



This is a genuine specimen of that rare and most occasional of occasional publications, the MSG NEWSLETTER. Its purpose is straightforward, to inform the scattered tribe of moldywarps and fringe moldywarps what each other have been doing, or at least what reports have filtered back to the acting secretary.

Graham Stevens, the official Hon Sec, and holder of the great crowbar of office, has been absent from the helm of the Group for a year now, carried to a sadly uncavernopholous district of Spain by his work. However, from the 10th December 1978 he (and family) will be back in Middlesbrough.

The year has seen no spectacular MSG discoveries of any great size - we are still awaiting a follow-up to Cliff Force. However, there have been a fair number of trips, and a lot of useful work done. Another few months, and perhaps one or two more sizeable caves found, and JOURNAL TEN will be on the slipway.

So, what has happened warpwise in the last year or so?

In the Northern Dales.

In SWALEDALE several new caves, none of any great size, have been found in areas which we thought we had pretty well covered previously:-

SWALESIDE CAVE, at Keld, was really a bit too obvious. There are two entrances at the foot of the cliff on the north side of the Swale, one on each side of the footbridge by which the Pennine Way crosses the river. The entrances must have been seen by hundreds of passers by, but no report of what lay within has ever filtered back to us. Total passage length between the entrances was c.150', with a choke half way along which could be seen over but not passed bodily - digging would soon alter this, if it was thought worthwhile.

EAST GILL POT was listed in the old 'Pennine Underground', but could not be found when the area was checked over for 'Northern Caves'. However, a fresh browse along the shakeholes high on the east flank of the Gill revealed a grassy hole with a slight tinkle of falling water below. A brief excavation showed the grassy floor to be resting on rusting tin sheets, covering a deep hole. Exploration proved this to be the missing rothole, and survey revealed the depth to be exactly the quoted depth, 96'. The "boulder choke" reported as terminating the hole turned out to be the usual pebble floor, no hope of extension.

EAST GILL CAVE yielded a little more passage. A desperate and optimistic dig at the downstream limit - a low gravelly bedding, resulted in 25' of unpleasant constricted progress, but no hope beyond that. However a previously unnoticed dry inlet led off the top of a 10' aven a little further back upstream, and this was forced for 70', to a squeeze leading back into the entrance passage of the cave only a few feet from daylight.

LOVERGILL SINK CAVE also yielded a couple of short extensions, gained basically by the propensity of Arthur Champion to ascend vertical or overhanging walls, aided by miscellaneous metallic hardware. Bearpit Series contained a very tight 15' pitch. Total length new stuff 150' or so.

SWINNERGILL RESURGENCE CAVE in East Gill briefly raised our hopes of getting into something big. The southernmost of the three risings, bringing water from Swinnergill Sinks over a mile away, is from a bedding in solid rock into which the writer (pride) forced his way. Inside it opened into a more sizeable crawl and ended at a choke after 40' - judged to be very near the surface. Several days were spent on a dig to try and get in from the surface, into a continuation of the cave, but all the

expenditure of effort proved fruitless. Arthur mangled his hand with a crowbar and had to be rushed to Hawes for stitching up, which proved a brief diversion.

In STOCKDALE we made a couple of finds. ROWANTREE MEA CAVE, near the west end of Row Pot Holes (a long line of rocky shakes and small sinks, with a few small holes, nothing more than 25' long or deep) was wide open, 100' of rift passage, roomy in parts with some small formations.

GRAINY GILL CAVE was first entered by a warp in 1969 - one snowy morning Stuart Hodgson was induced to enter, with promises of hundreds of feet of passage. He retreated cold and dripping, observing that it ended in a blank wall 10' in. However by September 1978, doubtless due to the high rate of solution of limestone by Swaledale water, it had enlarged to a low airspace wet crawl, which Richard Gibson nobly forced through a squeeze and over a tottering boulder ruckle into more roomy passage. On the second, survey trip the boulder ruckle caused some nasty moments, however a second entrance was dug out a little further upstream which avoids the entrance gravel and the choke. Total length c.200'.

Further north, a long walk on the northern flanks of Cross Fell revealed a few little caves but nothing of any length at all. The Errington brothers and Consett contingent have been busy in the Northern Northern Dales as well, their most notable achievement being their digging out 170' of choked passage in their dig in Stanhope Dene, proof that once you really start digging it becomes psychologically impossible to stop.

At FLUSHMERE MINES the Caverns remain inviolate, despite strenuous efforts. The latest of these have involved descending an old shaft 200' deep, but all in vain.

