfall Chamber Series.

Waterfall Chamber and the G.S.G. Extension.

Entering the cave from the Sink Entrance, after the initial bouldery constriction the stream cascades down an inclined bedding with a granite floor, for about 15', to where the roof drops and the stream disappears into a choked slot. A low crawl on the r. here suddenly opens out into a 6' high chamber, with an obvious passage on the far side leading towards the Main Entrance.

Doubling back to the l. is another low passage, a bouldery crawl (which may have to be dug out) which returns to the stream, which flows from out of a choke and promptly spills away down another inclined bedding. This is quite low at first, but soon opens into the top of Waterfall Chamber. The climb down to the floor is very slippery, being on slimy decomposing granite. Care is necessary here -

on the survey trip Elaine Ryder slipped and fell onto a slab of limestone, which is much more liable to have sharp edges than the granite. Although she soldiered on and the survey was completed, the resultant wound required three stitches afterwards.

At the foot of the waterfalls the stream slides under the wall into a low bedding. Some digging here allowed entry, and a low crawl runs eastwards (i.e. away from the resurgence) for 25' to a sump chamber.

Running westwards from the foot of the waterfall is a rift which closes to a narrow crawl, which comes out over a shingle bank into the roomy but low Grampian Chamber. Part of the floor of this is occupied by a pool 2' deep, which appears to extend laterally beneath the walls, and beneath the floor of the further part of the chamber, as a submerged bedding. On the r. a scramble over boulders leads up into a high chamber, very much like a dry version of Waterfall Chamber. On the l. is a 20' long shingly crawl, which digging might extend.

Grampian Chamber is c.30' long and 10' wide. At the far end a slot leads down to a muddy pool, with no way on, and a tiny hole leads out to daylight - from the surface it can be seen that this is beneath a granite 'dyke'.

The total surveyed length of Waterfall Chamber Series comes to 200', making the length of the cave 550'. An extensive series of submerged passages appear to exist, and probably link the Resurgence (where 40' has already been explored), the pool in the Terminal Chamber of the passage to the west of the Main Entrance, the pool in Grampian Chamber, and the downstream sump beyond Waterfall Chamber. Further visits by cave divers are awaited with interest!

The relationship between the granite and the limestone here, and the obviously multi-phase cave development promise some absorbing problems for the speleogeomorphologist. Beinn an Dubhaich Cave deserves a very close study.

P.F.R.

Camas Malag Cave

As part of a week's holidaying and caving in Skye from 19th - 26th June 1979, Robin and Chris Sermon made several visits to Camas Malag Cave. Not having visited the area before, but being forewarned with information from PFR, the intention was to locate the 'Shuttleway Inlet' discovered by S.U.S.S. (1)&(2), and to examine any other possibilities near the Sinkhole Entrance.

The first visit to the cave was made on the evening of arrival, after setting up camp at Camas Malag Bay (Tuesday 19th), the intention being to locate the cave and its various entrances. This was easily done, and a small hole in a shallow dry gully to the west of the Sinkhole Entrance was noted for further examination. A quick look inside the Sinkhole Entrance suggested that one or other of the bedding crawls on the r. of the main stream passage (see the original survey, (3) & (4)) was likely to give access to 'Shuttleway Inlet'. Not being equipped for underground, they returned to the camp to get settled in ready to commence underground work the following morning.

Next morning a late start was made, setting a trend for the week and proving once again that not all people wake early on their first night in camp. The cave was entered via the Sinkhole Entrance and attention was immediately turned to the two bedding inlets.

The r. hand of these appeared too low, but by moving a few stones RS was able to make progress in the l.hand one, until at about 20' from

CAMAS MALAG CAVES

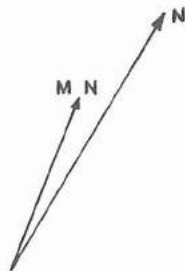
LOCH SLAPIN SKYE

NGR NG 584187

Alt. (Sink Entrance): c.100'

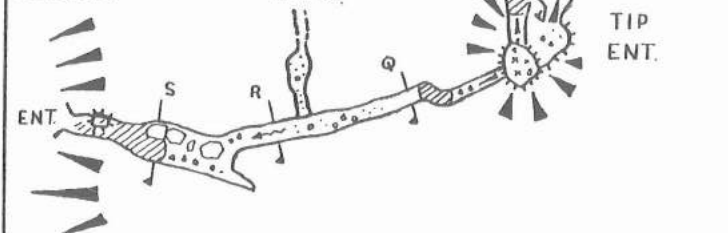
MSG Survey BCRA Gr. 4-5b 1971-1979

SCALE
0 25 50 Ft.



LOWER CAVE length 230'

Sea Cliffs



POT HOLE
ENT.
(18' pitch)

WET ENT.

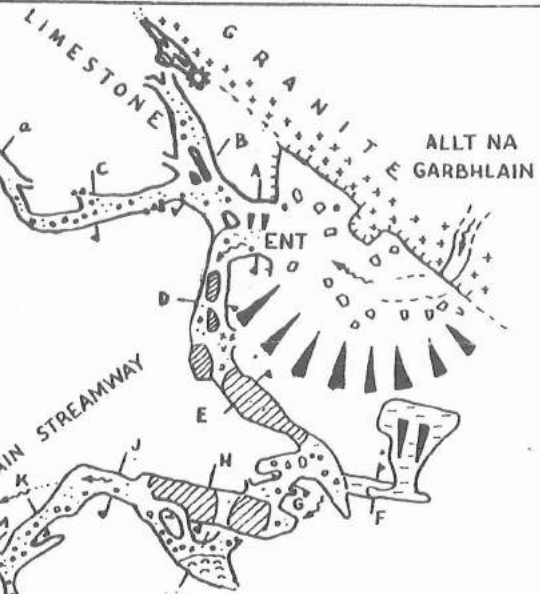
DRY ENT.

UPPER SHUFFLEWAY

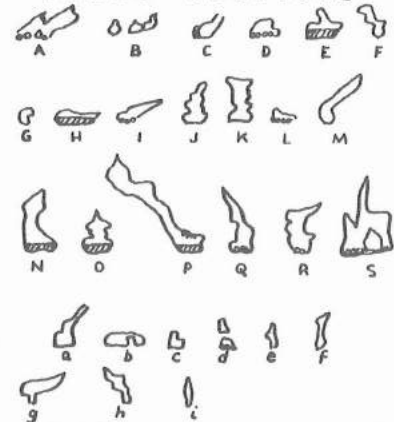
SHUFFLEWAY
INLET

MAIN STREAMWAY

UPPER CAVE length 600'



CROSS SECTIONS



PFR 1971/9

the junction the height came down to about 12". After a further 10' the passage dropped into a small chamber about 9' long, with a clean washed floor. Behind to the r. was a rift too tight to enter, and there was a blind continuation at the far (west) end of the chamber. The way on was slightly to the l. in a low but fairly wide passage, with right angled bends to r. and l., then widening further. After about 50' a blind pool was reached straight ahead, the way on being a tightening tube to the l. for 15'.

This small tube suddenly dropped into a tight rift which continued straight ahead. Beneath the letterbox opening into the rift a low crawl ran back under the tube, to end in a static sump. Underwater exploration with a boot suggested that there could be no way on below water level (too tight). The main rift from below the letterbox however ran on for some 60', to rejoin the main stream passage of the cave on an elbow bend.

A return to the surface was made by following the main streamway up to the Sinkhole Entrance. A quick glance at the journals showed that the rift passage our letterbox had dropped into was 'Shuffleway Inlet' discovered by MSG in 1975 (5).

The team then equipped themselves with surveying gear, and surveyed in from the Sinkhole Entrance, continuing until cold and hunger were sufficient excuse to leave the rest until the morrow.

The following day the survey was completed, the total length of the passage (including Shuffleway Inlet) being c.200'. RS also attempted, unsuccessfully, to make further progress in the r.hand bedding passage just inside the Sinkhole Entrance, the passage proving too low.

We now had a complete survey, but were still not certain whether the entire passage had been previously explored. It would seem possible that this is the S.U.S.S. 'Shuttleway Inlet', although the published survey (2) bears very little relation to the passage.

On a brief trip into the Upper Cave on Thursday 21st, RS made a determined attempt to push the r.hand bedding passage again, and managed a total of c.30' of progress by scraping shingle, until stopped by a very tight squeeze. This would have been extremely difficult to reverse, although the passage could be seen to continue beyond, still desperately tight. In the wet conditions which prevailed, this passage carried a small inlet stream.

One further visit to the cave was made, on the evening of Saturday 23rd, when a survey was made of the small cave which had been noted previously near the Sinkhole Entrance. This small hole (length 15', depth 10') is developed on the limestone/granite junction. The entrance is a small hole situated in a very shallow grassy gully which follows the line of the edge of the granite, 13' from the north corner of the Sinkhole. An 8' scramble down loose boulders leads into a rift chamber 12' long, floored with boulders and walled on the r. by granite. A small stream was audible through a very narrow slot at floor level. The survey shows this to be the inlet in the r.hand bedding just inside the Sinkhole Entrance - the connection is too constricted to allow any hope of a through trip here.

References

- (1) S.U.S.S. Journal Vol.2 No.5
- (2) S.U.S.S. Journal Vol.2 No.6
- (3) M.S.G. Journal 5. p.18.
- (4) Trans B.C.R.A. Vol.1 No.2. p.103
- (5) M.S.G. Journal 8. p.6.

Robin Sermon.

Cave C.G. 24.

The multiplicity of small caves in the Coille Gaireallach woods makes a numbering scheme rather easier to handle than a naming one. C.G.24 is the sink at the head of the gully which contains Uamh Pharnassus. A dig at this sink (NG 606194) in 1975 was fruitless, but a renewed attack on Sunday 22nd October 1978 soon saw an accessible slot opened up.

A grovel in the stream under a low rock leads into a bedding chamber c.12' long and 3' high. At the far r. corner the stream drops into a short rift passage, which turns r. alongside a large slab. A step through a "window" leads into an inclined rift, which immediately turns r. and becomes far too tight. Total length of the cave is c.30', and depth c.15'. The end draughts strongly, but there is little hope of any progress, and the stream is seen again within 100' or so anyway.

Letterbox Cave.

A low resurgence cave on the south bank of the Allt nan Leac, opposite the top entrance of Uamh Sgeinne (The Cave of Knives). The entrance is a real letterbox - a daunting prospect, 9" high and half full of water.

On Monday 23rd October 1978 Arthur Champion managed to post himself into this orifice, and get through into a wet crawl, obstructed after 25' by a fallen flake. On Tuesday he returned with a hammer, and managed to knock the flake downwards until he could squeeze over it. Beyond the passage turned r. into 25' of more comfortable crawl, ending in a 2'6" waterfall, a bodylength above which the streamway encountered an impassably tight corner. To the l. at the foot of the fall a short passage led to a choke and small aven. The cave was roughly surveyed (Gr.2 - 3), and totalled 57' in length.

The Gaelic name - Uamh Bocsa Leitranacheachin - was provided by the Broadford postman, and threatens to exceed the cave in its length...

Valley Head Cave.

An attempted through trip in this, Skye's classic stream cave, was thwarted by light failure. However, John Flewitt and Arthur Champion did have a look at the boulder choke which terminates the high level passage leading off Chantry Chamber.

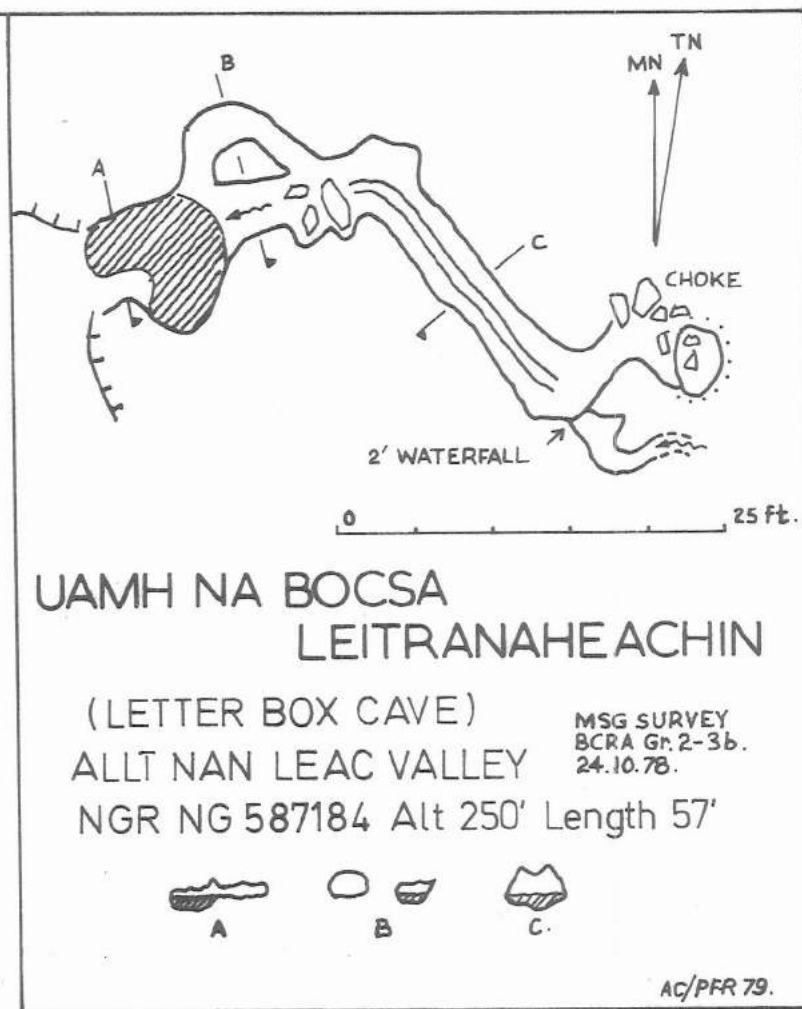
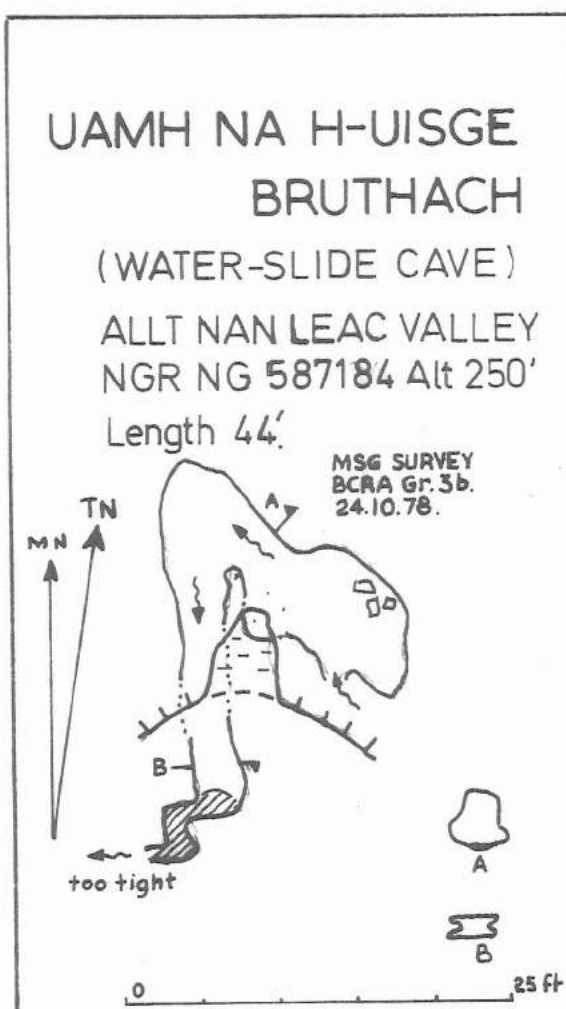
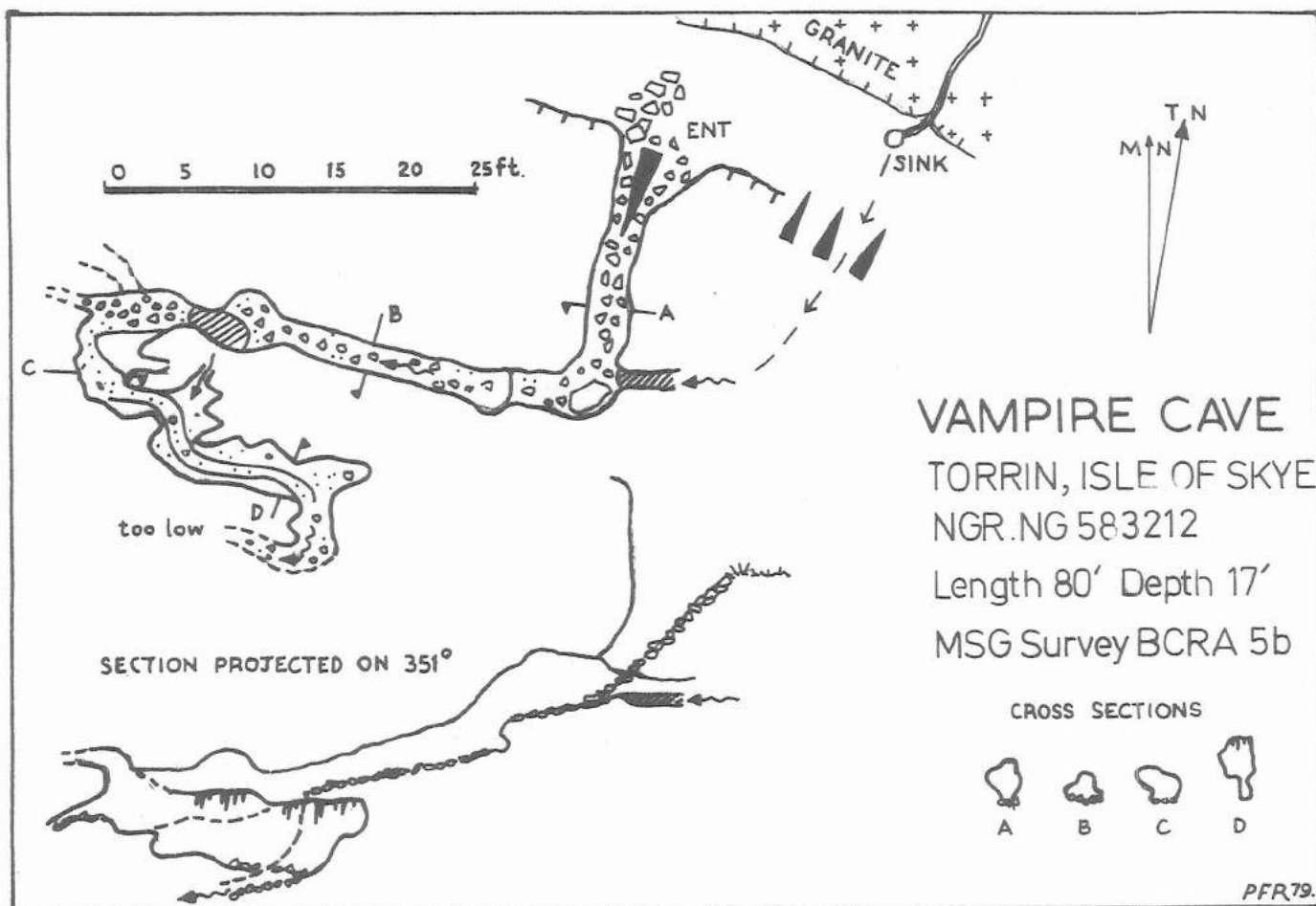
A squeeze between the wedged blocks, which had defied Graham Stevens in 1976, proved negotiable to the pair, and a 12' long arched chamber was entered, ending in a slope up to a 'T' junction. Passages to r. and l. both quickly ended in solid-looking chokes, a rather abrupt end to a promising lead. Total length of new passage was 35'.

Waterslide Cave.

This sink for Uamh Sgeinne, normally a very wet little cave, was re-examined with the water flow reduced by Flewitt engineering. Arthur managed to reach the end of the inclined wet bedding, where the stream turned r. through an impassable slot, beyond which the head of a small waterfall could be glimpsed - even in the slot could be enlarged, the passage beyond would need a lot of hammering. The cave was surveyed to Gr.3, and proved to be 44' in length.

Mossy Cave, near Ord.

The O.S. 1" Geological map of Skye shows three patches of Durness Limestone in Sleat, two to the NE of the hamlet of Ord and one to the S. Arthur walked over these areas, finding them very disappointing cave-wise. The only hole found, Mossy Cave, was at NG 636145, alt.300', about 100' from a stream. A single sloping passage formed directly beneath an igneous dyke descended to a total choke, 20' total length.



Vampire Cave.

A Grampian Speleo Group part visiting Skye in the summer of 1978 found two small caves, Boulder Pot and Vampire Cave, to the north of the hamlet of Torrin, in an area of limestone where no caves had previously been reported.

The entrance to Vampire Cave was located, on the granite/limestone boundary (NG 583212), a few yards from a small sink. A rift, obviously dug out by GSG, sloped down into a narrow crawl. This continued for 20' to a tiny "chamber", where the small stream from the sink entered from a fissure on the l., and flowed away to the r. down an 18" waterfall into a tight and jagged crawl. The GSG, wisely, had gone no further than this.

On the afternoon of Sunday October 22nd 1978, an enthusiastic Arthur Champion plunged into this crawl, and reappeared a few minutes later stating that the passages beyond were (as usual) "big enough to take your granny down". This inveigled PFR, who does not wish to be considered an inferior grade of speleologist to Arthur's grandparents, to accompany him on a survey trip into the hole the next day.

The crawl below the 18" waterfall was in fact as tight and narrow as it looked. After 15' there was a brief enlargement (the only place in the cave where one can turn round easily). A few feet beyond the passage turns very sharp l., and the floor drops another foot or so. In this section one can crouch in a constricted semi-upright position. This relative relief soon ends in a lowering of the roof and another sharp bend. Digging here allowed a bodylength of progress, to another bend which was clearly impassable. The most notable feature of the surveying trip was the semi-permanent people choke which resulted from one member of the party trying to pass the other. Unfortunately the only formation in the cave suffered in the resultant struggle - anyway, there hadn't really been room to turn one's head to look at it.

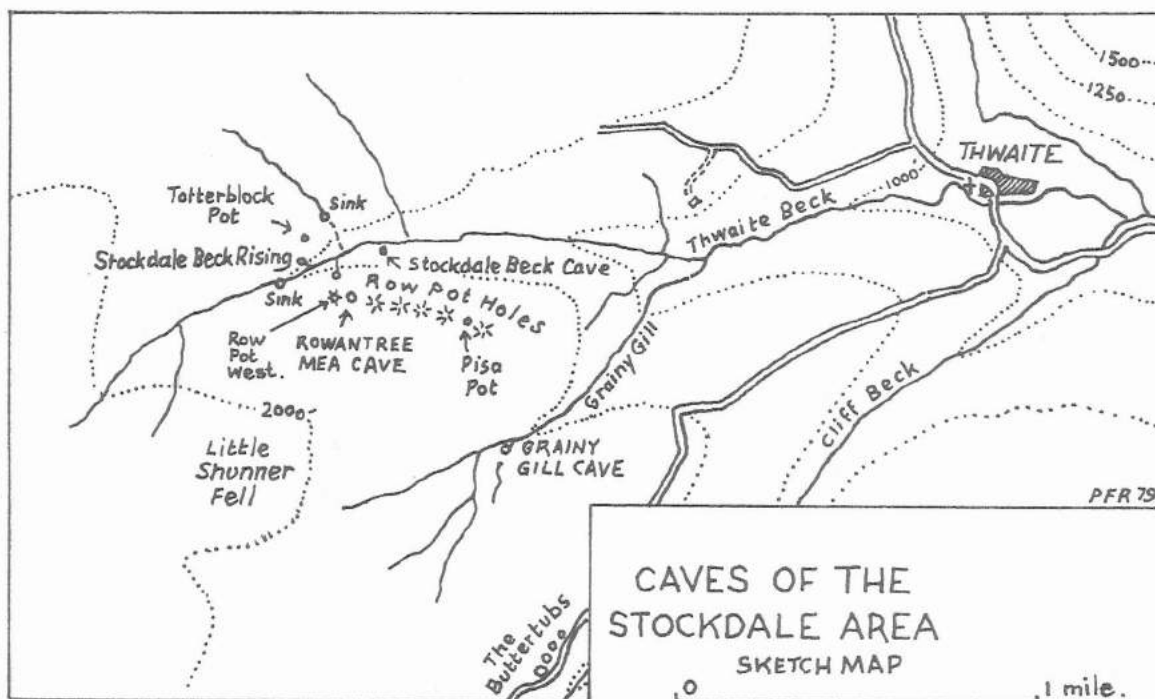
Total length of the cave is 80' and the depth 17'. The stream probably resurges from boggy pools a few yards further down the hillside. Not a place to revisit, even for were-grannies.

