

**ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN
CAVING CLUB**



DECEMBER 1970

NEWSLETTER No 19

INDEX

Editorial	Page	1.
Library		3.
WHO's - WHO		4.
Odds and Sods from the Forest		5
Are there any caves in the Forest ?		6.
Ancient History - Cursits Cave		7.
Cursits Survey		8.
Wet Suits		9.
Dates of Trips		10.
Club Badges		11.
Iron Mine Trip		11.
NIFE Cell Spares		11.
Address list of last years members..		

The newsletter is in red this month - not so much in sympathy with the club's finances - more because we have been given some red Banda carbona.

The treasurer - John Court - has asked me to warn club members intending to rejoin this year that this is their last, official warning that the deadline for paying the subs is February 1st. Newsletters will only be available to paid-up members after that date.

When insurance was obtained for the club van, the committee gave the insurance company an undertaking that the van would only be driven by club members with the permission of the committee. This causes practical difficulties and so the committee have given John Court the control of the use of the van and he should be contacted by any club member requiring the van. His telephone number is Ross 3455. Note that anyone driving the van should be a club member, over 21 and have a good driving record.

No club members should spend any money on repairs or parts for the van without committee approval.

Geoff Broadman is sorting out all the club tackle and storing it tidily in the tackle room at the Castle. Will any member that has any club tackle return it to Geoff so that it may be listed and checked. Any club member requiring tackle should contact Geoff on Lydbrook 255 except for the helmets and lamps which are temporarily held by Jim Hay (Ross 3924) .

The club has always been a bit lax about surveying any of its findings so to encourage the amateur map makers in the club, it has been decided to purchase a good 100 ft tape and a clinometer. We already have two prismatic compasses and so should finish up reasonably well equipped . There seems a chance that we might obtain the tape and clino cheap (very cheap) but if they are not in club hands by mid January we will go ahead and actually spend spend money on them.

John Elliott is arranging the meets list for this year and we hope to publish an up to date list in the next newsletter. In general, there will be a trip on each weekend following the club meetings with a more selective trip, a fortnight later. See inside for dates known so far.

More information for the newsletter PLEASE.

At the rear of this newsletter is an address list of last years members. Some of these addresses are known to be out of date so please fill in your new address if yours is out of date on the slip provided and give it to Roger Bailey if you want to continue to receive newsletters and club information.

LIBRARY

Cataloguing the library has proved a bigger job than was at first thought so the list is not yet ready for publication. We, will however, give details of additions to the library in the newsletter each month with brief details of the contents of each addition. Recent additions are :-

Orpheus C C Newsletter Vol. 5. No 10. Nov 1969. Lancaster - Easegill. Lost Johns. P8.

Orpheus C C Newsletter Vol. 5. No 11. Nov 1969. Agen Allwed. P8.

Cave Research Group Newsletter. No 118. Oct 1969. A G M Report.

Mendip Caver. Vol. 5 No 5. Twin Titty, Westbury Hill Quarry Cave, Rhino Rift, Society for Mines Research in the Bristol area, Box Stone Mine.

Mendip caver. Vol. 5. No.6. St. Cuthberts II. Rescues in Rods Pot & Stoke Lane. St. Cuthberts Line Survey .

South Wales Caving Club Newsletter. No 64. Sept 1969. Photography in Town Drain, Ogof Pen Cyfrwy-Pemb, Cave losses from quarry, Introduction Radio Device, Science & Sport in O F D. Digging Sites in S.Wales, Diving in D Y O Survey News.

Cambrian Caving Council Handbook. Access in Wales & the Marches. Cambrian Caving Clubs. South Wales C R O.

Northern Cave Handbook 1969. Area Map. Caving in Areas. Cave Lists Plus Access. Underground Safety. Accident Procedure.

Northern Cave club Journal. Vol. 2. No,2. Winter 1969. Ireby Cavern Extensions. Foss Gill Pot Lamp Care. Birks Wood Cave. Cave Diving Report. Diving Harness. Space Blankets. Surveys. Ireby II Main Passage. Foss Gill. Birks Wood.

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY EXPLORATION
JOURNAL October 1969.

This large publication covers ten years work by the U L S A and contains 16 surveys including a fold out survey of the West Kingsdale System. There are a number of photographs and systematic coverage of each Northern area.

DESCENT No 7 Oct - Nov 1969 :-

Early Pot. Hepste Cave. Long Rake Mine. Ogof Garreg Fawr. R F D C C & B U S S in Aggie.
Expedition reports (inc R F D C C in Spain)

Descent No 8 Nov - Dec 1969 :-

International Congress. Spanish tackle. Pierre St. Martin. Lathkill sump. Norway.