Back in Weardale, SUNDERLAND CLEUGH POT was found, with the aid of a local farmer, and was 30' deep and 60' long, Geoff Tryon being the sole explorer/surveyor, the only one to brave the presence of a very deceased sheep.

In Derbyshire.

Several evening trips from Sheffield have been made to well known Peak District caves. PERRYFOOT CAVE provided a few hours of excessively muddy and constricted entertainment, and P8 one of those trips, of no great consequence, which is thoroughly enjoyable at the time as well as afterwards - a superb little cave.

The only useful 'project' which has been carried out in Derbyshire has been the thorough inspection and surveying of BRIGHTGATE CAVE, near Matlock. A maze of solutional rifts (reminiscent of Devils Hole), tilted through 30° leads down to a series of slanting bedding chambers, ending in sand and mud chokes. There are some good formations in parts, and smoked inscriptions left by t'owd man - several in the 1700's and one of 1536 - at first this was thought to be a forgery, but on closer inspection it seems that it may be authentic. Total length of the cave is 1,080' and depth 80'.

In South Yorkshire.

HERNE HILL CAVE at Maltby, a cave which has the virtues of being only 15 minutes drive from Sheffield, being situate only a few yards from a fish and chip shop, and being completely dry, has received a few visits. Sundry digs and thrutching episodes have added perhaps another 150' to the previous length of 400'. The cave has been sadly vandalised and defaced by local kids, and noises have been made to the appropriate bodies about conserving it, but as yet nothing has been done.

On the Isle of Skye.

At Autumn half term Arthur Champion, John and Maggie Flowitt and the Ryders spent a week at Broadford, and managed quite a bit of useful caving, despite the damp weather.

VAMPIRE CAVE, a sink opened by the Grampian S.G., above Torrin, was pushed for another 60', to give a total length of 80'. Claustrophobic throughout. BEINN AN DUBHAICH CAVE was visited and the recent GSG Extension surveyed, and about 100' more passage found as well - total length now 575'. Just opposite the top entrance of Uamh Sgeinne, Arthur forced his way into a 9" jagged bedding which disgorges a small stream - LETTERBOX CAVE. This gave 60' of low passage. In VALLEY HEAD CAVE the boulder ruckle squeeze at the end of the high level passage from Chantry Chamber (which had even repelled Graham Stevens) was passed by both Arthur and John, but only gave another 35' of cave, to final-looking chokes.

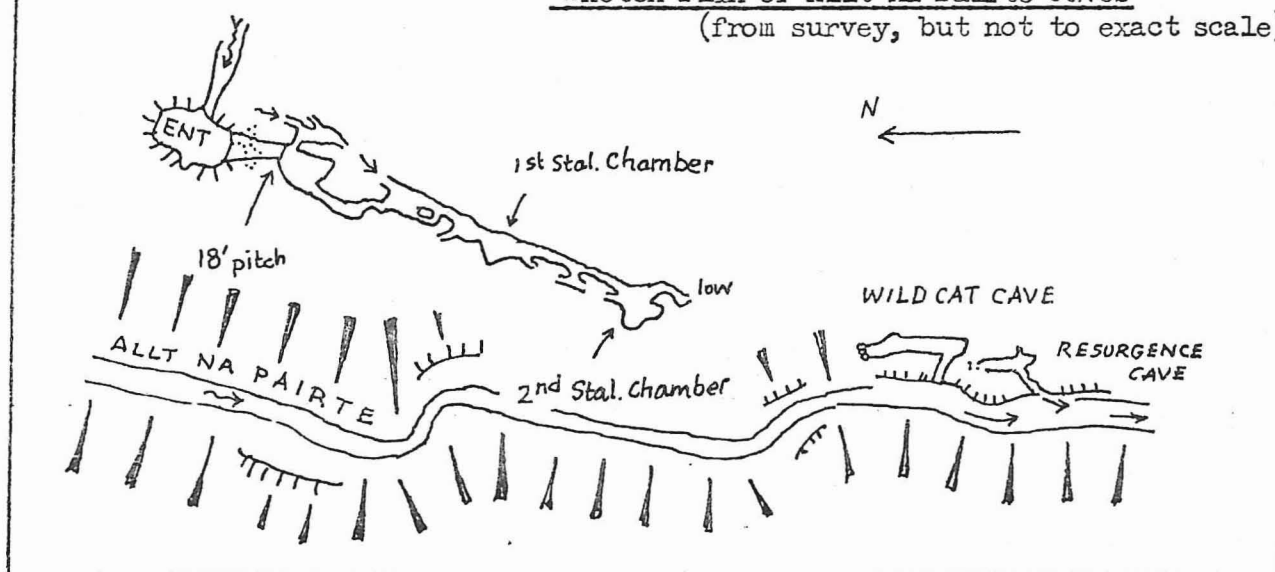
The best find of all came right at the end of our time on Skye. In Jurassic Limestone, remote from civilisation, and wide open and awaiting us, we stumbled on the ALLT NA PAIRTE CAVE, an open sink.