NEW EXPLORATIONS IN THE NORTHERN DALES.

STOCKDALE AND ITS CAVES

Stockdale is one of the lesser known tributary valleys of Swaledale. A wide and relatively desolate valley, it bears little evidence of mens' activities, beyond a few stone walls and a couple of old trial levels high on its north flank.

The Main Limestone is exposed on the south side of the main stream, and also in the tributary Grainy Gill. The valley was briefly visited by MSG several years ago, and a few features of speleological interest noted. Further visits within the last two years have revealed a little more, although nothing really spectacular (see a brief note in MSG Journal 9 p.16). The caves are here documented more or less from west to east, from the limestone outcrops in Stockdale itself round towards Grainy Gill:



STOCKDALE BECK RISING SD 863979

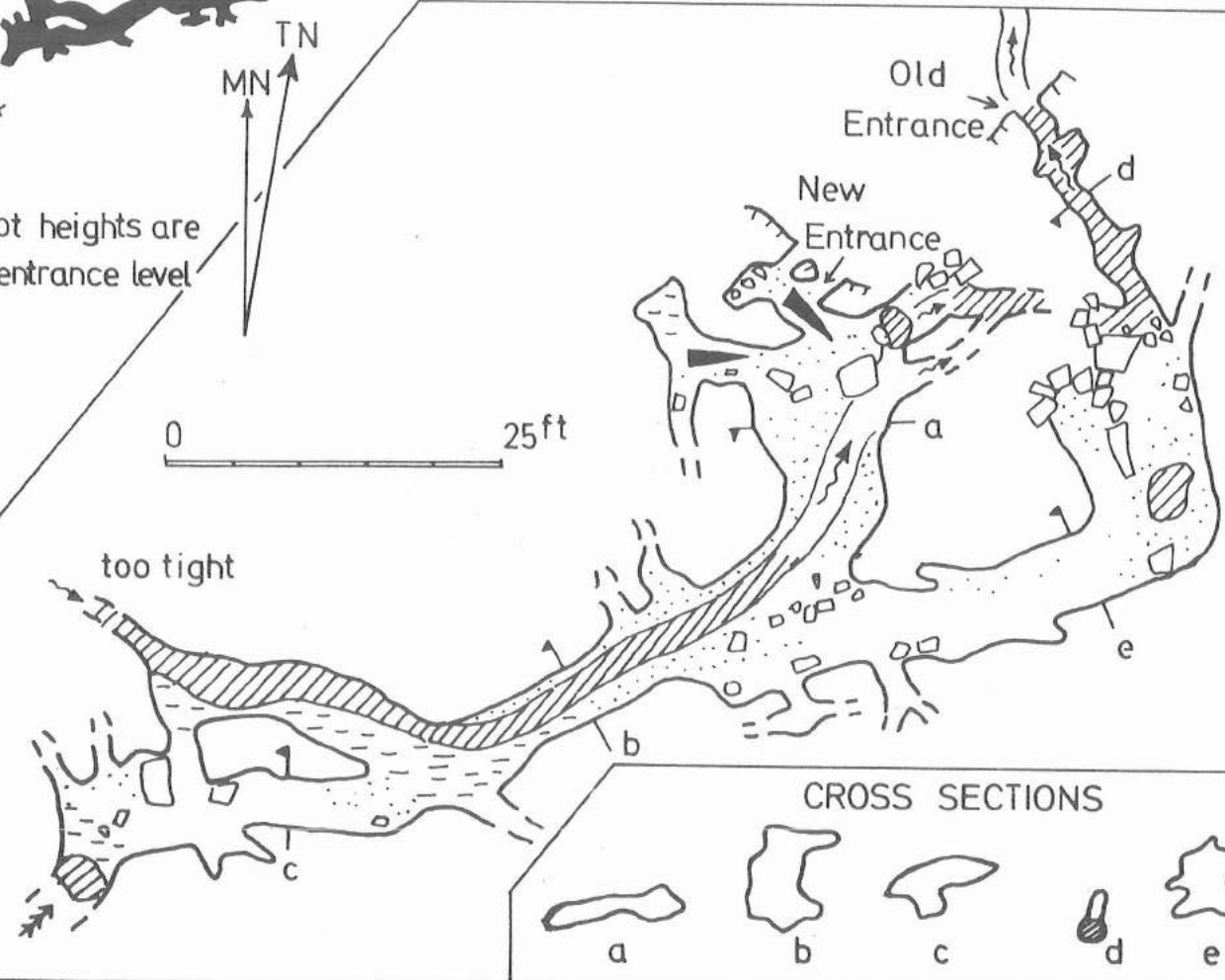
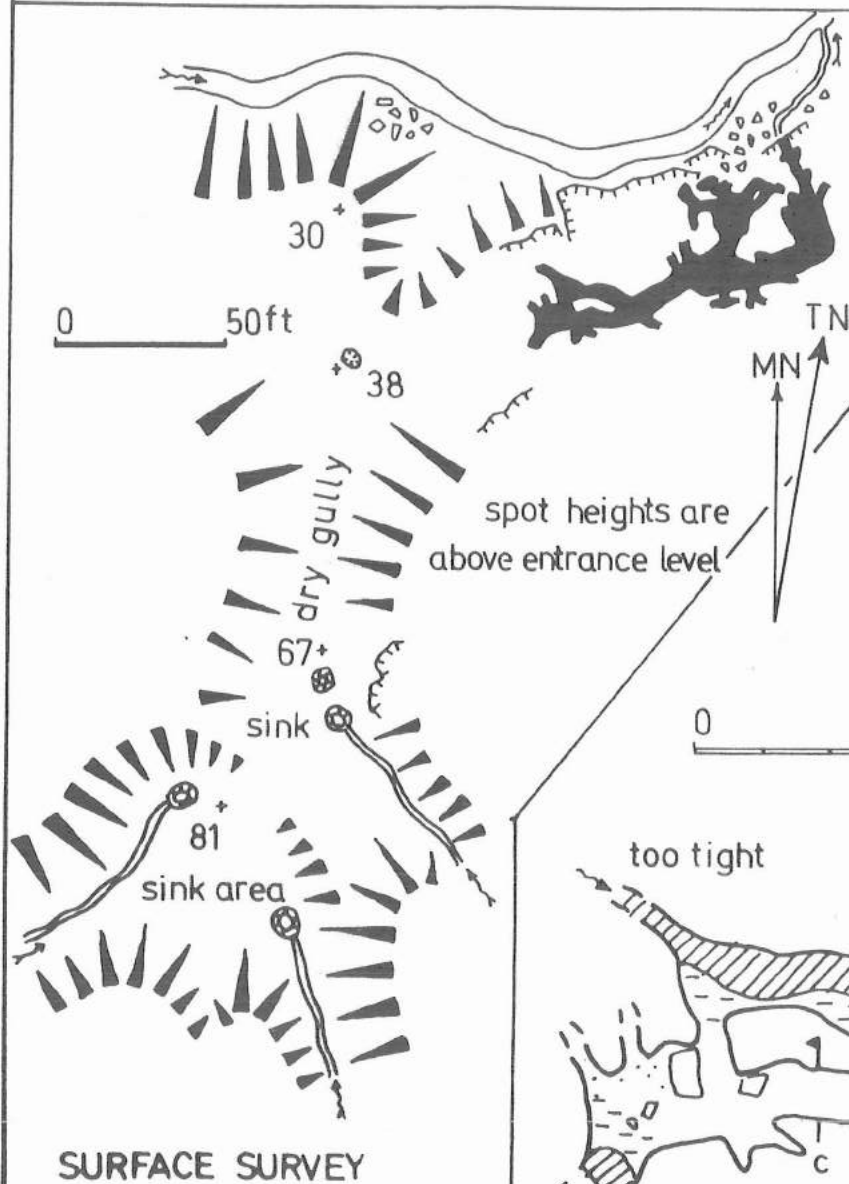
Walking up Thwaite Beck, when the Main Limestone is reached, an inviting hole on the north bank debouches a reasonable stream. Appearances flatter only to deceive however, and the cave is only a shattered chamber 12' long. Digging in the boulders of the floor revealed the stream welling up from impassable fissures, and what appeared to be a major collapse of the beds. Further progress would require a mining and shoring operation. One consolation is that the limestone hereabouts is excessively crinoidal, waterworn specimens from the stream bed being very "collectable".

Two sinks appear to feed this rising, one in the main stream bed at SD 862978, and the second in the opposite direction, in a tributary gully at SD 864982. On the hillside, more or less directly above the rising, one open hole was found:-

GRAINY GILL CAVE, STOCKDALE.

NGR SD 871971. Alt. 1550' Length 230'.

MSG Survey BCRA Gr. 4-5b, 11-11-78



TOTTERBLOCK POT SD 863980

In a shake with a prominent upstanding block of limestone. 15' slither down to the head of a tight 8' drop. Hammering here caused a huge slab overhead to start slowly moving, hence an abrupt termination of exploratory desires...

RISING FOR ROW POT HOLES. SD 864979

On the south side of the main beck, a little downstream of Stockdale Beck Rising, a stream emerges from boulder ruckle and cascades down the hillside. At first sight there was little possibility of an entrance here, but on August 28th 1978 John Carver and PFR moved a few rocks and almost entered a comfortable passage in solid rock, draughting nicely. To make entry quite safe, one chockstone overhanging the hole was knocked out - with the result that the whole hillside slumped, and to our utter frustration the cave was completely buried by huge slithering blockes and cascading soil. A return visit to dig it out again was completely unsuccessful.

STOCKDALE BECK CAVE. SD 865980

Down beside the main stream again, in the south bank at the foot of the Undersett Limestone outcrop. A comfortable bedding entrance closes to a silty tube. Digging allowed a little progress, but after 20' the way ahead became increasingly constricted and hardly worth the effort.

The cave is probably connected with impassably tight rifts, probably old sinks, about 100 yards upstream.

ROWANTREE MEA CAVE. SD 866978

Returning to the rising for Row Pot Holes, and striking straight up the steep grassy hillside above, Row Pot Holes themselves are reached - a long row of shakes and small sinkholes.

The most interesting hole here was found in a small grassy shake just east of the large rocky hole (Row Pot West) above the rising. The simple matter of lifting one slab allowed Messrs Carver and Ryder, fresh from their frustration at the rising, to scramble down into quite a complicated series of rift passages, all ending too tight or choked. Quite an attractive little system, subsequent survey showing a total length of 188'.

Row Pot Holes commence a couple of hundred yards west of Rowantree Mea Cave, and run east for almost half a mile. There are quite a number of promising looking entrances, but all except Rowantree Mea Cave are of very minor extent. Two holes are perhaps worthy of some note:

ROW POT HOLE WEST. SD 865978

The open but narrow rift at the base of the large rocky shake is partly choked with boulders, and despite hammering, could not be entered. However, up on the west side of the shakehole a small muddy hole was partly cleared to allow a thrutch down a clayey slope and a narrow chimney descent (rope useful) to a choked floor 25' down.

PISA POT. SD 869977

Quarter of a mile east of Rowantree Mea Cave, in a large shake with a "leaning tower" of fluted limestone. A hole at the foot of the tower leads to a crawl to a 10' rift descent, from which an excavated hole leads down to a total choke, 25' below the entrance.

GRAINY GILL CAVE. SD 871971

An obvious rising on the east bank of Grainy Gill, first noted by a prospecting party of Moldywarps on a snowy New Years Day 1969. Stuart Hodgson was coerced into a solo exploration with the promise of a drink bought for him by the other members if he made a reasonable find. Bravely changing into his wetsuit, in adverse conditions not helped by the other members throwing snowballs, he plunged into the icy waters, to immediately reappear feet first to report that the cave closed to a "tiny fissure" after a mere 10'. In their frustration the other members snowballed him again as he changed back into his normal gear.

There the matter rested for a long time - until on September 23rd 1978 Richard Gibson and PFR were walking back from Row Pot Holes, past the cave. Richard, being wetsuited, crawled into Grainy Gill Cave to reassess the "tiny fissure", whilst PFR dug at the entrance to lower the water level. With stream level down a few inches, the previous limit turned out to be no more than a tight duck. Richard disappeared to return in an excited state half an hour later, telling of an estimated 150' of new cave.

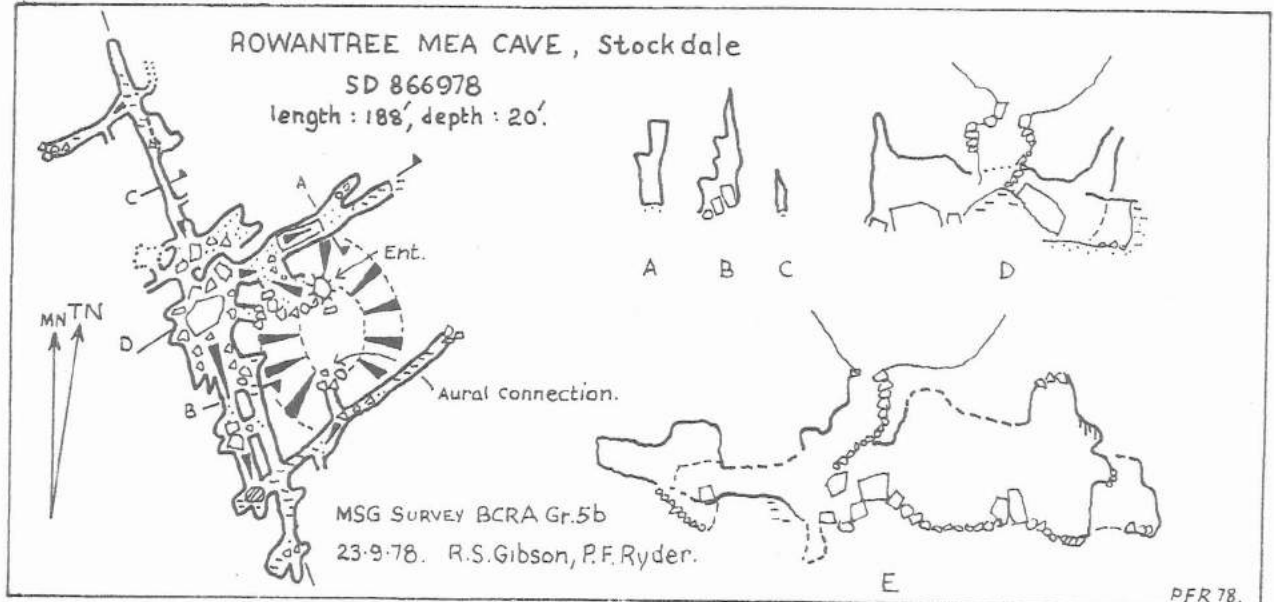
On November 11th we were back again, Arthur Champion and Richard surveying the cave and digging out a new entrance avoiding the watery constrictions of the first.

Description of the Cave

The original entrance is a narrow wet crawl, with an awkward squeeze over a boulder, to a climb up through boulder ruckle (with one large suspended block) into a roomy walking-sized passage. The stream is lost in the ruckle, and rejoined after 50' flowing into a bedding on the r. This can be followed for 30' to a choke, but on the l. before this a squeeze leads up to a small chamber and the new entrance, emerging onto the stream bank about 8' above rising level.

Back in the main passage, easy passage leads on to a fork, the stream entering from the l. This branch soon ends in an impassably narrow rift (larger passage can be glimpsed, but blasting would be needed to gain access). The l. fork also ends in a pool after 20'.

Total length of the cave is 230'. The sinks are found by walking up a dry gully on the south side of the Gill at the head of the small cliff the cave entrances are situated in. Three small streams sink in small holes. Underground, the cave extends roughly half way from the rising to the nearest of these sinks, so there are no great prospects for extension.



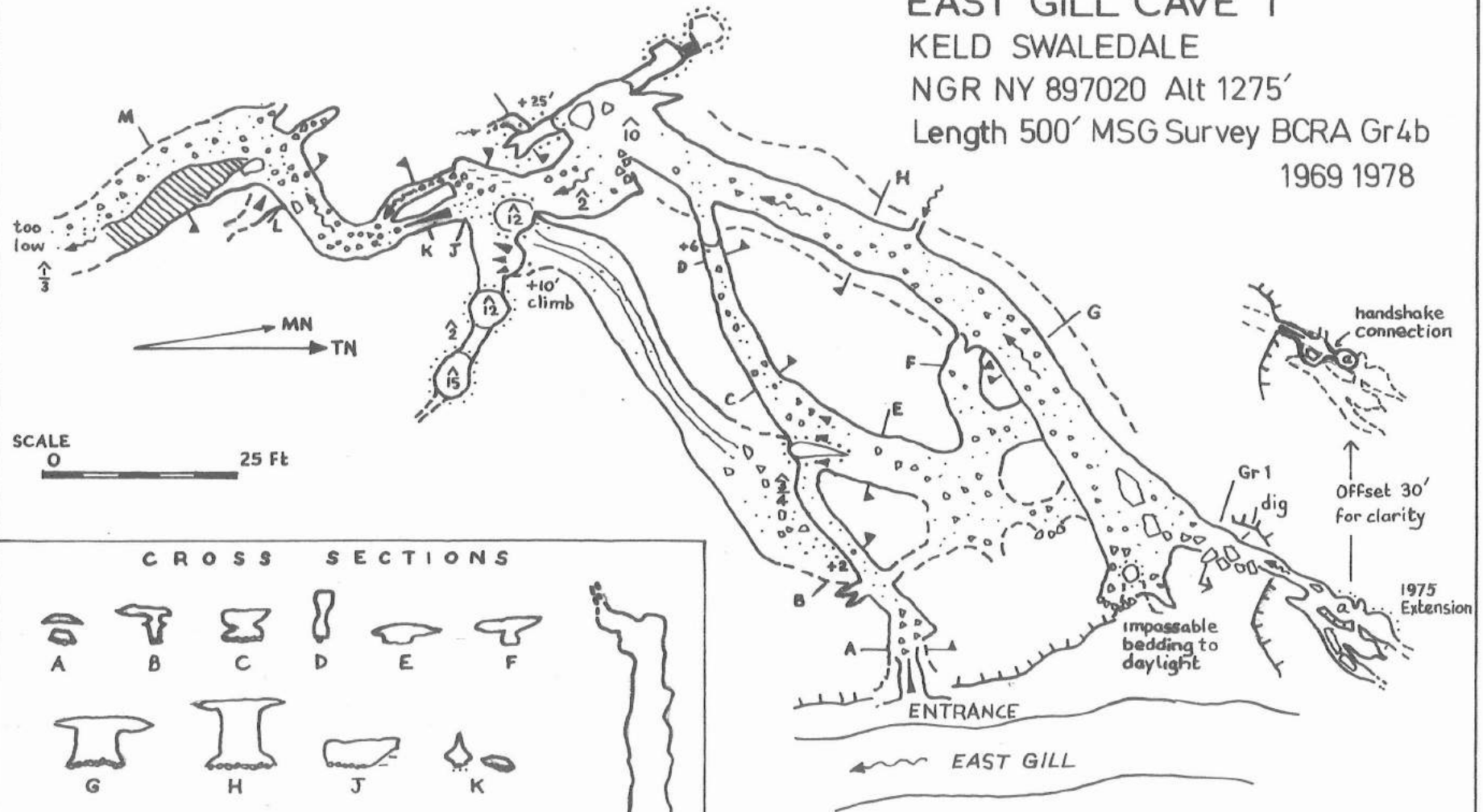
EAST GILL CAVE I

KELD SWALEDALE

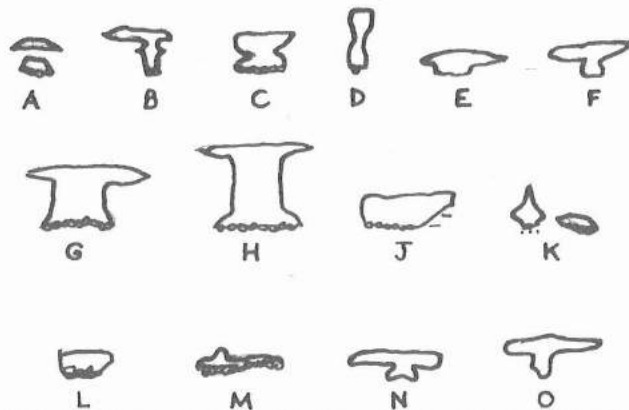
NGR NY 897020 Alt 1275'

Length 500' MSG Survey BCRA Gr4b

1969 1978



CROSS SECTIONS



PER 79.

SOME NEW EXPLORATIONS IN THE CAVES OF THE EAST GILL AREA, KELD.

The various caves in East Gill, Keld, have figured in several of the previous publications of MSG.

East Gill Cave 1, a flood sink on the west side of the Gill, in the Main Limestone, was first explored in 1933 by the Yorkshire Ramblers Club. In 1969 MSG made some small extensions, and a survey appeared in Journal 3, when the length of the cave stood at 360'. In 1975 a further short extension was made (Journal 8 p.46).

East Gill Cave 2, basically a phreatic cross-rift system, lies on the same side of the Gill 70 yards further upstream, and has a narrow entrance in the cliff face well above stream level. The cave totals 490' of passage, and a survey appeared in Journal 8 (p.47).

East Gill Cave 3 is a 30' long dry rift cave between caves 1 and 2. Cave 4 is a 30' resurgence on the east side of the Gill, a short distance downstream of cave 1. Cave 5, further downstream and again on the east bank, is merely a choked 15' long rift above the resurgence for the water sinking in Swinnegill, over a mile to the east.

East Gill Pot, a B.C.C. discovery of 1962, appeared in the last edition of 'Pennine Underground' (Dalesman. 1959 p.60). In the course of fieldwork for 'Northern Caves', the new guidebook, the pot could not be found, and so no reference to it appeared.

'Northern Caves' still contains a reference to Rosebush Pot, the other cave in the valley, although it is now listed as 'blocked'. Originally a 40' shaft, "descent possible with a sound rope, through squeezes", it does not seem to have been located in recent years.

A renewal of interest in the caves of East Gill in 1978 saw some new extensions, and the rediscovery of the missing East Gill Pot.

East Gill Cave 1.

Back in the early 1960's Colin Carson, later a moldywarp, visited this cave and found the inscription 'Rover Scouts Pothole Exit' chalked over the entrance. So where was the pothole entrance? A surface search failed to reveal it. Where did the mythical pothole enter the cave? The question tormented us over the years.

The most likely - really the only likely - route to 'regions above' was the high aven at the downstream end of the initial section of roomy streamway in the cave. Various people had attempted to climb this, but the final move, to where there appeared to be an inlet passage, had always defeated them.

However, on 29th April 1978 it did not defeat Arthur Champion and Richard Gibson, armed to the teeth with miscellaneous climbing hardware. Tragically however, the inlet, 30' from the floor of the aven, closed after only 3' to a 2" wide rift.

The downstream end of the cave, a low gravelly bedding, was re-inspected on the same day. The rising (fluorescein tested in 1975) was still a couple of hundred yards away, and the passage seemed to draught, so digging was commenced.

On 17th June the same party continued the dig, but work was abandoned after 25' of progress, the bedding ahead lowering further to absolute impassibility. Meanwhile, at the upstream end of the last tight crawl before the old limit of exploration, PFR had climbed a 10' aven and at the top found a quite crawlable passage which had been completely missed on previous trips.

Commencing as a 'T' cross section, the roof bedding more commodious than the floor trench, this was followed for 40' amongst small formations until it became tight. AC and a lump hammer were then inserted,

and a few roof pendants detached themselves, allowing the explorer to thrutch on until he emerged in the entrance passage of the cave, just a few yards from daylight.

This new passage, apparently an old streamway pre-dating the present stream passage and the entrance passage (which now takes water only in flood, NOT a time to be in the cave), adds another 70' to the total length of the system. The length of the cave is thus brought neatly up to 500', just passing East Gill Cave 2, a good excuse for republishing the survey, with the new passages added.

East Gill Cave 6.

On 17th June PFR decided to have another look at the Swinnergill Risings on the east side of the Gill, below Cave 5. Water was emerging from a boulder slope in two different places. A few feet further south, and just above stream level, was a low opening in solid rock. In the past this had been seen issuing a stream as well, and thought "too low".