Jim Hay and John Court have given all their back copies of Descent and Speleologist to the club library and Diana is arranging for us to receive both of these publications regularly in the future. When the library list is published, will any club member with back copies of either publication that fills a gap in our numbers please consider donating them to the library.

WHO's - WHO.

Who, when told to go slightly left in Swildons Duck Two, went - left - left and came out where he went in ?

Who, broke a rib in one of the larger passages in Old Bow ?

Who took 12 Coppers down Old Ham and brought them ALL BACK ?

Who uses Cordtex to tie equipment onto his roof rack ?

Who are the members of Lydney Caving Club ?

Who, when told to go slightly right when coming back through Swildons Duck Two, rolled onto his back, went right, finished up on his left and had to be rescued ?

Who are C P G ?

Who took three days to do one Yorkshire cave ?

ODDS AND SODS FROM THE FOREST

Water levels are still dropping even though rainfall recently has been quite heavy. The level in New Dunn bottom has fallen another foot or so and the majority of the third landing is dry. The level from the third landing is driven against the dip for the first few hundred feet but then dips at about 30 degrees down to the water table. This is apparently because the system was to use dipple pumps to pump the workings but to let the outlet from these pumps flow freely along the level to the main pumping sump at pit bottom.

Unfortunately, this means that the bottom of the shaft is still flooded locally even though the water table is now 20 or 30 feet lower.

Wigpool was found to be the driest it has been for a long time but the levels have not dropped so far in the north of the Forest and so it seems doubtful if it will drop far enough to allow the round trip via Trial Pit and the Tip. The water has dropped far enough to make it likely that the flooded level below Columbus Pit is accessible.

The upper levels of the mines in the Forest are now extremely wet and it will only be a matter of a week or two now before this moisture makes itself felt at the water table. Ross-on-Wye water supply engineers have been quoted in the local press as saying that any rainfall needs six weeks before any effect is noted in the deep wells locally - it seems likely that the same sort of delay is applicable to the Iron Mines.

Malcolm is continuing his one man water tracing efforts, and, after trials with his equipment at Coldwell Swallett and Rising, has confirmed that Symonds Yat Swallett rises at the slaughter resurgence. Efforts are now made to obtain more equipment, and, in particular, more Fluorescein.

B U S S insist that they have not abandoned Symonds Yat Swallett dig but have left it temporarily in favour of Shakespeares. Common opinion has it that they are hoping it will fall in before they get around to more work on it.

The Baileys are continuing their dig in the Wye Valley where they have found a small cave with a draught not far off river level. The dig is located just off the track from the Rock Inn to the Biblins and not far from the river and recently the Baileys have noted that the stream which flows down this valley is now sinking before it reaches the culvert under the riverside track. This could be very significant as water divining has shown that the stream sinking in Green Moss Pot heads towards the Slaughter and it may be this passage that is taking the surface stream.

Green Moss Pot - SO555141. Slaughter Resurgence - SO557156.

Further news about Yew Tree Pit has been held over as Tony Day has apparently finished the survey from New Dunn to the dig, and, when matched up to the Baileys survey of Yew Tree workings, will provide a much fuller picture of the area. It is of interest to note that the 1835 map of the Forest Mines shows the mine as New Yew Tree Pit, the first Yew Tree Pit being near Bream.

Mineral specimen collecting trips recently have turned up some unusual iron samples. A trip last month with Mr Wrigley to obtain a clay Nellie and iron samples for the National Museum of Wales turned up some particularly fine Goethite stalactite pipes that are now being examined. First reports back from the Museum say that they haven't seen anything like it before. The ground above Stowe Quarry has also turned up some samples of Kidney ore along with quite a lot of alluvial iron in with the old river gravels.

Shropshire Mining Club visited us again recently but unfortunately chose a weekend when most of us were otherwise occupied. However, they seemed quite happy when they were last seen on Saturday night in the Butchers Arms and it was unlikely that they felt like going down a mine on the Sunday.

Cave registry may get a new lease of life with the news that Ian Standing is to move to the Coleford area. It seems he has run out of teeth in Nailsworth. With his closer association with the area, Ian thinks that he may be able to continue as registrar. Perhaps the new Cave Project Group may come to help out ?

ARE THERE ANY CAVES IN THE FOREST ?

As others have done in the past, the Bailey brothers have recently been looking over the holes listed in Caves of Wales and the Marches around the Wye Valley area. Unfortunately they also confirm what others have thought, ie :-

Patches Wood cave - SO 550138 - is a short mined level that broke into a small natural chamber.

Diggers Hole - SO 54651428 - is also mined with clear signs of the miners pick marks.

Ladypark Stalactite Cave - SO 547147 - is almost completely mined notwithstanding the fact that it was once a show cave.