The stream goes down in boulders at the bottom of a large rocky shake, and a low level passage nearby rounds a couple of corners and chokes. Up in the side of the shake a larger gallery lowers to a short crawl, and then an 18' pitch into a big (by Skye standards) chamber. Descending passages regain the stream, and downstream are two chambers with really good formations, the best on Skye. The streamway ends too low, but there are various oxbows and high levels, which haven't been properly looked at as yet. Total length must be over 500', although not all of this has been surveyed.

Further down the hillside, in the limestone gorge of the Allt na Pairte, was WILD CAT CAVE, a bedding with bones and pawprints, 60' long, and the very aqueous resurgence, only unsumped by our digging, 40' long.

Sketch Plan of Allt na Pairte Caves

(from survey, but not to exact scale)



JOURNAL NINE - is still available! ONLY 50p + 17p postage.

The ideal Christmas present for your friends and neighbours, jammed with new explorations, surveys and interesting articles. Hearne Beck Cave and Pot, Cliff Force Cave, pots on Great Dun Fell, Ayleburn Mine Cave, Flushiemere and Hudgillburn Mines, and more..... available from Chris Langthorne or Pete Ryder (addresses overpage).

NEW YEAR 79. Are you coming to Winterings for the traditional celebration? Round about the New Year we should have three or four Northern Dales trips, contact CL, PFR or GS for details. Join the SPEARHEAD wrestling SECRETS from the BOWELS of MOTHER NATURE etc.

Moldywarps Address List Autumn 1979.

The below people have mostly been on more than one MSG trip during the year, others are moldywarps of long standing so they couldn't really be omitted.

Teeside/Darlington/Northallerton.

John Dale. 72 Hampden Street, South Bank, Cleveland.

Stuart & Jan Hodgson, 37 Cockpit Hill, Brompton, Northallerton, N.Yorks.

Chris Langthorne. 17 Huntershaw Way, Longfield Lane, Darlington. D'ton 58745

Graham Stevens. 4 Kingston Ave., Acklam, Middlesbrough, Cleveland. M'bro 83052

Sheffield area.

Pete Allison, now at Mvumi Hospital, P.O.Dodoma, TANZANIA.

John Carver, 301 Upperthorpe, Sheffield S6 Sheffield 666729

Arthur Champion. 22 Nether Edge Road, Sheffield. Sheffield 584182

Chris Chiltern. 1 The Row, Spark Bridge, Greenodd, Grange over Sands, Cumbria.

Ruth Ellis. now at I.S.H., 229 Gt. Portland St., London W1N 5HD

Richard Gibson. 2 Sherwood Ave., Scawsby, Doncaster.

Tom Megahy. 49 Waller Rd., Sheffield S6 Sheffield 336392

Pete & Elaine Ryder, 147 Heavygate Rd., Sheffield S10 1CF Sheffield 669388

Geoff Tryon, 16 Little Common Lane, Sheffield S11. Sheffield 350927

Austin Watson. 11 Eyam Rd., Sheffield S10

Consett.

Dave Errington. 295 Durham Rd, No.1. Consett, Co. Durham.

Keith Errington. 3 Clarence Gdns., Blackhill, Consett. Consett 505435

Barry Hunt. (Rev) Church House, Aynsley Tce. Consett.

Elsewhere

Dave Atkings (cottage warden) 5 Larchwood Grove, Dunderland. Sunderland 226161

John & Maggie Flewitt, 39 Oakfield, Hyde Wood, WOKING, surrey.

Alan Holmes. 13 Station Close, Riding Mill, Northumberland. Riding Mill 443

Roger & Helen Cooper. 10 Woodkirk Close, Wedgewood Farm, Tunstall,
Stoke on Trent. Stoke on Trent 85183

Kevin Solman. 12 Tavistock Rd., Jesmond, Newcastle.

Les Howe. 24 Thornley Close, Broompark, Durham.