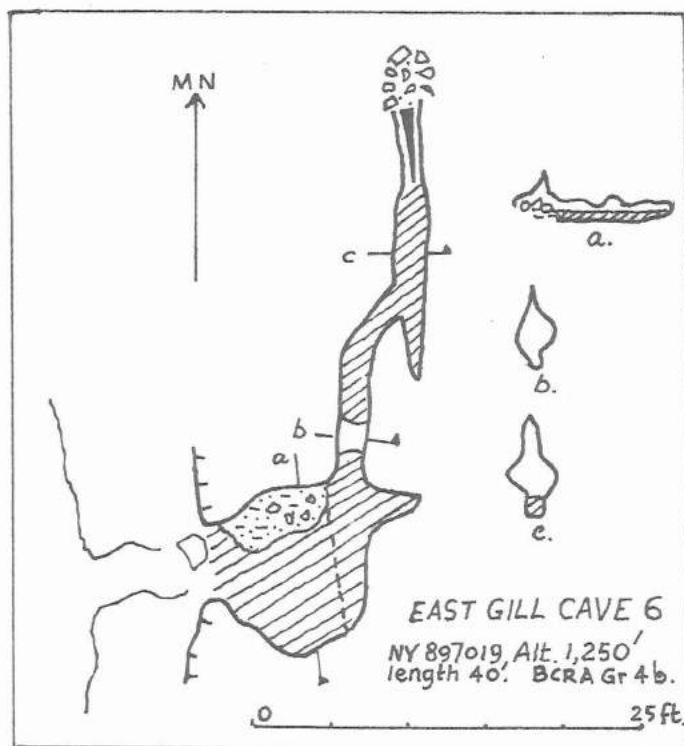
However, this time the bedding entrance was more or less dry (i.e. no water was flowing - a shallow pool covered most of the floor nevertheless), and an attempt at entry seemed justified. A rather desperate grovel and squeeze through the wide but very low bedding led to the explorer emerging, with some surprise, into a higher cross rift leading 1. into a very attractive scalloped passage 4' high. Had the Swinnergill system been cracked so easily?

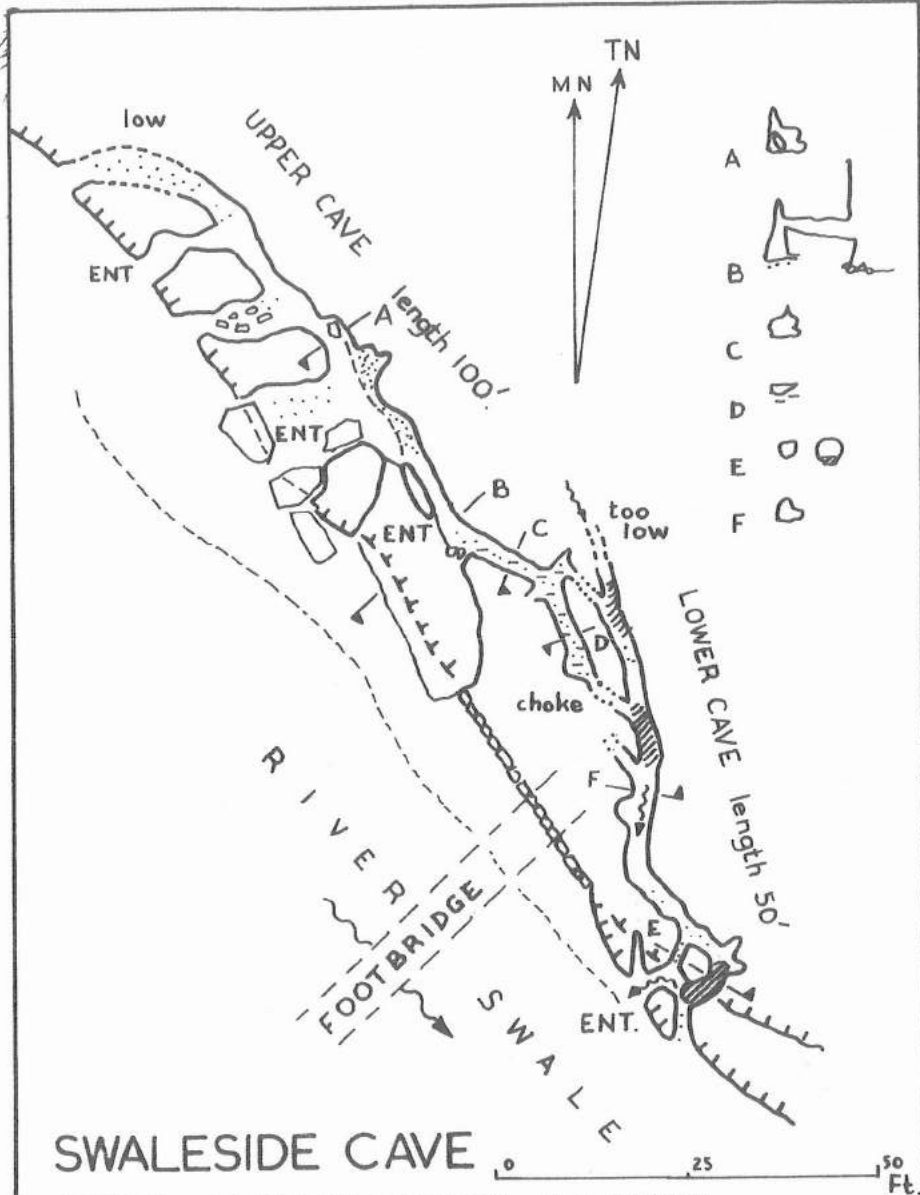
It was not to be. The passage rounded a couple of corners, and ended in a slope of boulders up into a narrow aven. AC arrived, and tried to squeeze up into this, but the whole place seemed very loose, and looked choked. However, somewhere above, running water was clearly audible.

The pair surveyed the little cave, finding it to be 40' long. The entrance bedding proved to be much harder to pass on the way out than on the way in. Even AC found it very tight and awkward. PFR threatened to become a permanent fixture.

The degree of development seen in the cave, and the sound of running water at the end, prompted an attack on the boulder slope above the active rising, which we judged was only a few feet away from the cave. Although

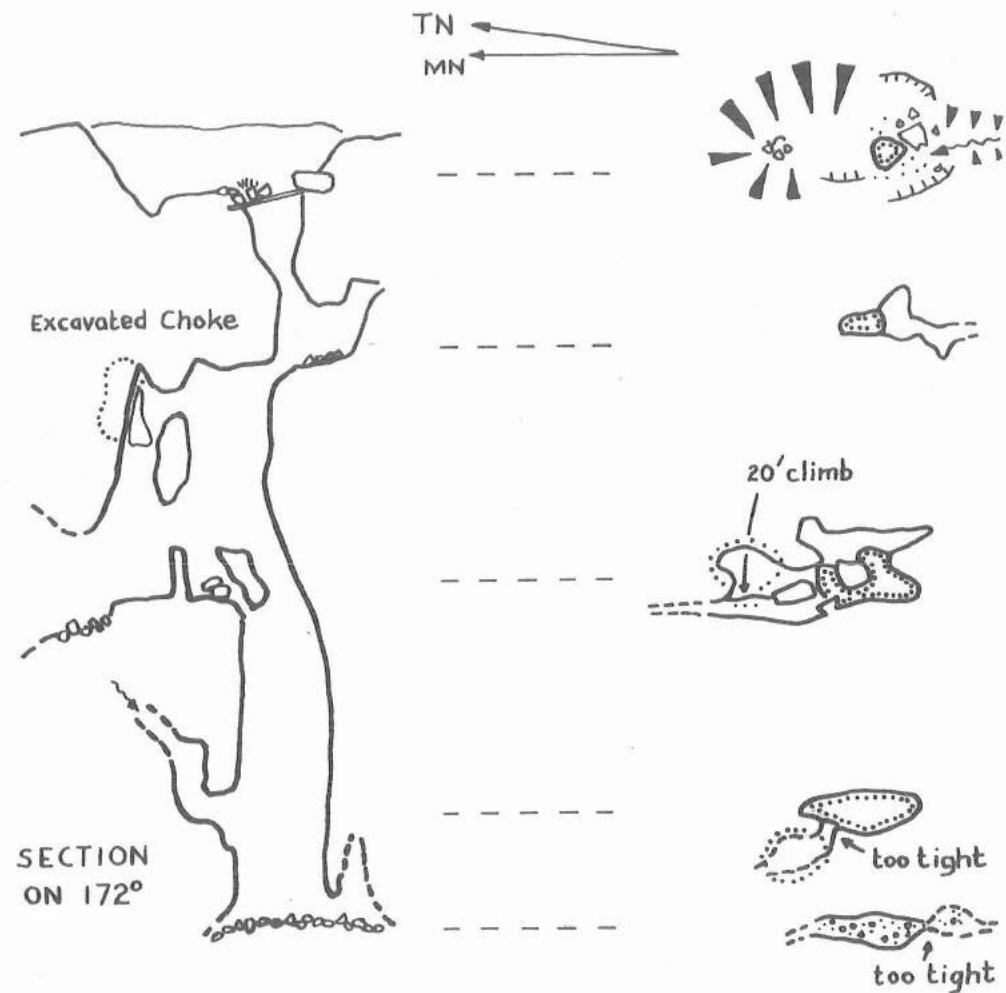
much rock and earth were shifted, no open holes were forthcoming. The resurging water was found to be welling up beneath rather immovable fallen slabs. One diversion was provided by AC hitting himself with the sharp end of a crowbar, and the subsequent emergency dash in the Ryder Morris Minor over the Buttertubs to a doctor, and three stitches, in Hawes.





SWALESIDE CAVE

KELD NGR NY 895011 Alt 1000'
MSG SURVEY BCRA Gr.4b. 29.4.78.



EAST GILL POT

KELD NGR NY 898006 Alt 1300'
DEPTH 96'6" MSG SURVEY BCRA Gr.5b. 17.6.78

East Gill Pot.

'Pennine Underground' describes the pot as being "In shakehole 20 feet S. of gate in second wall from barn". If one substitutes 50 yards for the '20 feet' this location is quite accurate.

The reason for the pot being 'lost' was that the entrance, in a grassy shake with very little rock exposed, had been thoroughly covered over by iron sheets and old rails. This had grassed over, and the only clue to the cavity beneath was the faintly audible dripping of water.

The careful removal of part of the covering exposed an open 20' shaft. AC descended, and cleared a little rubble to expose the head of a much deeper shaft. All the ladder we had - 60' - was fed down, and Arthur went down, to find the ladder still far from the floor.

On 17th June 100' of ladder was put down the pot, and this reached the bottom. The hole was surveyed, and proved to be 96'6" deep. The bottom is a pebble floor, typical of Northern Dales shafts, with no hope of extension. 50' down there is a wide ledge, with a 20' climb to an aven chamber under the north half of the shakehole.

Swaleside Cave.

This is not, technically, one of the East Gill caves, but is located on the north bank of the Swale only a few yards upstream of the confluence of East Gill with the river.

Thousands of people must have walked over the cave without suspecting its existence, for the entrances lie on either side of the footbridge which carries the Pennine Way across the river. From the bridge an obvious undercut can be seen, in which the entrances to the upper section of the cave are situated.

Whilst crossing the bridge en route to East Gill on 29th April 1978, Richard Gibson said he remembered once seeing a cave entrance proper at the rear of the undercut, so the party went to have a look. The cave was explored and surveyed there and then. It is so obvious that someone must have been in before, but as far as we know no mention of the system has appeared in print.

Upstream of the footbridge are three entrances - the uppermost a tight bedding in solid rock, the middle a scramble over boulders and the lower a slot at the back of a huge fall block. All three open into a hands-and-knees crawl running parallel to the river. At its downstream end this ends in a choke.

A few feet downstream of the footbridge is an enlarged joint, concealing a tight tubular crawl with a small stream flowing out. This rounds an awkward corner (which can be avoided by taking an even tighter ox-bow) and runs through pools to the same choke as is seen in the upper section of passage, the stream entering from an impassable bedding. Contact was established with those in the upper section of the cave via a small slot above the choke, which could be cleared if the exercise were thought worthwhile - in fact the choke may be a transient feature. The cave is obviously subject to very severe flooding when the river is high, and may change in character with each inundation.

Total length of passage is 150', 100' in the 'Upper Cave' and 50' in the 'Lower Cave'. In high water conditions the Swale rises several feet, being confined in a solid rock gorge, and the cave is completely flooded, forming a small subterranean ox-bow to the main river. The system is obviously of some considerable age, and pre-dates the gorge in its present form.

CAVES OF THE HELL GILL AREA

Hell Gill, the infant River Eden, cuts through the Main Limestone in a spectacular gorge - the traverse of which is a sporting exercise in daylight speleology.

The limestone bench to the south of the gorge provides several interesting caves. The longest of these is:

Jingling Sike Cave.

A few hundred yards south of the Hell Gill ravine, a small stream sinks at the rear of the grassy limestone plateau, and reappears barely 500' away from an inviting arched portal at the foot of a little cliff. The stream is Jingling Sike, the etymology of the 'Jingling' probably relates to its subterranean section (e.g. the many 'Jingling Pots').

It appears that the first party to explore the cave which lies between the sinkhole and the inviting resurgence portal was a group of NPC members in 1966 (NPC J1. Vol.3.1) - at any rate, they were the first to chronicle an exploration. Anyone expending such effort as the through trip entails would certainly judge the expenditure worthy of some form of public notice.

All unknowing of this previous exploration, Colin Carson and PFR "discovered" the sinkhole entrance, a pleasant ferny place with natural rock bridges, on 24th August 1967. This was in the days of motorcycle transport and "dry grots", before the wetsuit era. The presumed new cave was gleefully entered.

Several hundred feet later, with glee somewhat abraded by sharp rocks and dampened by cold water, PFR was left shivering and moaning on a sandbank, and Colin forged on through an aqueous section before at last turning back, building a little cairn to mark the limit of exploration.

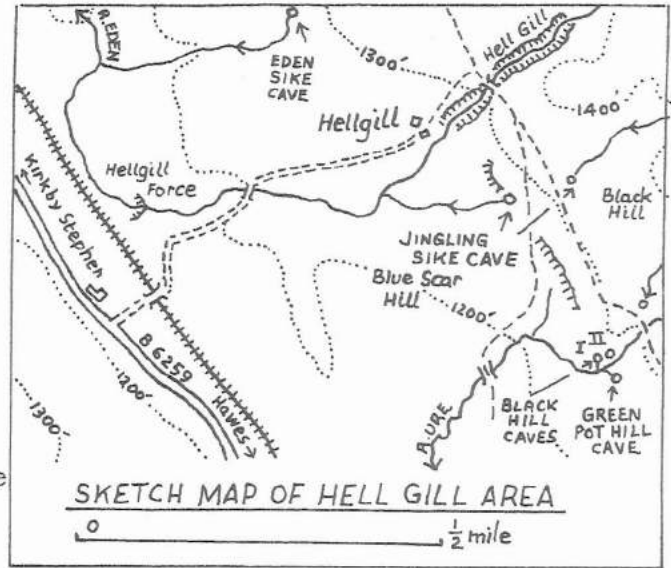
The surface was slowly and painfully regained, where warm sunshine raised drooping spirits. The resurgence entrance was then found. Colin crawled in, and promptly found his cairn, just out of daylight....

It was later that we found that NPC had been through the cave before us, but they had not surveyed it. We realised why.

A decade rolled by, and memories faded. It was, after all, a cave 1000' (estimated) long, still awaiting survey - so in spring 1979 we returned. On the first trip both 'ends' were surveyed, but the low canal midway along the cave was sumped. Survey trip two in drier conditions saw the job completed. The cave proved to be almost exactly the estimated length.

Description of the Cave.

The cave is best described from sink to resurgence. From the sinkhole a 3' high passage immediately turns l. and drops to a flat out bedding - a grim beginning if the stream is high. 20' of gravel leads to a narrowing, and the head of a 6' waterfall. Scrambling down this, it looks



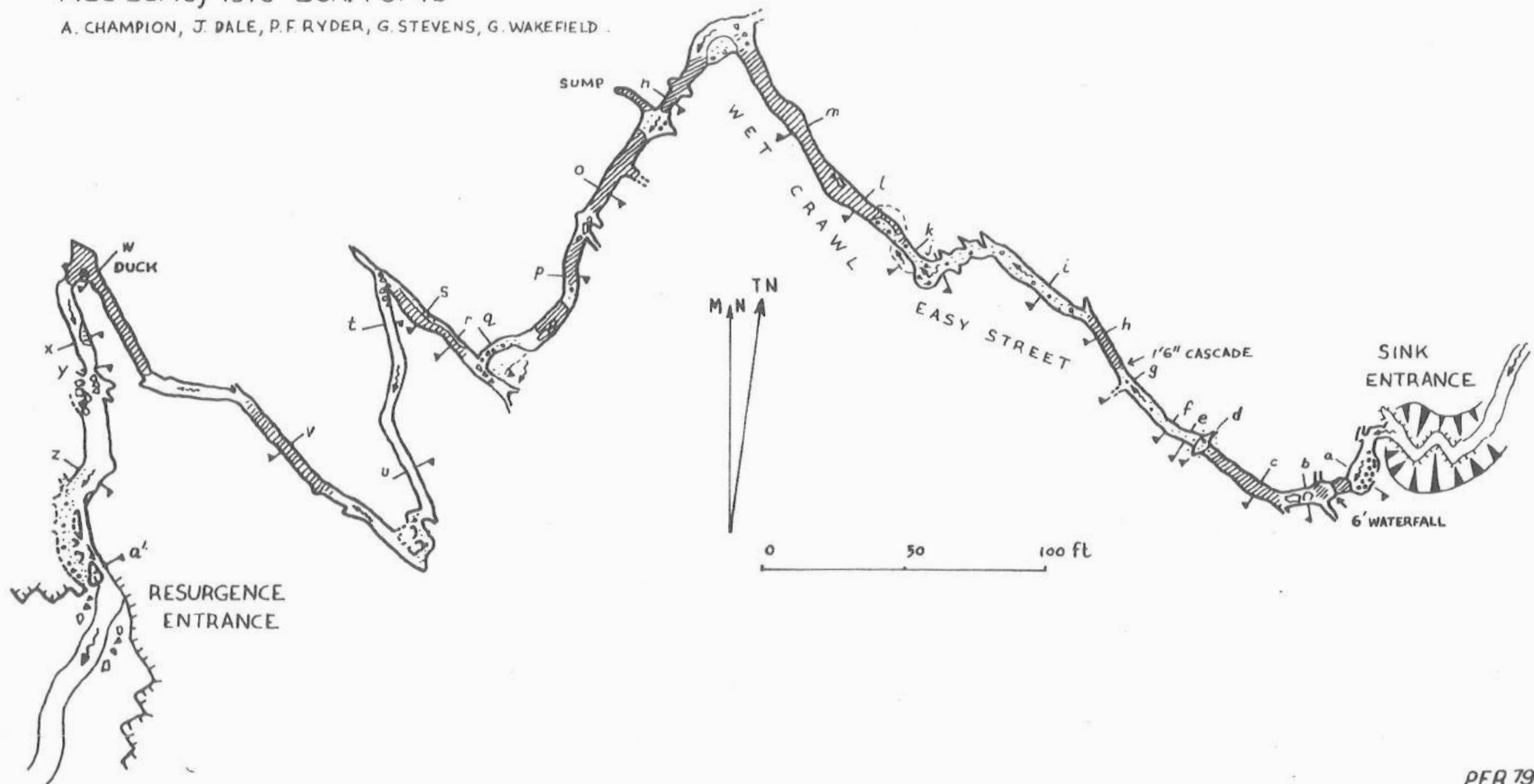
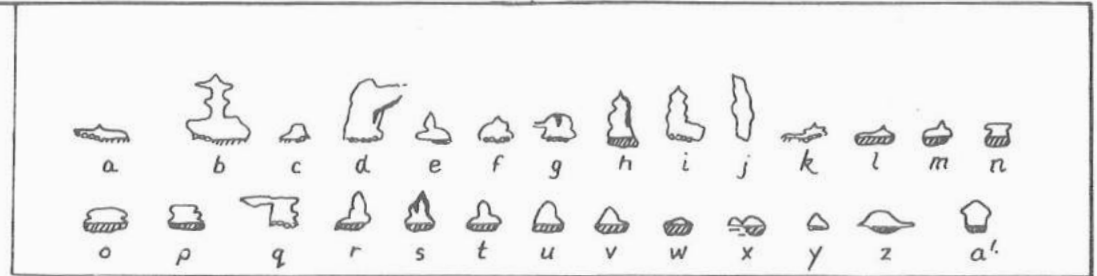
JINGLING SIKE CAVE

MALLERSTANG NGR SD 787966

Length 1000 ft Vertical Range 26 ft

MSG Survey 1979 BCRA Gr 4b

A. CHAMPION, J. DALE, P.F. RYDER, G. STEVENS, G. WAKEFIELD



as if the cave is beginning to open out - however, a thrutch over a boulder leads into more wet crawl. This goes on for 50' to an 8' high joint aven.

From here the only part of the cave that can be called pleasant begins. The floor drops away gradually, and hands-and-knees crawl enlarges to walking in a narrow streamway decorated with small but attractive formations, and named by us, without originality, 'Easy Street'. The promenade is short lived - after 100' the passage, now 12' high, ends abruptly in a small circular chamber. The stream cascades down over shingle under the r. wall into a flat out bedding.

This soon becomes a wallowy wet crawl, a roof joint just giving enough room to keep one's head comfortably out of the water. After another 100' of monotonous progress, the canal ends in a wide gravelly bedding, where the passage takes a sudden turn to the l. Passing a small chamber with a tight 15' long inlet (ending in a sump) on the r., a narrower wet crawl leads on (the passage now having a more interesting cross section, a trench below an elliptical tube) to a point where the stream sinks under the l. wall, to appear again a few yards further on from an impassable inlet.

Here the passage angles r. along a joint, the height increases to a full 3', and formations reappear. The whole character of the passage changes downstream of this point, to a streamway angling along two major sets of joints, with a series of acute bends - c.f. Smeltmill Beck Cave. The typical cross-section becomes a triangle, narrowing upwards. There is no relief from the endless crawling, although no especial difficulty either, other than a duck (in dry weather an easy wallow), 100' short of the resurgence. The final section of passage shows some collapse development, with just before the resurgence (the streamway re-assumes a tubular section for the last few yards) a low oxbow-cum-bedding chamber on the r.

The cave is 1,000' in total length. For a wet-suited caver it presents no real problem other than being a long crawl. However, it is certainly a place to avoid in wet weather - much of the passage floods to the roof, as flood debris testifies.

Caves at the head of the River Ure.

Ten minutes gentle walk along the limestone plateau south of Jingling Sike Cave takes one, unawares, across the central Pennine Watershed of England, and to a gorge where a sizeable stream cuts through the limestone, shallower than Hell Gill but attractive nonetheless - this is the infant River Ure.

At the mouth of the gorge, the flow of the stream is supplemented by a rising on each bank, each with an associated cave. Both of these systems are still being 'worked' by the Group, thus the following reports are of a decidedly interim nature:

Black Hill Caves.

On the north side of the gorge are two small cave entrances, the western debouching a small stream. When MSG members first prospected the area on 14.7.68, both caves were recorded as 25' long.

A reinvestigation showed this assessment to be correct for the resurgence cave (Black Hill Cave 1), a low wet bedding. The dry cave, however, divided at its entrance to a choked 15' long crawl on the r. and a l. branch which was only passable after a little digging. Shingle

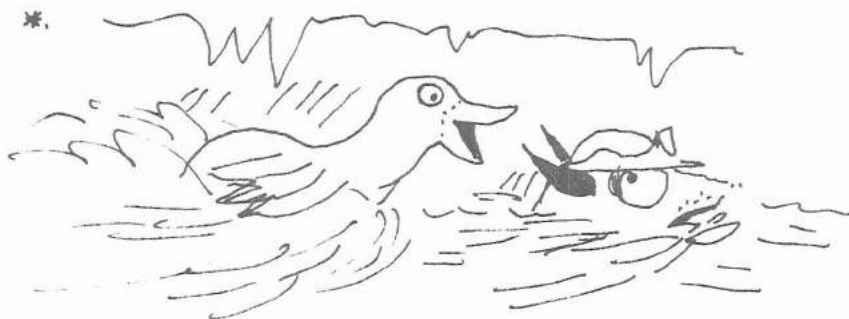
and then fallen blocks were moved in the low bedding to permit a squeeze into a little chamber, with a small stream entering. Upstream, a 9" crawl led to a pool with minimal airspace - a rather technical duck only passable on one's back. Beyond easier crawl leads on to another very low and wet section, not yet passed.