The area around Symonds Yat was so heavily mined with small trial pits that doubt must be thrown on a number of other 'caves'. In particular, Whippington Brook Rising - also known as the Old Stone Wall Collapse - presents a fine mystery of its own. The 1963 version of Caves of Wales gives its location as SO 553141 and its description as a 20 foot deep collapse covered by rotten timbers.

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The name is obviously a miss print as the 1926 six inch map names this reference as the Oldstone Well and referred to the rising of Whippington Brook. The mystery is deepened, however, by the fact that the G S S Journal of 1965 gave separate references for both Old Stone Well Collapse - SO 550138 and Whippington Brook Rising - SO 552141 neither of which agrees with Caves of Wales. If we can agree that the Old Stone Wall Collapse is the same as Oldstone Well which is the same as the now named Whippington Brook Rising, then the map reference is SO 553141 and Caves of Wales are right. All of this leads me to the suggestion that this site may also be mined, the location, size and rotten timbers being a pointer. There is no doubt, however, that the site has changed considerably since it was first described as the large collapse at the top of a bank has progressively worked out towards the bank and the present site consists of a single large collapse into the side of the bank. Perhaps a chat with some of the older locals can throw some light on the subject.

ANCIENT HISTORY

After the club was first formed in 1964, it became normal to record all trips made on written record sheets which were held by club records officer. Thus we have over 200 trips recorded for 1965 and 1966 during a time when the club made the majority of its discoveries in the iron mines. Most of these trips have never been published and so, over the next few newsletters, I intend to select some of the better trips and discoveries and print them for the information of later members. To kick off this series, two trip reports are here reprinted on the first two trips, club members made into Cursits Cave - not original work by the club as G S S first entered the cave in 1963 but its peculiar problems make it rarely visited. As far as can be discovered, only ten cavers have been in and out in those six or seven years.

The survey is reprinted here by permission of Pete Standing and the Gloucester Speleological Society.

Cursits cave - 29th Sept 1965.

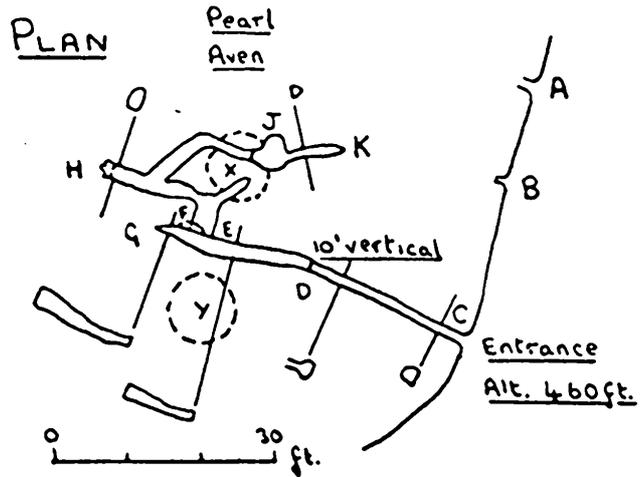
Party - J Hay, D Hay, I Currie, M Sterry, R Solari and A Solari.

Arrived at Cursits at 8 pm and followed Roger and then Malcolm into the hole. The long thin tube looks most formidable and both Daph and Ian decided not to venture further than the entrance, especially as Roger thought the way down the rift was too narrow for him. Malcolm changed places with him by sliding over the top and eventually wriggled his way down and we followed to find the way surprisingly easy once the way to go was clear. At this point we had no worries about getting out as the way in was so easy and the cave was quite large inside, consisting of a high rift about 2 - 3 ft wide in which it is possible to climb up to a level above the entrance.

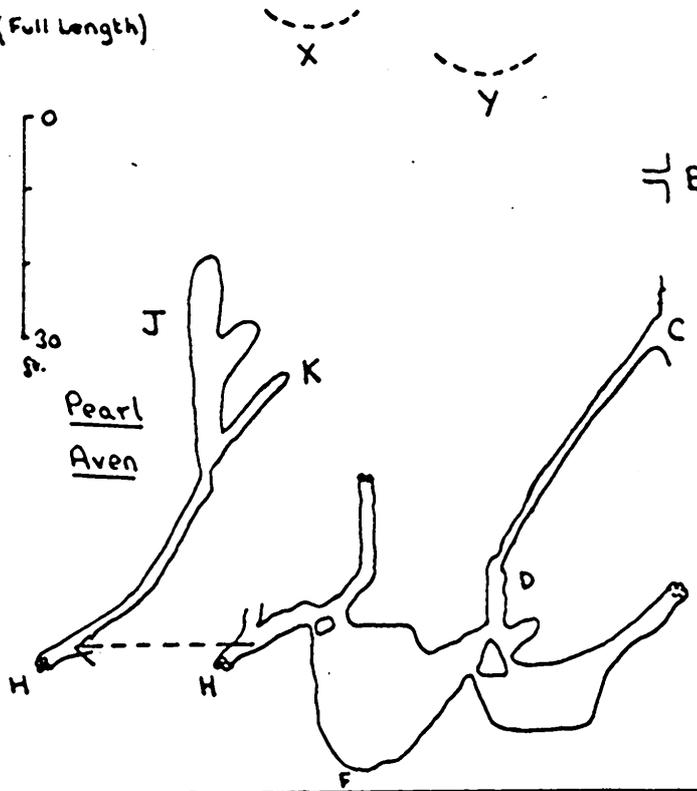
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CURSITS CAVE