Total length of this cave, Black Hill Cave II, is estimated at 100' so far.

Green Pot Hill Cave.

This impressive resurgence on the south side of the gorge yielded c.150' of cave to a solo exploration by Colin Carson in 1968. A 1979 revisit by Arthur Champion and Robin Sermon proved that what had been thought to be merely the upstream end of an oxbow, c.100' in from the entrance, was in fact a continuation of the main upstream passage, and passable.

20' of aqueous bedding here led on to a narrow rift with fast flowing water, passable for c.50' to an awkward duck, which might fall to a little engineering in dry weather. The total length of the cave now stands at over 200'.



ENDS AND ODDMENTS.....

A lengthy trek across the northern flanks of Cross Fell, on 24th August 1978, resulted in three small holes being found:-

Doups Burn Cave. NY 728368 Alt. 2,030'

A hole noted by Pete Jackson on N.M.R.S., who directed us to it. One of the main feeders of Doups Burn rises from an attractive little cave entrance a few yards south of an old hush. The 2' high entrance opens into a chamber, the floor of which is occupied by a pool. Digging lowered water level by a foot, and exposed a slot into a narrow canal, but this would need quite a deal of work to make it passable. Total length 25'.

Lambgreen Pot. NY 712362 Alt. 2,225'

In a large rocky shake near the eastern end of a row of shakeholes, on the east side of Lambgreen Hills, a hummocky spur running out northwards from the Great Limestone outcrop on the north side of Cross Fell. The hole is entered under a large slipped block but runs into solid rock. Arthur Champion was inserted, and managed to get through a squeeze and round a corner to an 8' drop, constricted with chert ledges. More work required. Length 25', depth 15'.

Backstone Edge Pot. NY 705361 Alt. 2,250'

On the limestone bench below Backstone Edge, in a small shake a few yards north of a larger one which takes a stream. An open shaft in peat leads down to spiky corroded limestone, and a squeeze to the head of a further short drop, probably impassable. Depth 20'.

Sunderland Cleugh Pot, Rookhope Valley, Weardale. NY 934400 Alt. 1,200'.

Sunderland Cleugh is a stream which crosses the outcrop of the Great Limestone on the west side of the Rookhope valley. Mr Foster, working at Northgate Farm, took us to a hole which had recently fallen open on the north side of the Cleugh, at the top of the limestone - probably an old flood sink.

The exploration was a solo effort by Geoff Tryon, braving a highly odiferous deceased sheep. The initial climb down is through earth and boulders, to a 12' rift climb in solid rock. This drops into a roomy rift leading to two openings, a crawl at floor level and a larger opening higher up, which both open into a second rift chamber. To the r. is a 30' aven, to the l. the rift closes to a constriction with a narrow rift visible beyond. Length 50', depth 30'.

Further down the Cleugh, in a vegetated gorge, a low bedding cave at NY 938398 is probably a fossil resurgence. Now a fox earth, it is too low to enter but might yield to determined digging. Quite a strong draught emerges.

Mine Level below Chestergarth House, Rookhope. NY 943420

Rumour had it that this was in fact a natural cave, so we went to investigate. The hole is at the north end of a disused quarry (Great Limestone), and is marked by a spoil heap. To reach the quarry, leave the road just after it crosses to the east side of the Burn, heading from Weardale up towards Rookhope, and scramble up beside the old loading bays into the quarry.

The hole is in fact a mine level, cut in solid rock rather than arched round, and thus mistaken for a cave. Approximately 300' long, it ends in a forehead, after crossing several narrow natural rifts, parallel to the valley side. These are probably mostly formed by pressure release, although phreatic oddments are present as well. Only one rift, c.100' from the entrance, could be entered. Geoff Tryon managed to climb

up into this, and squeeze up a steep mud slope heading northwards for c.20'. Tightness and loose rock prompted a return, although a thin man could probably make at least a few feet of further progress.

An Extension to Kisdon Cave, Swaledale. NY 899011

On 26th August 1978, during a quick tourist trip through the cave, a small hole was noted at the end of the big chamber on the l. of the mine level, which gave a glimpse of something larger beyond. A very muddy dig was embarked upon, until it was realised that there was a virtually open bedding passage heading in the same direction 6' higher up.

After clawing away more mud, John Carver managed to squeeze through this, and dropped into a small chamber, with on the r. a hanging ruckle of large boulders, including gritstone ones. This was not considered a safe place to dig - a conclusion backed up by Arthur Champion, who had a look at the choke on 28th May 1979. Total length 30'.

Lovergill Sink Cave, Swaledale. SD 882961

Two visits here, equipped with scaling gear and Arthur Champion, have seen two new extensions. These will be described in full in a later publication, when other work in the area is complete. The two extensions entered are Bearpit Series (120' of passage) and Cliffhanger Series (85' of passage). Both are characterised by lots of loose boulders. These and other finds in the system bring the total length to over 800'.

Turned Hill Cave, Fossdale, Wensleydale. SD 868942 Alt.1,660'.

A cave first dug out and explored by Richard Gibson, and unsuccessfully sought by us on 11.3.78, when most of the shakes were full of snow. It was at last run to earth on 25.8.78, and can be found by walking 100 paces northwards up the road from the obvious rising for Sod Hole Gill Cave 4, then turning straight up the hillside for 57 paces.

A squeeze leads down onto a boulder slope into a little chamber, with a 15' aven containing some formations, and a choked hole in the floor with no room to dig. Length 25', depth 15'.

Sod Hole Gill Cave 4, Fossdale, Wensleydale. SD 868940

Rather a retraction than an extension! The cave was visited on 11.3.78 and found to have fallen in 40' from the entrance. A possible route through the hanging death ruckle which has resulted was seen, but not entered.

Sod Hole Gill Cave 1, Fossdale, Wensleydale. SD 868937

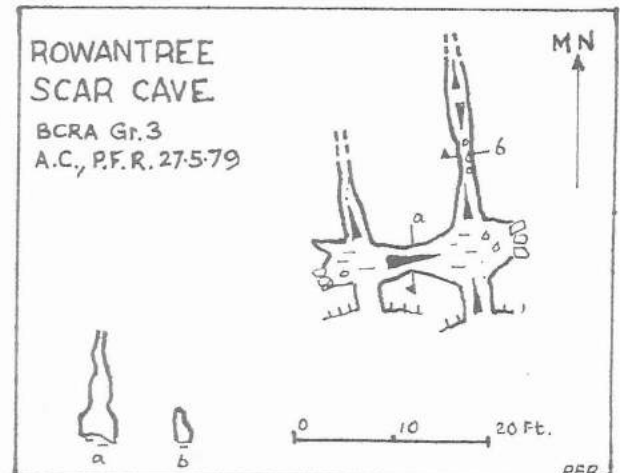
Two "new" avens were squeezed into, both 30' high and both on the r. of the Main Chamber. More interesting, a bone picked up from the clay bank which one descends to enter the Main Chamber was later identified (Sheffield City Museum) as a wild boar's tusk.

Rowantree Scar Cave, Castle Bolton, Wensleydale. SE 023928.

Visited on 27th May 1979, a few feet of narrow rift were squeezed into, but there is no hope of any significant extension. The cave is old and phreatic, of the same type as Bobscar Caves.

Brightgate Cave, Derbyshire SK 265599

The scene of several visits by the 'Sheffield contingent'. The system was surveyed, total length being 1,080' and depth 85' - an interesting and quite sporting cave. A full account with survey appears in Trans. B.C.R.A. Vo.6 No.1 (April 1979).



TWO CAVES IN THE MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE.

A number of caves in the Magnesian Limestone of South Yorkshire, North-East Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire, were described in MSG Journal 7 (1974). Two of these systems have been revisited recently,

Herne Hill Cave and Pleasley Vale Railway Cutting Pot. The former cave has been extended, and partially resurveyed, and the latter surveyed for the first time:

Herne Hill Cave SK 533922

A fossil phreatic system, the entrance to which was exposed in 1973 when a private car park was being constructed adjacent to the main street of the village. In January 1974 it made local headlines when two children were stranded within after lamp failure, and had to be rescued from the noisome depths by a policeman. Later in the same year the cave was examined and surveyed by MSG (J.7 p.16-17), and proved, at 400', to be the second longest known cave in the Magnesian Limestone.

The cave remains open, and sadly defaced by local children, the first chamber being half full of imported rubbish. Representations to local authorities that the cave should be gated and conserved, have met with the usual red tape at some juncture, and nothing has as yet been done.

Recent Extensions.

A few recent visits to the cave, mostly 'evening trips' by the Sheffield contingent of MSG, have seen several of the passages in the cave extended a little further by squeezeing or digging. These add another 150' in length, and merited a redrawing of the survey.

A series of small passages on the l. of Chamber 2 were entered by Dave Lowe (visiting on behalf of the Institute of Geological Sciences) on 3rd August 1978. Entry involves a squeeze up into a rift, thereafter there is no particular obstacle, although the passage remains small, to end after 70', running out under the quarry in front of the cave entrance.

On the same visit a small hole was noted at the far end of the system, on the north side of Chamber 5. Stones thrown through fell into a larger void. A few days later, on an evening trip, this small hole was enlarged to allow a squeeze into a chamber 25' long, ending in impassably small passages. The occasion was celebrated with a packet of chips - how many cave entrances are within two minutes walk of a fish-and-chip shop? Hence "Chips Squeeze".

A new passage was also found on the l. of Chamber 4, the largest chamber in the cave. A very narrow rift leads off here, leading round an excessively tight corner into a higher rift passage which can also be entered from a small aven in the roof of Chamber 4. The rift passage turns sharp r. and becomes too tight, 30' from the chamber.

Total length of the cave is now 550', and depth 35'. Whilst there are no particular dangers, and the cave itself presents no real threat to junior speleologists, it should be preserved from their attentions. Phreatic caves of any length in the Magnesian Limestone are rare, and Herne Hill presents an interesting variety of solutional phenomona. It raises several geomorphological problems - such as the source of the angular debris on the floors of most of the chambers, the walls and roofs of which are covered by smooth rounded solutional pockets. The system should be gated, cleaned up, and access restricted to parties with a genuine interest in the features it has to offer.

Pleasley Vale Railway Cutting Pot. SK 520649

This is the southernmost of the known Magnesian Limestone caves, being situated just north of Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. The brief description in MSG Journal 7 (p.19-20) requires updating and some alteration, in the light of the recent surveying of the system.

The rather clumsy name does at least give the situation of the cave entrance - however Rogan Jenkinson (of Creswell Crags Interpretation Centre), who is currently researching Magnesian Limestone caves in the area, is of the opinion that the system is the original 'Yew Tree Cave', documented in the 19th century as an archaeological site (see 'Caves of Derbyshire' p.125 for references).

Description of the Cave.

The entrance is an obvious hole on the south side of a disused railway cutting, now a public foot and cycle-path. The initial 10' drop is best provided with a rope or short length of ladder, since it overhangs on all sides, and needs some acrobatics to reascend if no such aids are available.

From the entrance chamber a large rift leads off to the south, and to the north, over a boulder, is a 'T'-junction with a rift running parallel with the side of the railway cutting.

The south rift soon chokes, but a hole under its l. wall leads down into a low chamber, really a lower level of the same rift, which steps sideways on a bedding plane (after the fashion of many slip-rift systems). From this lower chamber a crawl leads back northwards to join the main rift, at the foot of a sloping calcited slab to the r. at the 'T'-junction which forms the north end of the Entrance Chamber.

Following this rift on eastwards from the calcited slab, a narrow crawl (which should be tackled feet first) follows, to a squeeze down into a small chamber. A stemple which some person has thoughtfully provided here is an invaluable aid on the return journey up through the squeeze. A rift on the l. of the chamber soon chokes, but the high rift at the far side leads up to a l. turn along a 30' high fissure, with jammed blocks at various levels. This ends at a junction, from which a short series of rifts radiate, all choking or becoming too tight within a few yards.

Back at the 'T'-junction near the entrance, a climb down to the l. leads into another chamber ending in a boulder choke. The way on from here is down a sloping hole in the boulders of the floor, which leads through a narrow section onto the head of a 15' pitch. The ladder and lifeline for this must be belayed back in the chamber above, to any safe boulder.

The pitch drops into a high rift, the floor dropping away and then sloping up again to a widening overhung by an appalling boulder ruckle. This appears to have moved considerably between 1974 and 1978 (as a result of mining subsidence?) and should be given as wide a berth as possible - in fact visits to this part of the pot are not really recommended.

There appears to be a high level chamber above this point, but attempts at entry would be sheer suicide. A hole leads on down to the l., through a narrow rift into a high chamber, ending choked. A scramble up between boulders (some which appear more or less solidly wedged) leads to the head of the second pitch, a 20' drop into another rift chamber. Two holes in the floor of this can both be followed down for a few feet.

Total length of the system is a little over 300', and depth 75'.

PLEASLEY VALE RAILWAY CUTTING POT

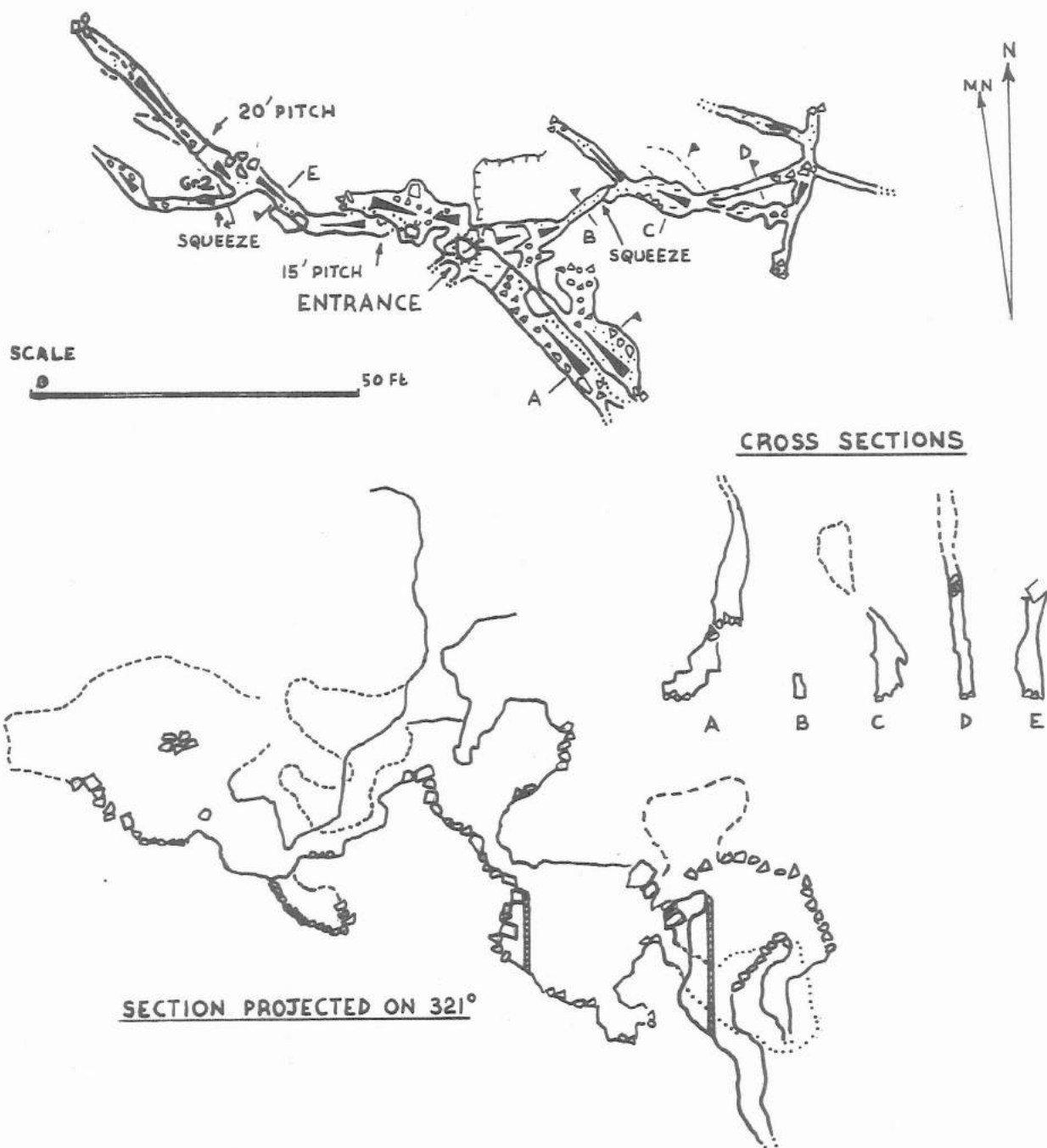
(YEW TREE CAVE?), PLEASLEY VALE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

N.G.R. SK 520649. Alt. 450 ft.

LENGTH: c. 300 ft (91 m) DEPTH c. 75 ft (23 m)

MSG SURVEY BCRA Gr. 5b 10.5.79 J. CARVER, P. FRYDER, R. SERMON.

2.6.79 B. WHITE, R. SERMON



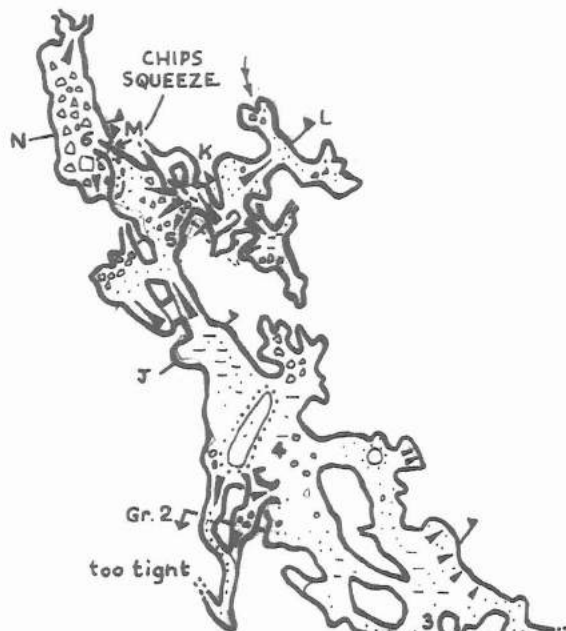
HERNE HILL CAVE

MALTBY SOUTH YORKSHIRE

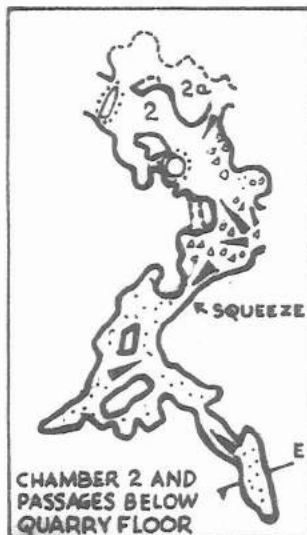
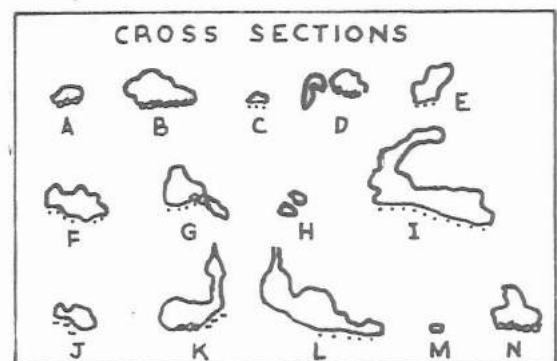
NGR SK 533922. Alt 350'

Length 550' Depth 35'

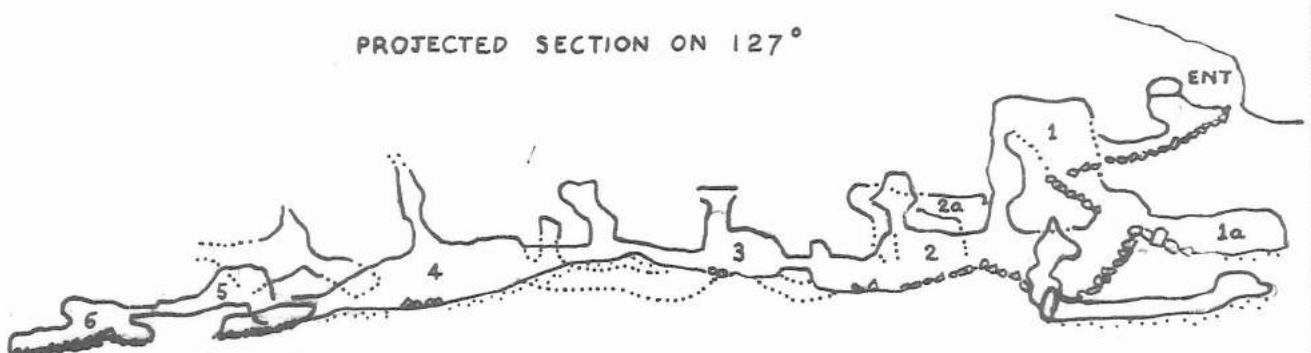
MSG Survey BCRA Gr5b 1974/8



SCALE
0 50 Ft.



PROJECTED SECTION ON 127°



I R E L A N D 1 9 7 9

In September 1979 a small party of MSG members spent a fortnight in the Kenmare area of County Kerry, combining sightseeing with caving. Over twenty 'new' caves were explored, and several known systems extended.

The 'expedition' comprised Arthur Champion, Rosemary Cork, Richard Gibson, Pete and Elaine Ryder, Pat Sweeney and Tom Megahy, most of the arranging of minibus hire, ferry tickets and accomodation being handled by Tom. Transport was a hired minibus from Sheffield.

The party left Sheffield at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday 15th September, two hours late after the hiring company had got themselves confused over which vehicle we were going to have. Despite the delay we made the ferry, 10.00 p.m. from Pembroke, without any problems, managing a tea stop and a brief cathedral inspection at Brecon on the way.

After a rather sleepless night we arrived at Cork at 6.30 on Sunday morning, and headed out west, stopping to look at the ruined Ballincollig Castle on the outskirts of the city. We reached the cottage where we were to stay, at Knockeens, Kilgharvan (about eight miles east of Kenmare) by 10.00 a.m. In the afternoon we had a walk by the Cleady River, which cuts the limestone outcrop midway between Kilgharvan and Kenmare, and promptly found CLEADY CAVE, obviously unexplored, with pleasant phreatic crawls and a chamber housing a bat colony...

Monday saw the Cleady River area more thoroughly inspected, with the help of Dan Leary who lives just above the cave. The system was surveyed, and pushed to a definite end. On the next day, Tuesday 18th September, we made our first visit to the Tubbrid area, which was to be the main focus of our speleological attention. Not realising that some of the caves here were tidal, Arthur and Richard almost met a watery end whilst surveying T6 sink, thereafter named 'DEATHTRAP HOLE'. The area around the caves is a maze of little fields, wooded limestone knolls and thick and impenetrable thorny hedges, in the middle of which little streams rise and sink. Even geography graduates lose their bearings and wander confused - the published sketch map and accounts of the caves were very little help in their location.

On Wednesday Killarney was visited. Supposedly a caveless day, a rowing boat trip to the exquisite Innisfallen Island in the Lower Lake (with an interesting assortment of monastic ruins) revealed a series of lakeside caves where the limestone outcropped. The rowing boat party only just regained the landing stage before a violent storm broke over the lake, and drowning was averted for the second day running.

Thursday saw the surveying of the Tubbrid Caves started in earnest. Several hundred feet of new passage in WATERPUMP CAVE was pioneered by Richard. Friday, a non-caving day, provided the highlight of the whole holiday - a trip to Skellig Michael, a stack-like island rising 700' out of the Atlantic nine miles offshore, and crowned by the remains of a Celtic monastery dating back to the 6th century. As Irish guidebooks tend to put it, "the ruins are in a good state of preservation". Once again the sea made a determined attempt to put an end to the party, the return journey especially being extremely rough.

On Friday evening Donal Gilhuys and Dave Miller of the Irish Speleological Association arrived from Dublin, to join the group for the weekend. Saturday saw the enlarged party back at Tubbrid again, and Donal pioneered a rather desperate duck ('The Blarney Duck' - so called because you have got to "kiss the stone" to utilise the half inch or so of airspace) to make the first through trip between Waterpump Cave and the T5 sink, giving us, at 600', the longest of the Tubbrid caves. Later in the day the ISA contingent and Richard put in a lot of digging to gain 25' of passage in CONFLUENCE CAVE whilst the Ryders attempted to photograph several of the caves.

On Sunday 23rd September the area east of Tubbrid was prospected by Donal, Dave and Richard, without any spectacular finds being made. Monday saw more Tubbrid work, with Richard pushing a wet bedding at T2 sink to find several hundred feet of cave. In the afternoon the FINNIHY RIVER CAVES on the river below Kenmare were surveyed - having been found two days previously by Arthur in the course of one of his solo wanderings (we had been deprived of his presence underground by the fact that he had cut his hand badly whilst making a desperate exit from the flooding Deathtrap Hole on Tue day, which required stitches and abstinence from speleological activity, at least of the subterranean kind).

On Monday evening and Tuesday it rained heavily. Tuesday saw a second visit to the Killarney area, with the intent of visiting Muckross House, and, for the more fanatic troglaphiles, prospecting the limestone of the nearby Muckross Peninsula. More new caves were found here.

Wednesday, the penultimate day of the holiday, was another surface day, spent in the area west of Cork, looking at various ruined castles and monasteries. One brief subterranean excursion was made, into OVENS CAVES. Here even Rosemary and Pat, who had previously stuck resolutely to the surface, were coaxed underground. Whilst most of the party stooped and crawled round the well trogged main passages of the system, Richard and Arthur ventured into the more constricted further reaches, and were repulsed by a rather annoyed badger.

The thought that only one day was left, and that the cave at T2 sink remained to be 'finished off' and surveyed, prompted a dash back to Kenmare for an attempted evening trip. Unfortunately water levels were too high after Monday and Tuesday's rain to allow entry.

Thursday 27th September saw the party divided, the tourist element driving over the Heeley Pass and exulting in glorious landscapes, whilst the cavers went back to Tubbrid again. The stream was still too high to let us into T2 sink - a note of frustration to end caving proceedings on. However, the rising for T6 and some interesting bits of cave were found in the inter-tidal zone in the small estuary.

The return trip, on Friday, was accomplished without calamity, although the drive from Pembroke back up to Sheffield proved rather shattering.

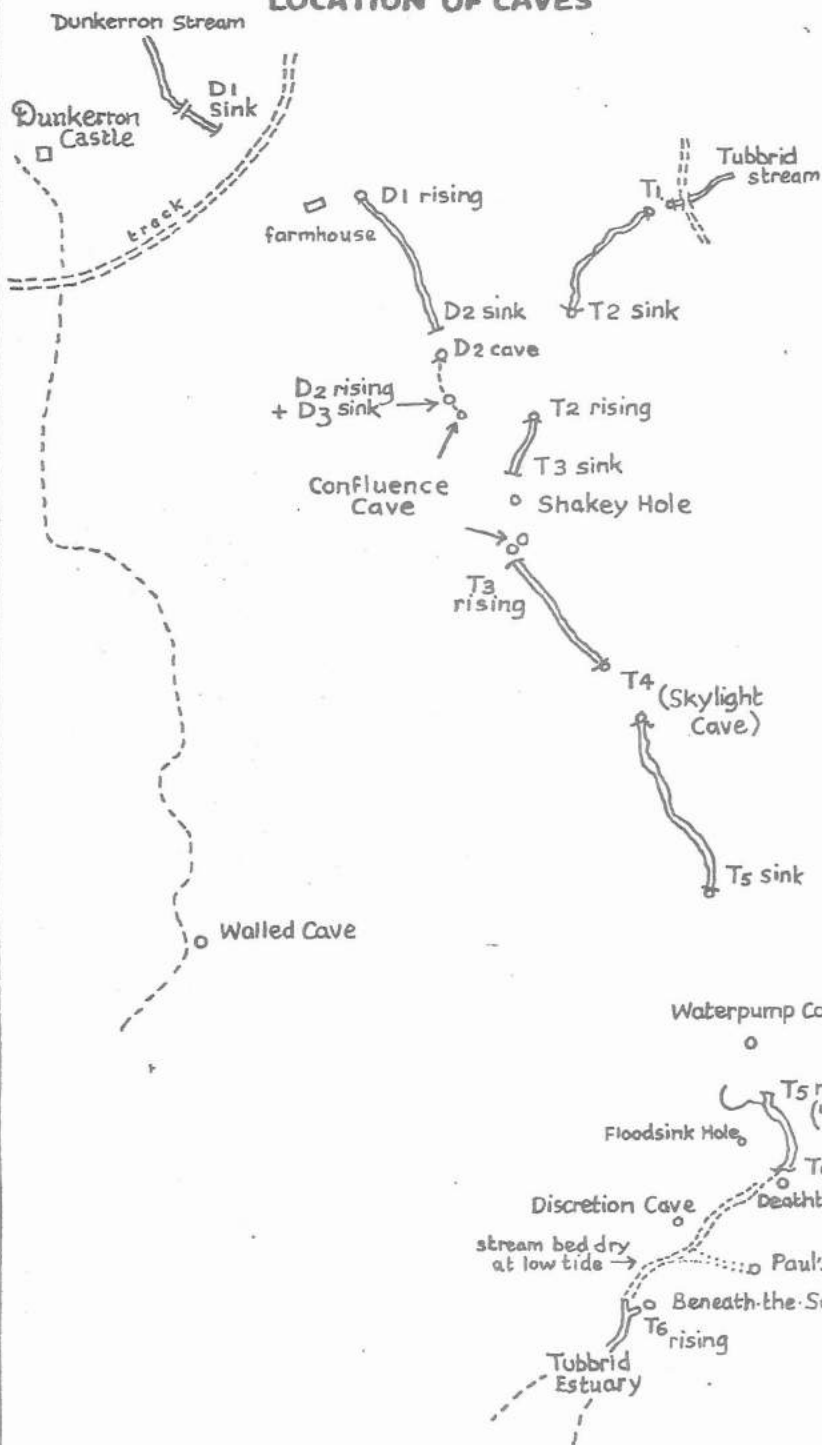
The results of the caving are detailed below under the headings of the various areas looked at.

The Kenmare Region.

The Kenmare River is one of the flooded valleys or rias that penetrate deep into the south-west corner of Ireland. Geologically, the River follows a syncline, which preserves in its centre an area of Carboniferous Limestone, the most southerly outcrop in Ireland. This is generally very steeply dipping, and in parts almost vertically bedded. The outcrop is restricted to the north side of the Kenmare River, where it forms a belt about ten miles long from east to west, rarely extending more than a mile inland (i.e. northwards). The outcrop is at its widest at Tubbrid, two miles west of Kenmare, where two small streams sink and rise several times, forming the Tubbrid Caves.

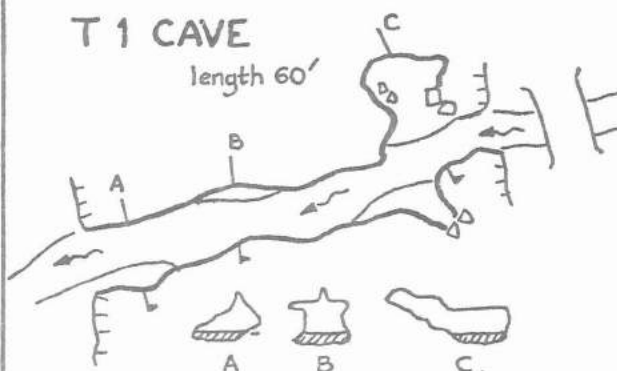
The two larger rivers which flow down from the highland to the north into the Kenmare River, the Finnihy and the Cleady, both have limestone gorges, which provided further caves.

TUBBRID AREA LOCATION OF CAVES



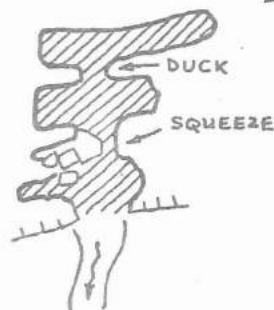
T 1 CAVE

length 60'



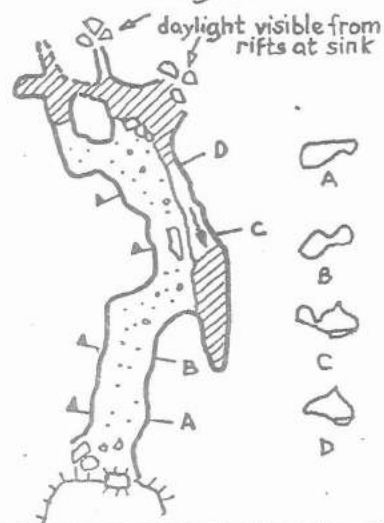
T 2 RISING CAVE

length 40'



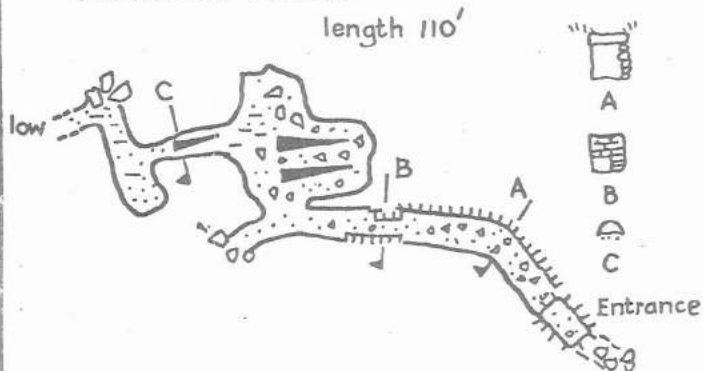
D 2 CAVE

length 90'



WALLED CAVE

length 110'



SCALE (Area Map)

0 500 Ft

0 100 metres

(Cave surveys)

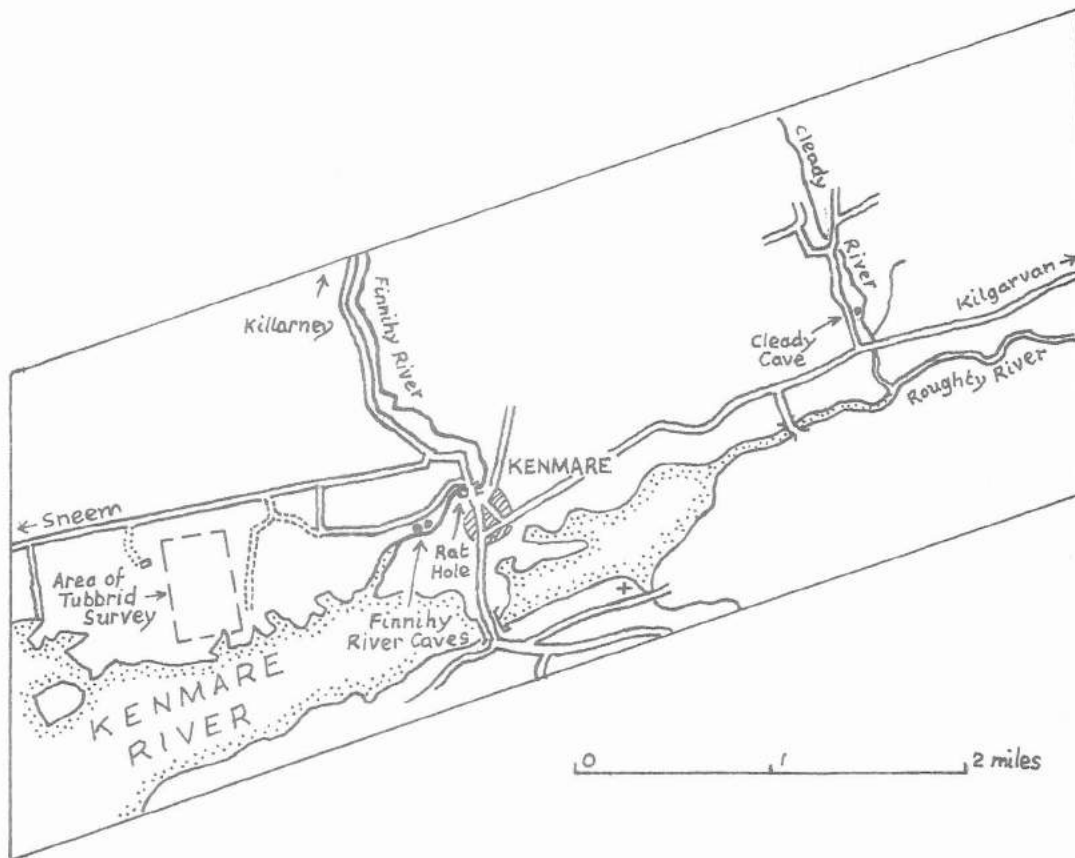
0 25 50 Ft

0 5 10 metres

Surface Survey BCRA Gr 5
Cave surveys BCRA Gr 4-5b (unless stated)
MSG Surveys 1979



PFR 79.



Sketch Map showing the Kenmare Area, and Locations of Caves.

The Tubbrid Caves.

These were first documented by Wingfield and Whitehead ('Irish Speleology Vol.1 No.1 1965 p.15-17'). From their account it was apparent that new passage remained to be found in the area, and that the thorough examination and surveying of the whole group of caves, even if none were liable to be of any great extent, would be a useful project. It was this that attracted the group to Tubbrid, and all expectations were justified. Wingfield and Whitehead's numbering scheme for the caves has been followed, although the more significant systems have been named as well.

Two small streams, the Dunkerron (western) and Tubbrid (eastern) streams, flow south towards the Kenmare River from the Old Red Sandstone hills to the north of the main Kenmare to Sneem road. South of the road, both streams encounter limestone knolls, and sink and rise several times. The sinks D3 and T3 both feed the T3 rising, joining in what was named Confluence Cave. The enlarged stream flows on southwards through the T4 (Skylight Cave) and T5 (Waterpump Cave) systems, finally sinking at T6 (Deathtrap Hole). The peculiar behaviour of T6 will be touched on later. At low tide, a dry stream bed winds on from T6 sink to the T6 rising, amongst seaweed in the centre of the little estuary.

The caves are here dealt with working downstream, from D1 sink to D2 rising, then T1 sink to T2 rising, the T3 system (Confluence Cave) and then T4,5 and 6.

The Dunkerron Caves.

The Dunkerron stream first goes underground about one hundred yards to the east of the ruins of Dunkerron Castle (which comprise a shattered tower house and a length of curtain wall, all heavily mantled in ivy - in the bank beneath the external face of the curtain wall is a 15' long cave or grotto, now fitted with a grille across its entrance). The stream sink is impenetrable, in a low choked slot.

The stream reappears a little over one hundred yards away, near to an old farmhouse. The rising has evidently been used as a water supply at some time, and is fitted with a grille, which however can be lifted up to allow access. Inside, a wet crawl turns r. and ends in a sump after only 20'.

The stream then flows on the surface, beneath a hedge (as do many of streams in the area), to the bouldery D2 sink, where it passes underground again in boulder choked rifts.

D2 Cave.

Twenty yards south of D2 sink a dry stream bed runs out from beneath a small cliff. At the foot of the outcrop, an 18" by 12" hole drops down into a roomy hands-and-knees crawl, leading back towards the sink. This soon joins the stream, which sinks on the r., and ends where daylight can be seen from the choked rifts at the sink. The total length of the cave is 90'.

The dry stream bed below D2 cave leads to a pool, where running water is again met - rising on the r., and sinking on the l. of the pool. This is the water from D2 cave, and sinks to be seen underground a few yards away, just inside the upper entrance of Confluence Cave.

The Tubbrid Caves.

The Tubbrid stream first encounters a limestone ridge just below the bridge where a track crosses it. The T1 cave is simply a stooping size passage 60' long running right through the ridge. The stream then stays on the surface for some distance, until T2 sink is reached

T2 Sink.

The stream flows into a low wet passage, 10' wide and 2' high. When first found, rotting animal remains made entry unpleasant. However, a dam was built a few feet upstream, and when a good head of water had collected, was broken, so the entrance was "flushed out" by an artificial flood pulse.

The entrance passage lowers to a low duck, and then, 30' in, enlarges to a small chamber. The obvious route straight ahead here is too low, but in dry weather an oxbow on the r., with very little airspace, leads through into a continuing passage with 9" of air above 3' of water. A larger dry passage running parallel can be glimpsed through a bedding up to the l.

This was the point at which Richard, making a solo exploration, thought it prudent to turn back. Unfortunately, before a return visit could be made, the weather broke, and the duck after the first chamber stayed thoroughly sumped. There is potential for another hundred feet or so of cave here - total length of passage so far seen is c.130'.

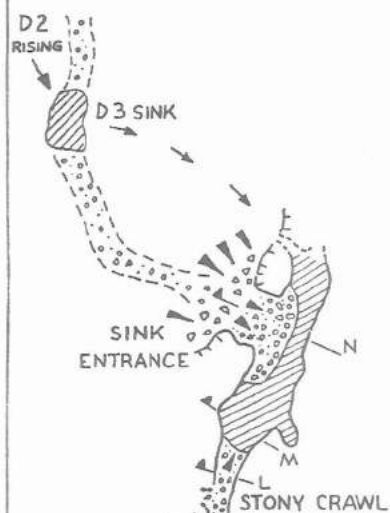
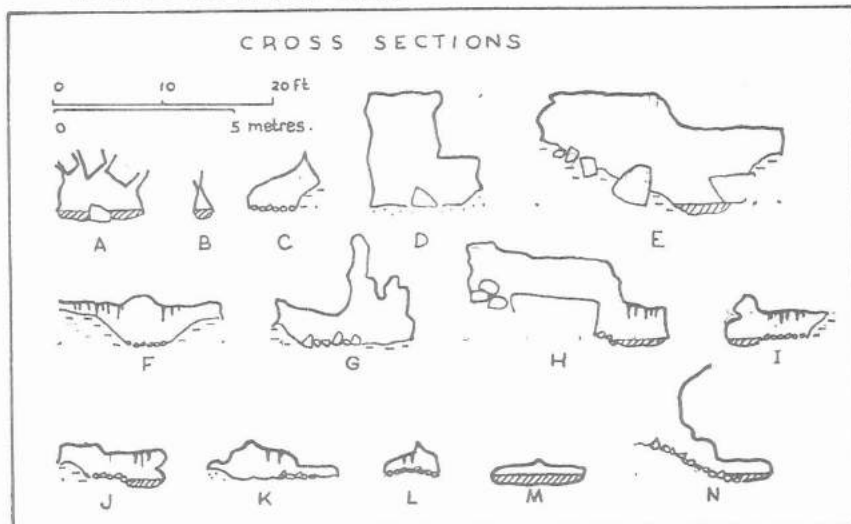
T2 Rising.

At the south side of the wooded limestone knoll the stream reappears from a low opening. This can be entered, and a short aqueous cave explored through a squeeze and a duck to a sump, 40' in.

The Tubbrid stream now flows along a hedge bottom for barely 100', before disappearing underground again in the choked T3 swallet. A few yards further south is a rocky depression, containing:-

CONFLUENCE CAVE (D3/T3)

SURVEY BCRA Gr. 4-5b 20-9-79
LENGTH . 500 ft (150 metres)



MATCHBOX CHAMBER

CUP AND SAUCER CHAMBER

SUMP

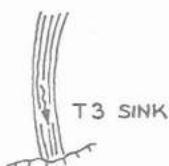
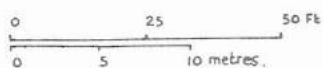
NEW ENTRANCE

LETTERBOX ENTRANCE

LOWER ENTRANCE

Chamber in
ruckle-not surveyed

RESURGENCE



CROSS SECTIONS



MSG SURVEY 1979
PFR.

Shakey Hole.

A cautious descent of 7' leads into an irregular chamber, amidst boulders, with very little holding its roof up. At floor level is a low slot, opening into a solid stream passage. The stream enters from the boulder ruckle beneath the entrance, and flows away down a hands-and-knees crawl, with a high bouldery rift on the r., ending in a sump. This is only a few yards from the inlet sump in Confluence Cave. The point of exit of the water is not clear however, and the sump is unlikely to be freediveable. The cave is 65' in total length.

Confluence Cave.

This is the system in which the waters of the Dunkerron and Tubbrid streams join. It is best visited via its upper entrance, beneath a small cliff a few yards from the pool which acts as the D2 rising and D3 sink.

The low entrance clearly takes water in flood conditions, and drops into a low crawl. To the l. a few yards of low crawl can be followed to where daylight can be seen from a half choked hole a few feet from the entrance. The stream enters here, and flows past the entrance. To the r., downstream, a flat out wet crawl soon gives way to a dry stony section, somewhat narrower. The water is then rejoined, and the crawling gradually eases. An oxbow on the l. by-passes a low section on the stream, and small formations begin to appear in abundance.

A small chamber is reached, where a large block has fallen rom the roof. Beyond this the passage suddenly enlarges to 10' wide and high. The stream is lost again under the l. wall, but a dry passage continues, to where the stream is met again, emerging from a low passage on the l. (Richard grovelled up this for c.40', which must be almost back to the sink). Ahead, scrambling round some big fallen blocks, one steps out into Matchbox Chamber, a flat roofed cavern 12' high and up to 18' wide, housing hundreds of bats.

The chamber ends after 40', where the streamway lowers to a hands-and-knees crawl, and a dry oxbow goes off up on the l. This opens into another chamber, also hung with bats on our visit, with various short branches. This too is an oxbow, curving r. to drop down to the stream again. On the l. here is a passage bisected by an extraordinary thin slab of rock, which appears to have dropped down from the roof, probably the result of solution on two parallel joints only an inch or so apart.

The far side of this slab can be reached from the Inlet sump passage. The main stream passage at the far end of the oxbow runs into a ruckle of massive boulders. On the l. here a dug out squeeze and duck lead into the Inlet of the T3 water, ending after 25' or so in a sump. This section can also be reached directly from an entrance from the surface, the most northerly of those in the boulder slope above the T3 rising.

The main route on downstream is through a chamber 6' above the stream, dropping back down through a small arch into a bouldery chamber, with daylight entering from the 'Letterbox' entrance, passable by very thin cavers only. Animal remains in the water here make this lower section of the cave obnoxious.

The way to the normal Lower Entrance is through a short crawl, and up a loose hole on the l. A tight wet squeeze from the base of this leads to another ruckle chamber and another entrance, but this was not surveyed - prolonged contact with the water in this section of the cave being deemed unwise!

Total length of the cave is c.500'. Wingfield and Whitehead give a Gr.2 survey of this cave (which they term T 3), but could not work out where the two streams came in - they did not push through to the Upper Entrance, and give the cave's length as only 280'.

The various lower entrances to Confluence Cave lie in a boulder slope above the rising, obviously the product of the collapse of a chamber or chambers of some proportions. The stream resurges from a short length of passage ending in a blank wall where a huge block has dropped, only a few feet from the wet ruckle chambers at the downstream end of the cave.

The stream now flows on the surface for a little less than a hundred yards, before reaching the top entrance of T4 or :-

Skylight Cave.

At first sight the T4 sink looks choked, but if one crawls into the low opening, the roof suddenly lifts, and what appears to be a blank wall ahead is simply a boulder which can be climbed over, with care, beyond which one drops into a passage in solid rock.

Downstream, the cave widens to c.15', with the stream in a low section under the l. wall. Formations begin to appear, and where the passage narrows again it becomes really well decorated for a short section. Stooping and hands-and-knees crawling alternate to where a dry passage enters on the l. This enlarges to a small chamber- where another bat was found in residence - then descends a sandy slope into a low muddy crawl, containing a trickle of an inlet. Richard forced this for 40' or so - it is not quite clear where the stream is derived from. The crawl becomes very low and unpleasant.

Downstream again, easy passage continues with daylight entering from two shafts in the roof (the Skylights), which surface 10' above in a little fenced enclosure in the wood above. An easy roomy passage leads on for another 30' to the Lower Entrance, a 12' wide and 5' high arch, shrouded by dense vegetation.

The stream then flows on along a wooded gully between two open fields, until a ridge of limestone rears ahead, and the water flows straight into a cliff face at T5 or :-

Waterpump Cave.

The T5 Sink Entrance to this, the longest of the Tubbrid caves, opens into a boulder strewn chamber up to 17' wide. This soon drops down into a clean-washed stream passage, mostly of stooping size, which after 100' or so lowers to a short crawl, which emerges into a chamber largely occupied by a pool.

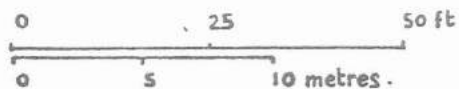
Up on the r. here is a high level passage ending in a choke. The way on is into the water, and through a 10' long duck with minimal airspace, on the far side of the chamber. This has actually only been passed in the opposite direction, and involves progress on one's back "kissing the stone" of the roof to utilise the minimal airspace - hence the name 'The Blarney Duck'. Roof pendants and spikes make a quick dive through hazardous.

Beyond the Blarney Duck, the cave opens up again into a wide wet chamber, more complex in appearance than it looks on the survey. Up on the r. is a choked high level passage, which could probably be dug out to bypass the duck. Passing some fallen blocks, the downstream passage narrows to a second duck, this time a quick one-ear-in-the-water job. A smaller chamber, low and wet, is passed, and the passage continues as a 2' diameter circular tube, half full of water.

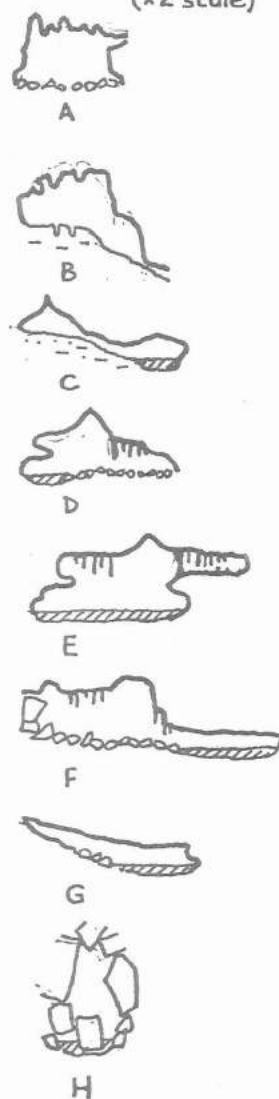
The tube emerges into another blockfall chamber, and a rather roomier passage goes on, to a silt bank up into a dry chamber. Ahead, the passage cross-section changes to an inclined rift, turning r. and then l. again, before lowering to another wet crawl. This becomes wide and wallowy, with the air space down to 6" or so for a few feet, before the passage gains height once more, and daylight is seen from Waterpump Entrance.

SKYLIGHT CAVE (T4)

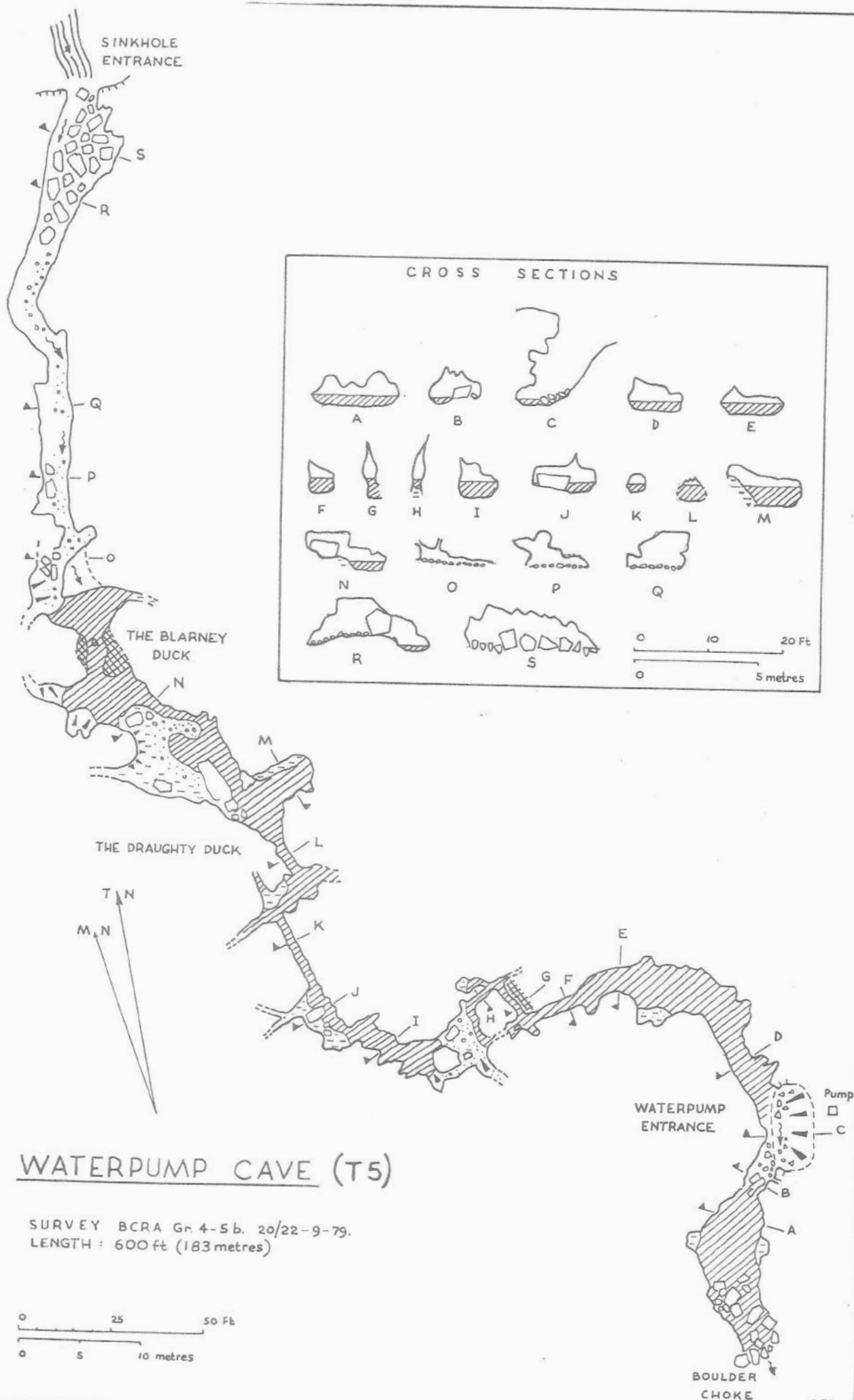
SURVEY BCRA Gr.4b 20-9-79
LENGTH : 210 ft (64 metres)



CROSS SECTIONS (x2 scale)



MSG SURVEY
PFR 79.



Waterpump Entrance, so named from an abandoned waterpump standing beside it, is a wide crater in the woodland, formed by the partial collapse of 30' of stream passage. At the south end of the open hole a downstream passage continues, an easy wet crawl, to an area of fallen blocks, and a final complete boulder choke, 50' from the open hole.

The total length of the Waterpump system is c.600'. If the downstream choke could be passed, another hundred feet or so of passage might be found before one gets to the T5 rising, where a few feet of cave are accessible to a choke.

The T5 rising appears to mark the tidal limit on the Tubbrid estuary. It is possible that high spring tides might cause the water at the rising to back up, and raise the level of the canals in Waterpump Cave.

The main stream at the T5 rising is joined by a smaller flow from a little rising amongst brambles a few yards further north- it is uncertain whether this is another part of the same stream or not. Sixty yards downstream of the main rising, when the tide is out, the stream sinks again amongst blocks below a small cliff, at T6 or :-

Deathtrap Cave.

The reason for the choice of name has already been briefly related! The stream sink itself is not enterable, but a few yards away to the south, on the wooded hillside above the stream, is an open hole dropping 8' into the stream passage. The small chamber at the foot of this can also be reached by a 30' crawl from an obvious entrance in the small cliff beside the stream bed, just round the corner below the sink.

From the chamber two passages lead off, a low upstream crawl, ending after 20' where daylight can be seen from fissures at the sink, and the main downstream route, a wide crawl with generally low airspaces, which rounds several gentle bends for 80' or so to a few boulders and a 2' cascade, into another low passage.

This was the point reached by Arthur Champion on a preliminary reconnaissance of the cave, three or four hours before high tide. Twenty minutes or so later Arthur and Richard started surveying into the cave, intending to explore on downstream from the cascade and survey as they went. They were within 30' of the cascade, and puzzling as to why they could not hear the falling water, when they suddenly realised the reason - the canal they were crawling in was rising fast as the whole cave filled up from its lower end - the 2' cascade had already filled. Survey was instantly abandoned, and a desperate race for the entrance made - one low section, about 10' long, had already filled, and necessitated a free dive, in which Arthur both cut his hand quite seriously, and lost his helmet.

From the safety of the entrance chamber the party watched the water level in the cave steadily rising, at about an inch a minute. Within an hour all but the chamber was full to the roof, and the entrance in the stream bank was flowing as a resurgence. Not until an hour or so later, at high tide, did the tidal water flow up the surface stream bed from the estuary - when it did, it just about reached the level of the entrance, and lapped against the base of the little cliff. As the tide falls, the cave reverts to being a sink again.

The apparent explanation of the extraordinary and dangerous behaviour of the cave's hydrology is that as the tide turns, and covers the resurgence of the T6 system (which is just above low tide mark), the stream flowing in the cave is forced back, and the whole cave fills, the fresh water being forced back upstream by the tidal influx, so that it flows out of the sink some time before the tide actually reaches that level.

After the alarming termination of the survey trip, and with some doubt remaining as to whether the flooding of the cave was quite predictable, the cave was not visited again...

The passage so far explored in Deathtrap Hole (120' of it in all) trends just south of east. The water is next seen at Paul's Hole, which lies about 200' away, almost due south of T6 sink. Paul's Hole is in fact a series of fissures below a small cliff, at the end of a tidal inlet from the estuary. At low tide one can drop down the largest of these into a few feet of passage and a sump. As the tide comes in the water level in all the fissures rises, and the entrance probably acts as a resurgence, as T6 sink does, before being covered by the tide. Fluorescein put in T6 sink was seen in the apparently static water in these fissures, an hour or so before it reached the T6 rising.

The T6 rising is another 200' beyond Paul's Hole, to the south-west. The water emerges between seaweed covered blocks in the middle of the small estuary, the resurgence only being uncovered briefly at low tide. A few feet away, a hole in seaweedy boulders drops into Beneath-the-Salt Cave, a roomy but wet crawl carrying the stream. This was explored for 40' to a sump - whether this is a sump at extreme low tide is not clear. Any exploration here would obviously be very hazardous.

Discretion Cave.

At low tide, a second, smaller, rising was noted a few feet to the west of that of the main T6 stream. The rising could not be entered, but what is probably the same stream was found in a small cave reached by walking up the dry (at low tide) bed of the Tubbrid Stream for 60 yards or so, to just beyond the branch up to Paul's Hole, and then striking up the bank on the west.

A dug out hole leads down into a bouldery chamber, and an active stream passage. Downstream was an attractive tubular passage, with its airspace becoming very low after 40'. A similar length of passage was explored upstream, a roomy crawl after an initial squeeze under a poised block. The fact that this cave too fills completely at high tide deterred as thorough an exploration as might have otherwise been made. The source of the little stream in the cave is a matter of conjecture. The upstream passage appears to be heading towards a small cave we called Floodsink Hole, about 150' north of the limit of exploration. This is entered by a thrutch down through loose boulders beside a small outcrop of weathered limestone, on the opposite side of the main stream to the T5 rising, and a few yards out onto the flat grassy floodplain. This rather hazardous entry lands one in a small chamber, ending in a sump - no flowing water was seen.

The 80' long cave was named, by Arthur, Discretion Cave, who after his Deathtrap experience lacked the necessary valour to force it to its limit. The stream in the cave is possibly leakage from the main stream just below T5 rising.

Walled Cave.

This was the one cave at Tubbrid away from the main group of active systems. It was shown to us by Mr Jerry Hallissey of Dunkerron, who farms in the area, and without whom we would certainly never found it!

The entrance is best found by following the path running south from the ruins of Dunkerron Castle, which crosses a walled lane, and continues as a track. 40 yards beyond the second gate (about a quarter of a mile from the lane), the entrance is only a few feet to the east of the track. However,

it is surrounded by bushes, and not at all easy to find. The small stones one stumbles over in the grass of this area are the gravestones of victims of the Potato Famines of last century.

This cave is completely different in character to the others in the area, being partly a man-made souterrain. The entrance is a hole where part of the roof of a passage running just below ground level has fallen in. This passage has one solid rock wall on the l., a drystone wall on the r., and a roof of large limestone slabs only an inch or two beneath the turf - it has obviously been an open trench at some time, before the slab roof was constructed.

Dropping into the passage, to the east (probably the direction of the original entrance) is choked by debris. To the west the slab-roofed gallery, of stooping height, runs for 25', to where it is closed by a drystone wall. The only route through this is a low rectangular opening at the base, through which one crawls to suddenly emerge into a natural chamber, roughly 15' square, and sloping down to the r. A short branch on the l. ends in a choke where daylight can be glimpsed above. On the far side of the chamber a tubular crawl leads to a bend r. and then l. before the way on becomes too low - scraping out the floor might allow further progress here.

The elaborate walled entrance passage suggests that this cave must have had an important function at some time. What was it? A quick scout around failed to reveal any Ogham inscriptions, or archaeological artefacts, to give a clue to this, only a few bones (presumably animal) on the chamber floor, and one or two bats in residence.

Total length of the cave is 110', of which rather more than half is natural passage. A flick through Coleman's 'Caves of Ireland' shows that quite a large number of similarly modified caves and fissures exist.

Other Caves in the Kenmare Area.

Wingfield and Whitehead suggested that caves might be found where the Cleady River cuts through the limestone, two and a half miles to the west of Kenmare, just above Cleady Bridge on the main Kilgarvan road. A quick inspection revealed that this was certainly the case. The main system found was :-

Cleady Cave.

The entrance to this can be found by taking the side road which runs north from the main road just to the west of the bridge. A little over 300 yards from the junction is a gate on the r., leading into a field with a prominent tower-like limestone outcrop in it. Striking down to the l. of this crag to the river bank, and walking upstream, the cave entrance is found in a small cliff only a few yards north of the end of the field.

The tubular entrance (roughly walled up when first found), about 3' above stream level, appears at first sight to be an old flood sink, however scalloping throughout the cave shows it to have once functioned as a resurgence. The entrance, low at first, opens into an attractive arched crawl with a floor of sand and shingle. Two low branches on the r. can be followed for a few feet, but the main way on leads to a junction.

On the r. is a slope up into Bat Chamber, really a 6' diameter phreatic tube, half full of clay, cutting across the system at a higher level than the other passages. On our first visit fifteen or twenty bats were peacefully hanging inverted from the roof - on a second visit (with the intent of photographing them) they had left, leaving a mound of dark guano as evidence of their presence.

Bat Chamber is c.40' long in all, dwindling to both north and south into low choked tubes. At the head of the slope above the guano pile, against the r. wall, is a 'letterbox' opening dropping into a little complex of passages (quite roomy hands-and-knees crawls) below. The continuation of the entrance passage beyond Bat Chamber, a low crawl, also leads to this point.

The main way on from here (two side passages end choked after 15' or so) is a low arched crawl trending eastwards. The clay floor had to be dug out in two or three places to allow squeezes under low arches. Passing a low oxbow on the l., the passage enlarges to a junction with a short length of passage which evidently carries a small stream in wet conditions. To the r. is 20' of roomy passage to a boulder collapse (on the surface above this point is a small open rift, too small to enter), to the l. a similar length of low crawl to a draughting choke.

The total length of passage in the cave is c.400', all very much of a phreatic nature, but quite different in character to the Tubbrid caves. Dan Leary, who lives in the house just up the field from the cave, told us that in 'The Troubles' of the 1920's some local lads had hidden a cache of guns and equipment in the cave entrance, including tools stolen from the railway, which they later used to remove rails from the viaduct which crossed the river just above the cave (its ruined piers remain) - later running a train onto the viaduct, to be derailed and fall into the gorge below. There was no sign of any guns in the cave on our exploration, but just inside the entrance we did find one very large and very rusty old spanner...

Other Caves on the Cleady River.

Four smaller caves were also found on the west bank of the Cleady River. Three of these can be found by following the river bank upstream from Cleady Cave for 40 yards or so. The entrances follow in quick succession, in a cliff which projects out into the stream - one must wade to get round it.

Cave (2) has an entrance 3' high and 2' wide, opening into a 4' high rift running parallel with the bank of the river. To the l. daylight can be seen through a low section, to the r. goes to a second entrance. On the r. just before this, half choked rifts connect with cave (3). Total length of cave (2) is c.40'.

Cave (3) has an exceptionally wet entrance - in the middle of the rock spur, a 3'6" high arch which is virtually submerged. A duck through leads one into a rift chamber parallel to the stream, with half choked rifts connecting with cave (2). Total length 20'.

Cave (4) is on round the corner, and has three entrances to a little complex of inclined tubes. Total length again about 40'.

The fifth of the Cleady caves, Cleady (5) is situated, still on the west bank, about half way between Cleady Cave and the main road bridge. A small complex of low passages with a boulder ruckle once more total around 40' in all.

A tributary stream joins the Cleady River from the east, just upstream of the main bridge. By following this upstream for 2-300 yards, a short through cave or natural bridge, 30' long, is found.

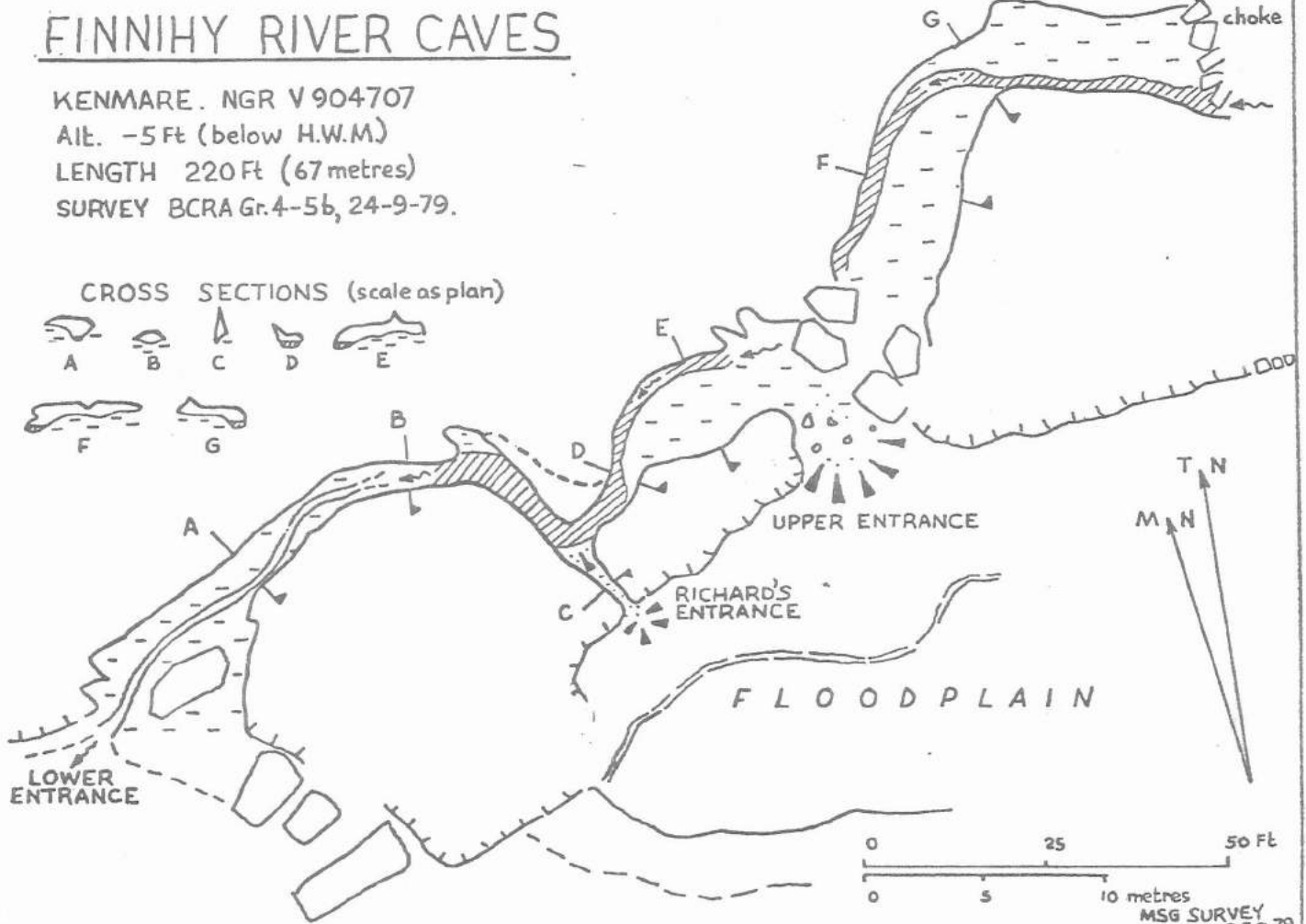
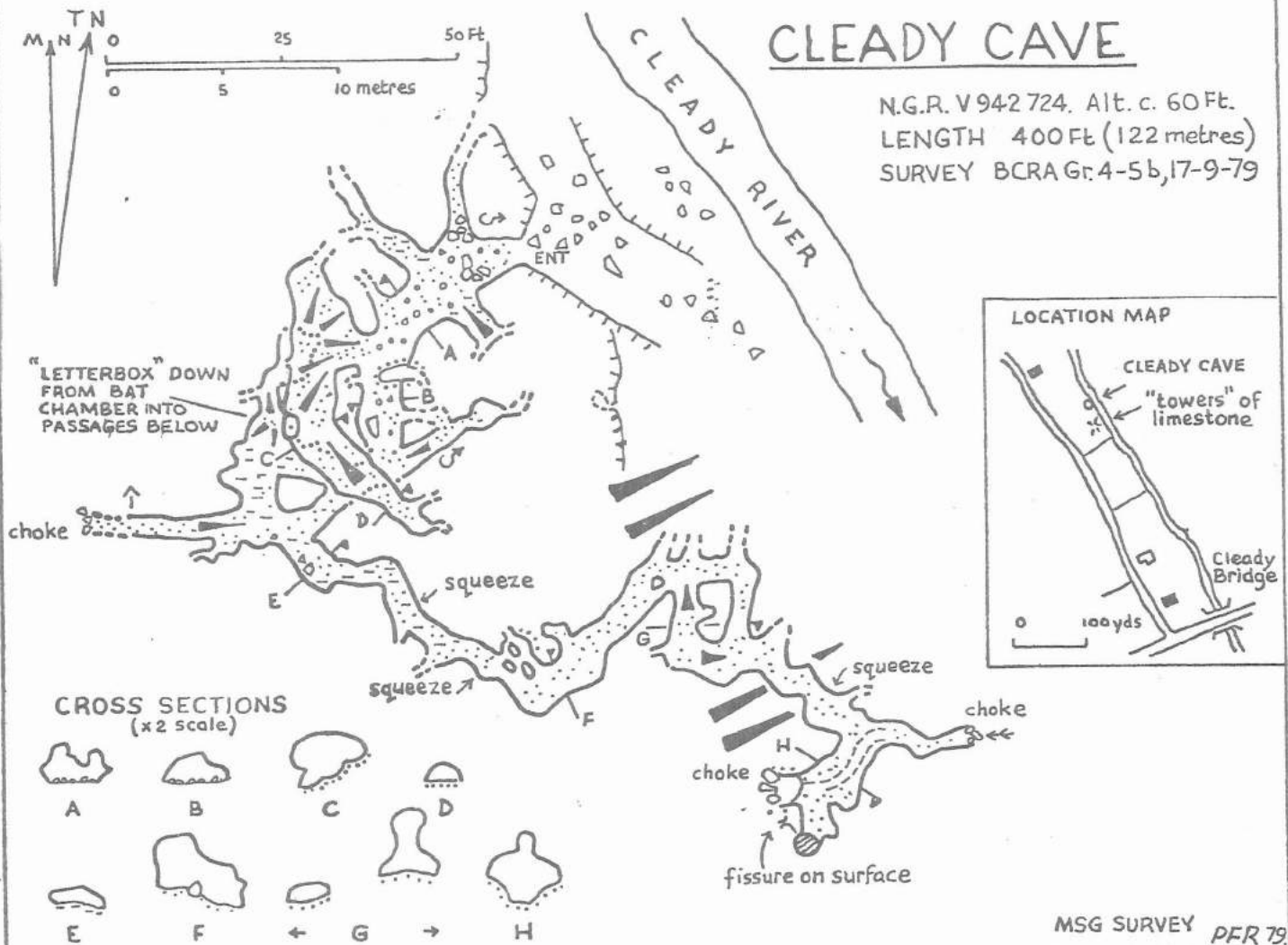
Caves on the Finnihy River.

The Finnihy River flows through the centre of Kenmare, and for the mile or so of its course between the town and the Kenmare River, has limestone fairly continuously exposed on both banks. We would not claim an exhaustive examination of this section, but two caves were noted:

Rat Hole.

This was 'discovered' by the simple expedient of peering over the parapet of the bridge in the centre of Kenmare! A few feet downstream, on the south bank, was an outcrop of limestone pierced by a low wide opening, with a house built directly above.

Arthur was promptly dispatched over the parapet with a carbide lamp. Gaining the river bank by sundry acrobatics, he found the cave was not quite as appetising as it appeared at first sight. Sewage from the house above dripped into the odiferous passage, which after 20' divided into small joints which would have required excavation - a larger passage could be glimpsed beyond. A remarkably unperturbed rat was found to be observing the explorer from barely a whisker's length away, and he retreated.



The Finnihy River Caves.

These were found about half a mile downstream from the bridge at Kenmare, on the north bank of the river, opposite to and a little below a stone circle.

The caves are basically a single streamway, running more or less parallel to the river. Like the T6 and Discretion Cave systems at Tubbrid, they flood completely at high tide. The system is best described from the lower entrance first.

The Lower Entrance is quite an impressive arch 12' wide and 5' high, from which a small stream emerges, flowing from between mudbanks which swiftly reduce the height of the passage. Crawling in, one finds oneself sinking in the deep soft mud-and-seaweed floor - the mixture is somewhat odiferous, and the fact that Kenmare's sewage is discharged into the river only a few hundred yards upstream becomes rather dominant in one's thoughts. Within 30' the cave has reduced to a flat out grovel in the foul stuff, and the going becomes wetter, until the passage turns r. and daylight is seen ahead. This is from a narrow fissure, just passable, running out to a hole between the river cliff and the floodplain (Richard's Entrance). Before this is reached, the stream enters from a low and disgusting slot on the l.

The low muddy slot might be passable with determination, but there is no need for such efforts, as the Upper Entrance, a larger tree-lined hole at the back of the floodplain, gives easy access to the same point. The downstream passage from here is at first 15' wide and 3' high, but soon lowers and narrows to the aforesaid slot, which is only a few feet long.

Upstream from the Upper Entrance, a scramble through boulders leads into a wide arched passage, again 15' wide, with the stream against the l. wall and mudbanks occupying the remainder. Easy but muddy going for c.80' leads to a complete choke of boulders, evidently a major collapse - there seems little prospect of a way on. A rusty tin jammed in a roof fissure slowly dripped water, evidence that it was filled completely on each high tide.

The source of the little stream is a mystery. It might be worth scanning the hillside above the final choke for entrances there, although the area is well endowed with the most ferocious of Irish undergrowth. The total length of passage explored is 220'.

The Killarney Region.

The next outcrop of limestone to the north of Kenmare is found in the Killarney region, where much of the Muckross Peninsula, between the lower two of Killarney's famous three lakes, is formed by it. We only had time for one brief visit to this area, where Coleman refers to "a number of small caves of no great length".

Caves on the North Shore of Muckross Lake.

Roughly the eastern half of the south side of the peninsula is formed by limestone, with low cliffs and a considerable number of 'lake caves' - what appear to be a lacustrine version of sea caves.

The Colleen Bawn rock, at V 948859, is an isolated 'stack' of limestone a few yards out from the cliff line. Its base is riddled with low passages, none more than a few feet long. To the east of here there are numerous caves in the cliffs, which we did not have time to look at properly. One which was perhaps typical, in the first headland to the east of the rock, had several entrances and 2-300' of passages, none very far from daylight. The limestone is sharp and jagged, with much

spectacular scalloping and fluting. Perhaps the most interesting feature was an 'inland' entrance, a scramble up an earthy bank leading to the surface (in the middle of a holly bush) about 20 yards back from the edge of the cliffs.

Another cave looked at, a few hundred yards further eastwards again, also had a landward entrance, a scramble down into a rather loose tilted chamber, with one exit out onto the lakeshore, and another passage running inland for 50' or so, ending in a chamber housing several bats.

The passage cross sections of these lakeshore caves are heavily influenced by the steep dip of the limestone, bedding planes and rifts tilted through 45° being common. This is in sharp contrast to the stream caves at Tubbrid, where although the strata are equally steeply inclined, the passage cross sections rarely show it.

Caves on the Peninsula.

Time did not allow anything more than a brief walk through the woodland which covers the east end of the Muckross Peninsula, with a quick foray into any caves stumbled across en route. Geomorphologically, this part of the peninsula consists of a series of low limestone hills, densely wooded, with marshy areas, more open and grassy, in between - these appear to have been the beds of lakes at some time. The first three of the caves visited are situated on the edges of the hillocks, and are probably 'lakeshore caves' similar to those now found along the shore of Muckross Lake. The fourth cave, Signpost Cave, is probably much older, formed at a time when the surface topography was utterly different to what it is now.

(1) Prospect Cave.

This is at approx. V 958861, and can be found by walking 45 yards south-east from point '15' (indicated by a numbered board) of the nature trail which winds its way round the peninsula. A squeeze down into a small opening on the edge of a limestone knoll leads into a roomy crawl, and a short series of joint passages, ending too low after 120', but with the prospect - hence the name - of more if the floor at the end were dug out a little...

(2) Straw Cave.

At approx. V 955860, where the road comes close to a limestone knoll, 100 yards west of point '15' on the nature trail. A bedding passage running parallel to and only a few feet back from the edge of the knoll, with three entrances. The straw in it seems to have been brought in by some animal, probably a badger, which uses the cave as its habitation. Total length c.70' (not surveyed).

(3) Richard's Caves.

More knoll-edge caves, 15 yards south of the road, 70 yards west from the side path to the upper entrance of Signpost Cave. Several entrances and short lengths of passage. One 35' long through trip, another a 20' long chamber containing a pool. (not surveyed).

(4) Signpost Cave.

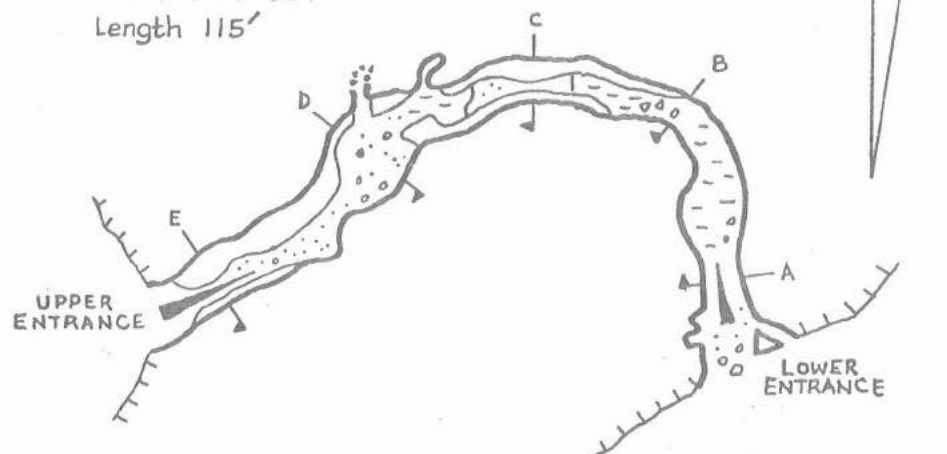
This could not really be claimed as a new exploration - a large signpost labelled 'Cave' points to it, and a well trodden footpath goes right through. A dry phreatic tube, usually about 6' in diameter, goes right through the top of a high limestone knoll, making a through trip 115' long. There are no side passages except for a couple of excessively tight fissures.

SIGNPOST CAVE

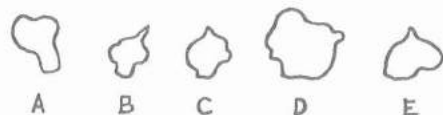
Muckross Peninsula

N.G.R. V 962864

Length 115'

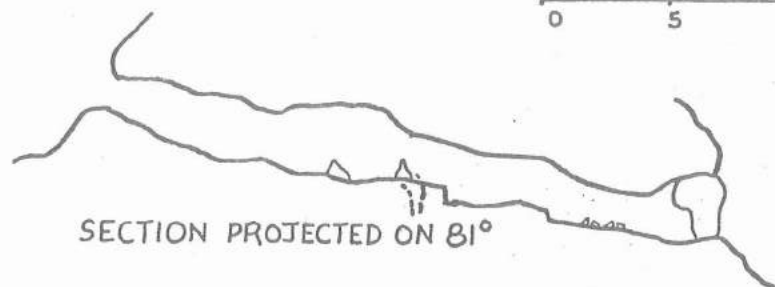


CROSS SECTIONS



Survey 25.9.79 BCRA Gr.5b

0 25 50ft
0 5 10metres



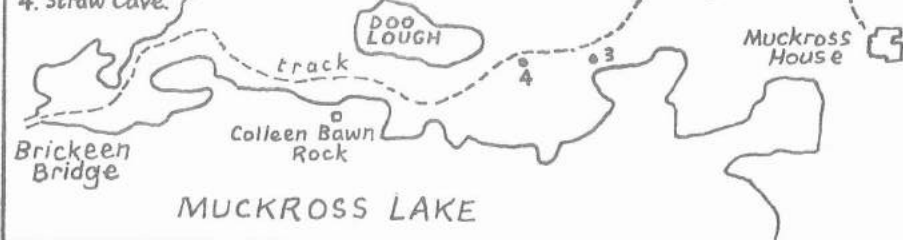
CAVES OF THE MUCKROSS PENINSULA

SKETCH MAP OF AREA

0 1/2 mile

LOUGH LEANE

1. Signpost Cave.
2. Richard's caves.
3. Prospect Cave.
4. Straw Cave.

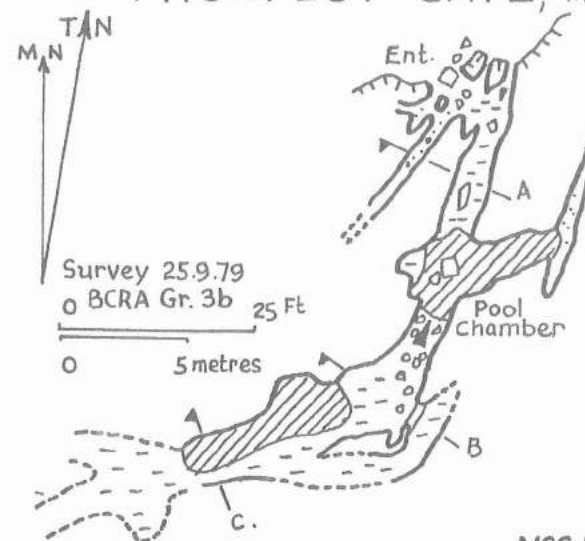


PROSPECT CAVE, Muckross Peninsula

N.G.R. V 958861

Length 120'

MNTN



Survey 25.9.79

0 BCRA Gr. 3b 25ft

0 5metres

CROSS SECTIONS.



MSG SURVEYS

PFR 79

In the immediate vicinity of Signpost Cave are several other small dry caves, probably similarly ancient. Time did not permit a thorough exploration or survey of these - these caves too house bats!

Caves on the North Side of Ross Island.

Ross 'Island', labelled as such on the O.S. 1":1 mile map, is not really an island, but a peninsula, jutting out from the east side of Lough Leane, the largest and lowest of the three Killarney lakes.

On the narrow neck of land connecting the 'island' to the main lakeshore is the impressive ruin of Ross Castle, currently under repair, from which rowing boats can be hired to visit the various islands in the lake. On what was officially a "day off" from caving, Pete and Elaine Ryder, Rosemary Cork and Richard Gibson hired a boat from here to visit the monastic ruins on Innisdallen Island. En route to Innisfallen, limestone cliffs and cave entrances were noticed on the north side of Ross Island itself, and visited on the way back.

The shireline here is quite idyllic, limestone outcrops fantastically sculptured by solutional action jutting out from the woodland into the shallows of the lake. We boated in as close as we dare, and let Richard disembark into a couple of feet of water, to wade through the water-lilies to inspect the various cave entrances visible. None of the caves seems of any great extent. The most noteworthy was a hole was Fang Cave, with a superb entrance which is symmetrically divided into three by two pointed fangs of rock. Inside is 40' of small passage with another entrance round the corner. Nearby is another little cave 30' long.

.....

CROSSWORD SOLUTION:

The Moldywarp crossword is on page 48, read the solution after you've tried it!

- DOWN:
1. Stream passage.
 2. Absail.
 3. Arrive.
 4. Trek.
 5. Tactile.
 7. Helmet.
 8. May.
 10. Bad.
 12. Fail.
 14. Ant.
 15. Squeeze.
 16. Low.
 19. Rising.
 20. Sump.
 22. Gnash.
 23. Agile.
 24. Float.
 27. Sink.

- ACROSS:
1. Stalactites.
 6. Thin.
 9. Resurgence.
 10. Delay.
 11. Elf.
 13. Ladders.
 17. Aven.
 19. Swallet.
 20. Insane.
 - 24, 26. Gaping Gill
 - Winch meet.
 25. Nose.
 28. Ducks.

SAFETY RULES O.K?

Can you imagine how Richard Gibson and I felt as we crouched in an airbell in what was to be named 'Deathtrap Cave' (see p. 31) as we realised that the incoming tide from the Atlantic Ocean would soon terminate our life on Planet Earth! Just about the only thing left to do was take a last breath - fighting off the horrible prospect of salt water burning down into the lungs - and plunge forward into the black water.

As it happened, thank God, a few violent surges forward brought us into usable airspace and the glorious light of day.

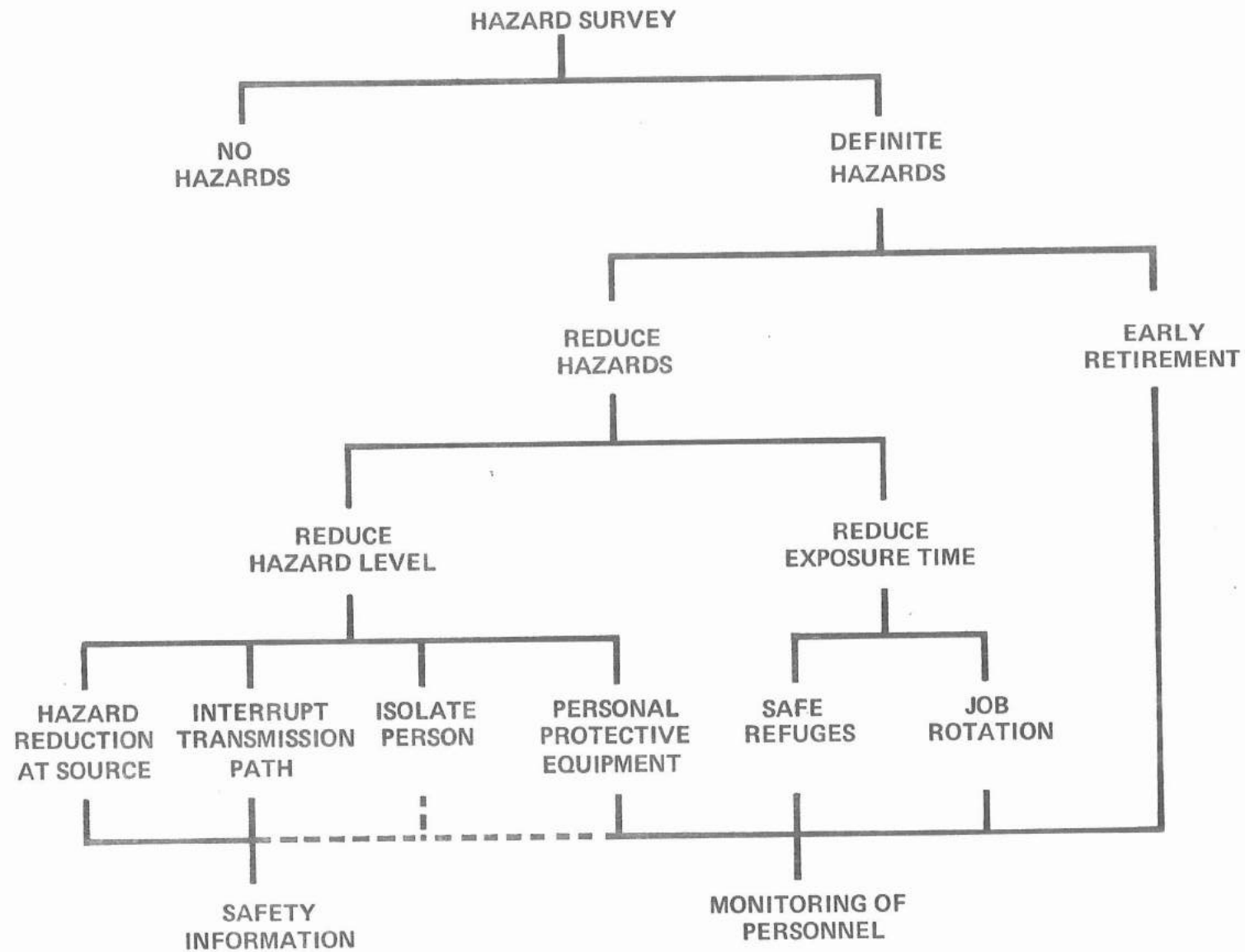
The gems of wisdom which inevitably follow such a "bad do" are here presented, to avoid the repetition of such an incident, and these principles are applicable to normal caving. The organisation of tactics follows a widely acclaimed policy for the control of industrial noise; a field in which I happen to find my employment. What follows is an elaboration about the concepts presented in the accompanying diagram.

The associations conjured up by names such as 'Peak Cavern', 'Mossdale', 'Langstroth' and 'Dowber Gill Passage' bear witness to the need for careful consideration of hazards. The folly of making assumptions as to what might be encountered is particularly relevant to the exploration of 'new' caves such as Deathtrap Hole. But do we ever learn? The very first common sense precaution to be taken is to form an assessment of even the most unlikely hazards (such as the tide coming in inside a cave which you did not even realise was tidal?) This stage should involve the reading of accident reports, guidebooks, contact with local speleologists and personal familiarisation with the geology and topography of the area. It will rarely be the case that no hazards are identifiable - even a Grade 1 cave might conceal dangers for the unwary.

This exercise should lead to a list of possible dangers. The likelihood of a serious incident is intensified by the breaking of new ground. Should we leave it for the next generation? The decision to proceed (with caution) opens up two possibilities: make this your last cave, and go into early retirement (writing caving books, turning your attentions to hang gliding or shark dentistry) or accepting the challenge of reducing the hazard but retaining the sporting element. It will not always be feasible to reduce the most severe hazards without damaging the cave environment. Cave conservation must not be neglected, should be given top priority and is of extreme importance (Ed.)

Ideally, the actual hazards themselves can be modified (a loose block can be propped in place) but if this is not possible the exposure time to danger can be minimised (you don't eat your lunch under the block).

Turning attention to the actual agents of harm offers four principal areas of control. By far the most important concerns the reduction of hazard at source. A freehanging



Two Small Caves in Wensleydale.

Thrupton Gill Cave

At the top of Thrupton Gill, above West Burton in Bishopdale, a cave at NGR SE 031855 was found whilst on a surface walk on 24-8-79.

On the next day the cave was examined. It lies at the head of a small dry valley in the limestone, adjacent to a 12' waterfall.

The 14" high 18" wide entrance is a spray-lashed crawl down a gravel slope into a 15' wide blockfall chamber. Straight ahead is 10' of passage to a step up of 1' and a muddy gravel to a choke.

In the chamber, on the l. the stream runs below large collapsed roof slabs, and a crawl between these leads into a short passage ending in a choke beneath the outside waterfall. Back in the chamber, an open passage in solid rock can be seen, taking a small stream, by peering between three big slabs. An unsuccessful and very unhealthy squeeze was attempted here.

Digging is not a viable proposition because the cave is formed in the thinly bedded Middle Limestone, just below the shale boundary, and is very loose throughout its miniscule 25' length.

Pike Slack Sinks.

Shakeholes on Pike Slack, Wensleydale (NGR SD 873932) have been poked at by JD over 1978-9, and a few small holes noted.

A passage dug in the stream bed of the largest sink (West Sink) was forced to a 5' drop down loose boulders to an impassable rift taking the stream. A constriction through which one can see this stream passage was found in the East Sink.

In August 1979 this "impassable" rift was forced by JD. Entering head first proved extremely hazardous, as it was nearly impossible to exit. So once down the entrance drop feet first, helmet and cell off and lying in the stream, the rift was pushed for 12' to an obvious 90° bend taking the stream towards a 30' choked shaft in the East Sink (this was found by dropping a plumb line down between boulders on the main east-west joint). Straight on, daylight could be seen through the fissure into the East Sink. Coming out of the hole proved even more fun - it is quite easy if you have knees that can be dislocated at will!

Outside, a crowbar was dropped down a hole - the hole was enlarged, and found to drop into a small passage in loose boulders. It became obvious that these deepish rocky shakes have deep shafts blocked with rubble, and that the streams sinking cascade down to resurge $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away and 120' lower down the moor. On this trip a rock leapt out at JD, and, after covering the main sink over, he headed for the car, bleeding profusely.

Interest has waned once more, but the sinks are very impressive, and the impression is that there should be something there - yet the known passages seem very immature.

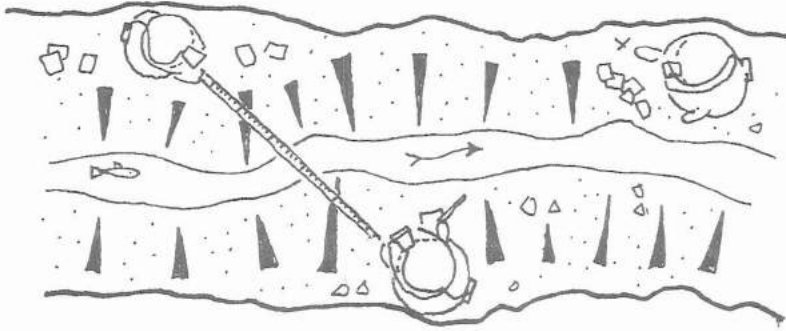
John Dale

MSG Surveys - the truth at last!

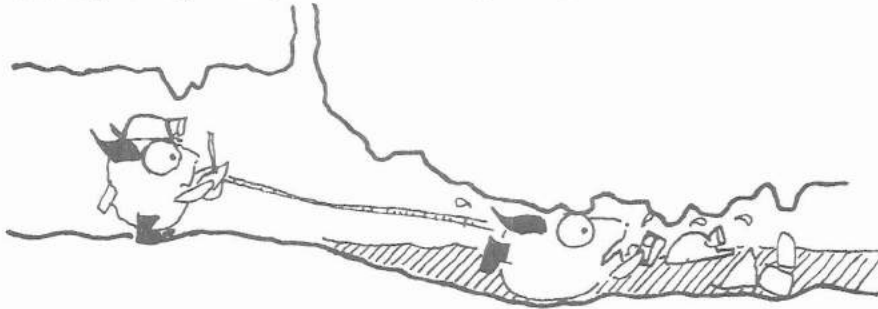
MSG surveys are carried out with ultimate care and precision by a dedicated band of surveyors. As devotees of the Northern Dales will know, the caves are occasionally less than ideal. It is difficult to read the compass when the water reaches your eyebrows; it is difficult to write and draw unless your pencil and notepad are shivering in phase with each other; it is difficult to see the next station when surveying round several corners in one leg....

Under conditions such as these, it is possible that the following

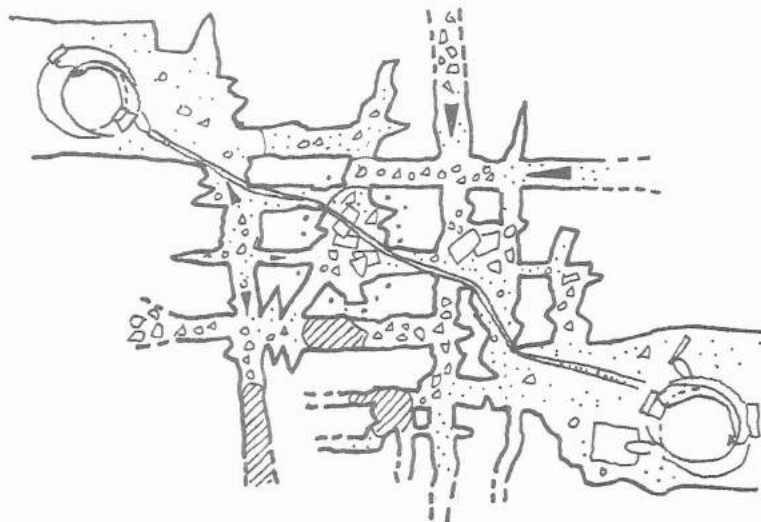
items of conversation reputedly overheard on surveying trips were in fact misheard - but this is what it sounded like



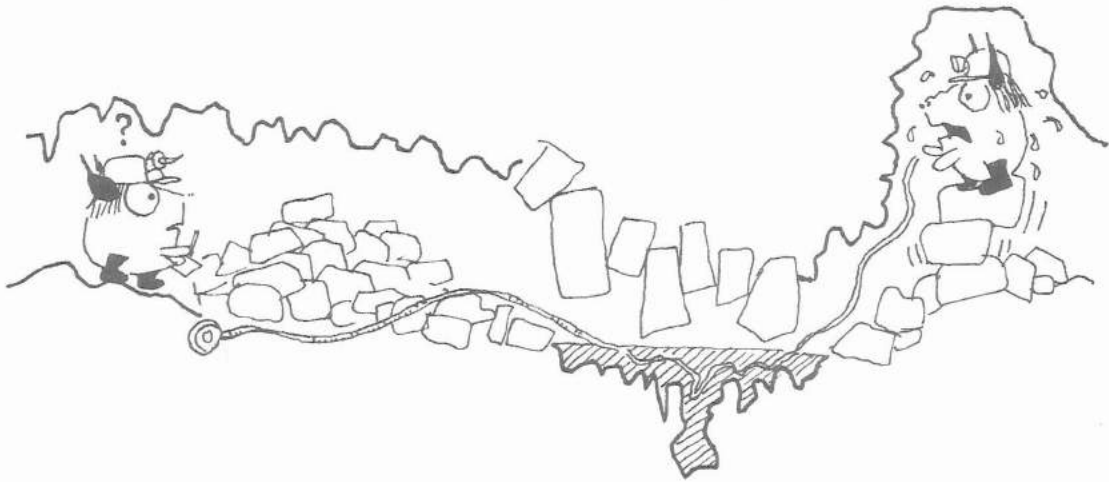
- (1) "Survey diagonally across the passage - it'll make the cave longer".



- (2) "I'm not stopping here - assume its the same bearing as the last leg".



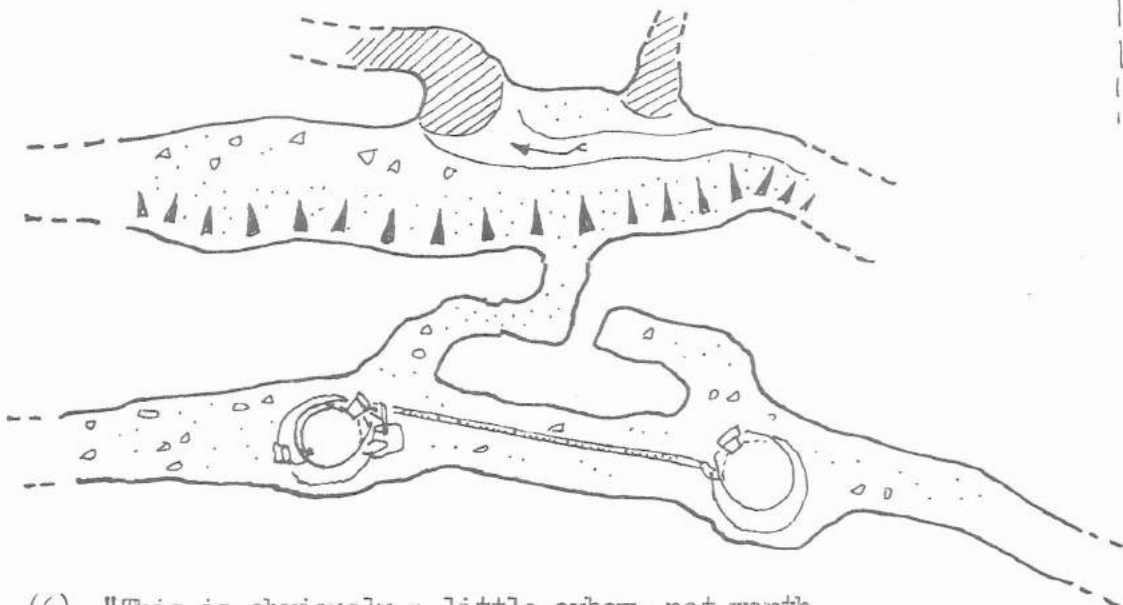
- (3) "It'll take b.... ages to survey this - just sketch it in".



- (4) "Come back and show me where the survey station is" "~~YESS!~~ (= no)"



- (5) "Hooray, we've finished! No need to go any further, I can see it ending in a blank wall ten feet ahead".



- (6) "This is obviously a little oxbow, not worth surveying - I'll sketch it in".

What is Oleospelology? New Readers start here..

A quiet August evening in 1978 in the suburbs of Rotherham. The satisfied masses have settled into a myriad armchairs, heavy with their teas, and switched on countless televisions. Some perhaps idly watch pre-packaged documentaries on brave souls who trek the Himalayas, climb the Poles and shoot the Equatorial Rain Forests. Do one or two stir from their reverie at the sound of a slight thumping? It almost sounds as if it comes from below, beneath their wall-to-wall carpets...

...for forty feet below, below the carpets, below the drains, deep below even the foundations, in the solid rock itself, half a dozen bemuddled sweating boilersuited fanatics are taking turns to writhe into a tiny tube-like gallery in the limestone, barely a foot high and little wider, to attack the rock walls with hammer and chisel.

Just beyond, just out of their reach, just half an hour of hammering and squeezing away, they glimpse cool darkness. Darkness where the tiny claustrophobic drainpipe that they fight savagely to enlarge breaks out into a cavern or chamber - a cavern or chamber that human eyes have never seen, where no foot has ever trodden. Perhaps a dead end - or perhaps the beginning of a series of vaults and galleries winding onwards, deep into the heart of the limestone hill..

This is what this journal is about, the forefront of an exploration which does not need massive expeditions, government sponsorship, teams of huskies, packs of sherpas or Prince Philip as patron. You can read all about the sequel to the above drama on page 23 - and about similar epics on most of the other pages as well. And if armchair caving takes your fancy (the beginnings of an infection for the real thing?) this is the place to start.

Before you can commence your vicarious savouring of being the first once through the squeeze into the unknown, an introduction to the vocabulary of the subject may be useful...

An Aven is a hole going upwards in the roof of a passage, the sort of thing one stands and stares up, as opposed to a pothole or shaft, which one stands and stares down.

A Bedding Plane is not British Airways version of a railway sleeping car, but a cave passage eroded on a bedding in the limestone, usually low and wide, more often traversed on one's stomach than upright.

A Dig is where those driven by a desire to explore new passages have to physically enlarge the passage - either by attacking the rock walls or removing clay and sand from the floor - in order to satisfy their urges.

A Duck is normally not foolish enough to venture underground. However, in a cave it is a section of passage so low and wet that explorers have to immerse part of their heads in the water to get through. This can vary from a mere skimming of the ear on the surface, to floating on one's back virtually totally immersed, nose thrust into a tiny groove in the roof and dilated nostrils straining for half an inch of air.

Fluorescein is a bright orange powder. The addition of an ounce or two of this to a stream will turn incredible volumes of water a brilliant grass green. Cavers use it to trace the courses of streams - i.e. to find out where the stream you meet in a cave appears on the surface. The intensity of the colour can lead to problems (although the dye is harmless to life) - cows in Dentdale have allegedly drowned trying to walk on the River Dee after it had been fluoresceined, thinking that they had their native herbage underhoof.

A Pot or Pothole is a cave that happens to be predominantly vertical, and usually requires a rope or ladder for its descent. The actual pastime of going underground can be referred to in three ways,

"Potholing" to shock or impress your listeners. An emotive word, good to use on maiden aunts at the teatable.

"Caving" is milder, sounds less risky. To persuade loved ones worried about your safety to allow you to go.

"Speleology" to sound scientific and worthwhile. Good to use when filling in your interests on insurance forms - they may not understand it.

A Pitch is a vertical descent within a cave, usually requiring some tackle. In some systems individual pitches may be termed 'pots', i.e. Avalanche Pot in Gaping Gill.

A Rising is where a stream which has been flowing underground returns to daylight as a spring. The Term 'Resurgence' means much the same, but is usually used in relation to a stream which flows through known caves on its underground course.

A Ruckle or Boulder Ruckle is where a cave passage ends in a choke of big tumbled rocks, which fanatics may try and squeeze round and through (imagine a fly crawling round in a coal scuttle...) Not nice places.

A Sink is where a stream goes underground in limestone country. The term can also be used inside a cave system, where a stream leaves negotiable passages to vanish, for instance, down an impenetrable slot.

A Shakehole is a grassy, roughly conical depression, on limestone. Many pothole and cave entrances are found at the bottom of shakeholes (often abbrev. to 'shakes'). These depressions, which may or may not have caves, or streams sinking in them, have different names in different parts of the country, 'slockers' in Eastern Mendip, 'swallets' in several areas, 'dumbles' in parts of Derbyshire, 'coves' in the Kirkby Stephen area, 'swilly holes' in Cumberland, and so on.

A Squeeze is fairly obvious - an especially constricted piece of cave passage, which perhaps only smaller cavers will be able to get through. A delightful variety of these abound in Northern Dales Caves.

A Sump is where a cave stream flows into a section where roof meets water, the passage becoming totally submerged. If the sump is only a few feet long, it may be possible to hold one's breath and dive through (a 'free dive'). Underwater exploration is usually the prerogative of the cave diver however, equipped with mask, tanks, valves, flippers and all sorts of specialised hardware. Not the safest of pastimes.

A Survey is an accurate measured map of a cave system. Surveying is usually carried out with compass, fibron tape, clinometer, waterproof notepad, determination, patience and difficulty. Ah, but the joy of sitting down after all your muddy floundering and scribbling, and seeing what the cave really looks like set down on paper for the first time! Seeing just where that passage ends, and how near the final sump is to the resurgence on the surface.... to some demented souls it might make it almost worthwhile.

A Thrutch is a squeeze, to thrutch is to squeeze, it's a more evocative word, isn't it? Not in the dictionaries, perhaps derived from 'thrust' and 'clutch'. Think of others, grunge, squovel, etc.

A Traverse is where one goes along a passage via the walls and not the floor - perhaps it is a rift which narrows downwards so as to be too narrow at floor level. Traverses vary between one fingernail on one wall and one boot on the other five feet away, with a roaring stream seventy feet below, to a sideways thrutch along a rift with a slot below, just wide enough to keep slipping down into and wedging.

A 'Through Trip' is a cave with an entrance at each end - you can go down one and come out of the other. In a few cases you might be lucky enough to be able to follow a stream from where it flows underground at its sink, right through to the resurgence. More likely your way will be obstructed by ruckles, sumps etc.

A couple of terms pseudo-scientific cavers like to use relate to the way in which the cave was formed:

'Phreatic' passages were dissolved out of the limestone by slow moving groundwater beneath the water table. They are often tube-like, and form complicated mazes.

'Vadose' refers to passages cut by fast flowing streams with an air surface above, i.e. the type of erosion going on in most stream caves today. The common passage type where a circular tube has a deep narrow trench below it usually results from an old phreatic passage being subjected to vadose action.

Once you have absorbed this glossary, are you ready for the next step?..

On from Armchair Caving - The Furniture Cave!

Many of the delights and problems of caving can, to some extent, be recreated in your own living room, by the construction of what may be termed 'The Furniture Cave'. Utilising simple items of furniture, and household goods, you can construct a cave (of sorts) to crawl and climb through. Why not try?

CHAIRS are perhaps the most useful item. A row of them placed side by side can give you a BEDDING PLANE CRAWL, with the odd THRUTCH under a low armchair. A good caver can manage 7", can you? Heavy furniture items such as WARDROBES and PIANOS, stood a few inches apart, can give you a TRAVERSE. Gaps between furniture can be provided with RUCKLES of cardboard boxes. Moving upstairs, how about DUCKS or even a short SUMP under the soap-rack in the BATH - the beginnings of a taste for wet caves. You can bring wet caving downstairs to the living room too, with a few pans and buckets of water, or even mud if you are keen. Have your friends pour them over you as you crawl under the chairs /bedding plane, to simulate a sudden flash flood.

PITCHES and POTHOLES require a little more thought. If your house has a good stair well, you can hang a ladder down that - or better still, out of an attic window. One recent indoor meet of MSG in a Sheffield house saw a fine 30' pitch rigged out of a second floor window, down the side of the house, and straight down the coal chute - a good thrutch - into the cellar. By going outdoors with your simulated caving you may inoculate the neighbours with a desire to follow suit too.

Of course, simulated caving indoors must be carried on with the lights turned out, and outdoors in the dark. Use hand torches or bicycle lamps if you do not have proper caver's lamps available.

And, once you've tried all this, it's only a short step to the real thing.....



Dene Quarry Cave, Stanhope, Weardale - The Story of a Dig.

Dene Quarry Cave was first visited by Keith and Dave Errington in July 1977, whilst pottering around various holes in the quarries of Stanhope Dene.

The cave consisted of a single narrow passage approx. 20' long, ending in a wall of clay with a rabbit hole running into it. It is thought to be a remnant of the now extinct Heatheryburn Cave (a fairly extensive dry cave - 500' or so of passages - which yielded a rich harvest of archaeological finds in the 19th century, before being quarried away - Ed. note).

Although no-one will own up to making the decision, it was somehow decided that we should dig a short way into the clay, on the possibility that it was just a short plug, with open passages beyond. And so, digging commenced.

Every Thursday night for over a year, the dig was visited and extended. Volunteers were found to help, and eventually, after 80' of clay, sand and gravel the breakthrough was made - into 15' of open cave passage, which ended in a clay choke. Being unable at this stage to give up digging without medical treatment, it was decided to follow a side passage which, although choked, had obviously taken a flow of water down a 2" diameter hole.

Digging is periodically carried out in this passage whenever the craving occurs, although all concerned are now responding to treatment.

Since the survey was made the dig has continued, and another junction has been reached. No decision has been made yet as to which direction to follow.

During the past two years a number of points have arisen which may be useful to anyone mad enough to tackle some similar project in the future:

- (1) Although at the beginning one or two people may be sufficient, once any corners are reached, or any great length achieved, the number of persons involved has to increase - and volunteers for this sort of project are very hard to find.
- (2) The size and shape of any tub used for hauling must be given serious thought, as the future size and shape of the passage is not always totally predictable - although estimates can be made as to whether the passage will increase or decrease in size.
- (3) Hauling ropes must be non-stretch. There aren't many things as annoying as having to haul in 10' of stretch in a rope before the full tub at the other end even begins to move.
- (4) Ventilation to the face of the dig became a problem after about 40'. This not only caused breathing problems, but the increased respiration and work caused a severe heat problem for the person digging. We found that in winter the person digging felt as if he were melting, whilst the person hauling at the entrance froze to death. This, in conjunction with the problems of mechanical ventilation and pumping air to the face of the dig, led us to the solution of ventilation by general air movement.

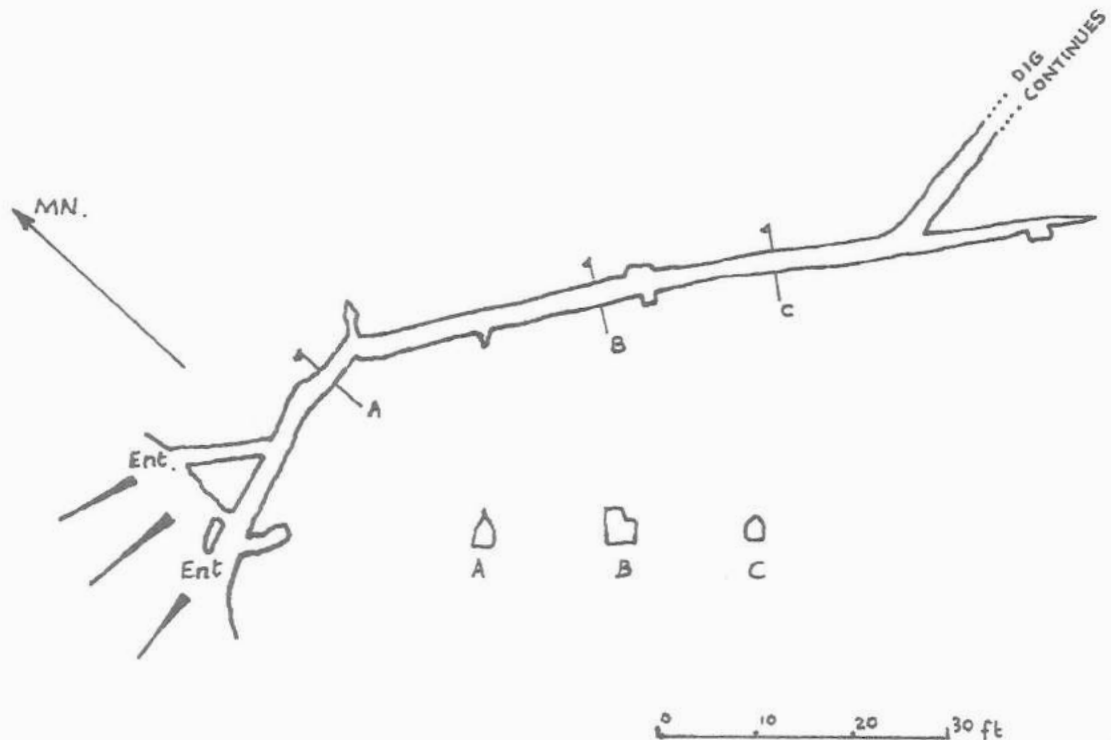
We found that hauling the tub back and forth caused a certain amount of air movement within the passage. This, accompanied by a rota system of working, whereby every half hour (which was about the

DENE QUARRY CAVE, Stanhope

N.G.R. NY 988411 Alt. 900'

Length 120', Survey BCRA Gr.2/3 2.6.79

Surveyed K.B. & D.A. Errington.



KBE 1979.

maximum period a person could work at the face) the person digging moved back to the entrance, and everyone in the cave moved up one place, proved sufficiently successful - and to date no-one has collapsed from exhaustion and no-one has suffered from frostbite.

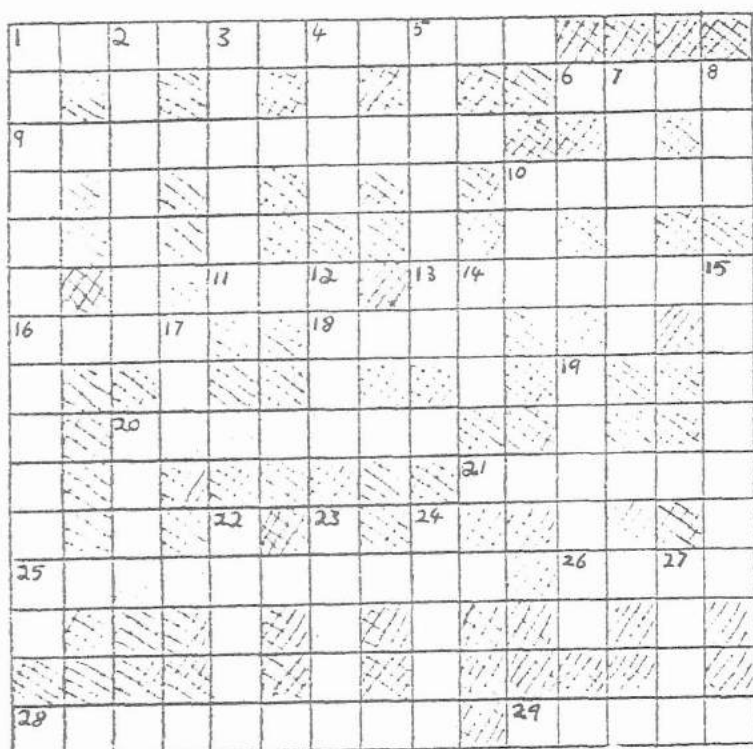
Another problem associated with ventilation of such a small cave was overcome by a mutual agreement banning certain foodstuffs which could be eaten within the 24 hours prior to the dig.

(5) Fumigation of the cave had to be carried out on two occasions, the first due to an infestation of fleas from a recently dead rabbit, and the second due to a rapid increase in the numbers of mosquitos and midges in the cave making work impossible. Fumigation was successfully carried out using Gamexane fumigation cartridges.

Permission for the dig was given by SAMUK, and anyone wishing to visit the cave should contact the foreman of Stanhopeburn Mine.

K.B. Errington.

THE MOLDYWARP CROSSWORD



Switch on your brain, or borrow someone else's, and try the Moldy cross-warp puzzle. Answers are on page 37 - but you won't need those - will you?

DOWN

1. Wet corridor, if active.(6,7)
2. Basil goes East down the rope.(6)
3. A river will turn up in the end.(6)
4. Journey to the stars, or just a hike to the caves.(4)
5. A kind of sensation, like liquid mud!(7)
7. Protects the brain from 1 across.(6)
8. An equine refusal.(3)
10. Don't breathe this air!(3)
12. If ailing, your cell might.(4)
14. The formic fellow who builds his own cave system.(5)
15. Awkward for a caver, worse for a lemon!(7)
16. Sounds like the cow must duck here.(3)
19. coming up for air, or water.(6)
20. Worse than 28 across - the ultimate in wet caves. (4)
22. Hangs up when you grit your teeth(5)
23. A 1 leg-up makes for nimbleness.(5)
24. Rise to the surface, opposite 27.(5)
27. The start of a cave - here in the kitchen!(4)

ACROSS

1. Late cats sit up in the roof dripping. (11)
6. A caver in the thick of it must be! (4)
9. A stream reappears.(10)
10. For secure fixing must yale be turned.(5)
11. Creature of lore gives the flea alpha minus.(3)
13. Forget snakes, descend this way.(7)
17. Nave making space overhead.(4)
19. Southern wallet takes in water.(7)
20. Nena is, and some say cavers must be.(6)
- 24 & 26 360 feet of thrills and a long haul back, every year.(6,4,5,4)
25. No compass? follow this! (4)
28. Amphibious aviators make for very wet passages.(5)

M S G PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE.

(All prices exclude postage)

Journal 6.	A4	31pp including 7pp surveys etc.	8 copies only left!	
			(200 g)	60 p.
Journal 8.	A4	89 pp including 23pp surveys etc.	(400 g)	95 p.
Journal 9	A4	37pp including 10pp surveys etc.	(200 g)	50 p.

Surveys (postage extra).

Cliff Force Cave, Buttertubs, Yorks.			
(5070')	22" x 60", 50':1"	Gr.4-5b.	75 p.
Cresswell Caves, Cresswell, Notts/Derbys.			
(1900')	16" x 14", 25':1"	Gr.4-5b	30 p.
Devis Hole Mine Cave, Swaldeale, Yorks.			
Central Maze (1 mile)	16" x 12", 25':1"	Gr.4b.	30 p.
Mine and Cave (2 miles +)	23" x 17", 100':1"	Gr.4b.	40 p.
Fossdale Beck Cave, Wensleydale, Yorks.			
(1320')	16" x 13", 25':1"	Gr.4-5 c.	30 p.
Keldheads Cave, Preston-under-Scar, Wensleydale, Yorks.			
(2000')	18" x 12", 25':1"	Gr.4-5 b-c.	30 p.
Kisdon Cave, Swaledale, Yorks.			
(750')	18" x 14", 25':1"	Gr.5c-d.	30 p.
Lease Rigg Whinstone Mine, Grosmont, Yorks.			
(2270')	16" x 11", 50':1"	Gr.5c.	20 p.
Lunehead Mine & Caverns, Teesdale, Durham.			
(10394 & 2475')	36" x 30", 100':1" and insets.	Gr.4-5c	40 p.
Richmond Copper Mine, Richmond, Yorks.			
(4030')	22" x 15", 40':1"	Gr.4b.	30 p.
Sil Howe Whinstone Mine, Goathland, Yorks.			
(11000')	17" x 13", 100':1"	Gr.4b.	30 p.
Swinnergill Caves, Swaledale, Yorks.			
(685')	17" x 11" 25':1"	Gr.5b.	30 p.
Upper Valley Head Cave, Isle of Skye.			
(765')	20" x 10", 25':1"	Gr.5c	30 p.
Windegg Mine Caverns, Arkengarthdale, Yorks.			
(4000')	18" x 14", 32':1"	Gr.4c	30 p.

Off-print surveys ex out of print journals:

Set 1.	6 sheets ex Journals 2-4 (Northern Dales)	10 p.
Set 2.	16 sheets ex Journals 5-6 etc. (Northern Dales)	30 p.
Set 3.	5 sheets ex Journal 5 (Skye)	5 p.

Postage should be calculated by adding the weights and referring to current GPO rates.

The above are available from

Dr G.Stevens, 4 Kingston Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough, Cleveland,
TS 5 7 RS (M'bro. (0642) 83052).

Anyone wishing to place a standing order for journals should notify the same. Please remember to notify any changes of address.