Parish - Ruspidge
N.G.R. SO 653111.



ELEVATION
(Full Length)



GRADE 3 B SURVEY
SCALE: 1 inch = 20 feet
SURVEYED 25.7.65
BY P.A. STANDING
H.O. PARKER
DRAWN BY
P.A. STANDING

We started out at 9 pm to meet Andy Solari and the first snag arose when Roger couldn't get back into the first portion of the narrow 15 ft vertical rift. I changed places with him and managed to reach the top after a couple of good pushes from below and then attempted to pull Roger up while Malcolm pushed from below. After removing his helmet, lamp and boots, he eventually made it up at 10.30 pm after 1 ½ hrs.

Malcolm found it impossible to get up on his own so I dropped back down and he made it up in about 35 minutes, but was so exhausted that it took him a further 35 minutes to put back on the boots he had taken off. By this time my patience was at an end so I climbed back up the rift using the chain someone had rigged up (G S S in 1963) and found it surprisingly easy the second time. We all made it out completely exhausted by 12.15 am.

The hole is definitely not for everyone, but the smallest and feet size plays a big part in the ease of getting out.

Jim Hay.

Following this trip, and as happens nowadays, some people doubted that such a small cave could give such trouble and one of them, Ray Wright, was taken for a trip.

Cursits Cave - 17th November 1965.

Party - J Hay - R Wright - M Sterry - I Currie and R Solari.

Eventually the party arrived at the cave entrance at 8.30, I entered the cave first and quickly passed the narrow rift at the bottom of the entrance passage, one that has no or few footholds and slopes at an angle of 60 degrees. Malcolm quickly followed and dropped a 35 ft rope to me as we were going to explore the rift beneath the tight pitch. As Ray started down, Malcolm and I explored the rift. It went up steeply and soon ended in a boulder choke which can not be too far from the surface. On the rock there, the calcite appears to be flaking away from the rock, causing an interesting spectacle. The rift is also blocked at the bottom.

Ray and Jim made the descent without mishap, but Jim decided Ian was too large for the hole. Ray and Malcolm looked up the Aven previously explored. As there were no other passages, I started back up the narrow rift, this time without boots and with a bit of assistance from Jim, made the tight part in about 10 minutes. Ray had to come next, he brought a sling up which enabled us to receive the boots. He first tried in boots but soon gave up and Jim took them off for him. He complained of cramp in his back and after another 20 minutes of straining, pulling and pushing, reached the top of the tight part where I was. The ascent took him 35 minutes. As Ray was tired, I climbed the rift and allowed him to pass me. I then, part descended the rift and lowered the sling to Jim. I hauled Ray's boots up first and then mine but unfortunately they got stuck half way up. Malcolm climbed up the rift to free them and did so successfully.

A 50 ft rope had been lowered at the beginning of the trip and I asked Ian to take the four boots to the surface.

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Malcolm completed his ascent in 35 minutes but he had to free the boots. He then lowered the sling to Jim but, being tired, dropped it and so I climbed the rift again and he left the cave with Ray. The 35 ft rope was still at the bottom of the rift with Jim so he tied the boots to it and I hauled it up. The boots jammed three times and Jim had to make three ascents. He was tired and angry when we left the cave at 11.30 pm.

R Solari.

None of the above is exaggerated or was due to inexperience. Anyone contemplating a trip down Cursits should note that the cavers on the above trips have been back since and found it just as difficult

. Certainly no one should go down without someone that has been before unless they are below 5 ft 5" in height and take less than size 7 boots. Both are the maximum for anyone to make an unaided climb up the rift at a first attempt.

WET SUITS

Most members know that wet suits are highly desirable and eventually get round to ordering them. Listed below are the minimum quantities that a wet suit may be made from. For a very small person, mittens and booties may be made as well but normal cavers will get a jacket, trousers and booties. For a single skin 3/16 inch wet suit, with sub-aqua discount, you can expect to pay £7, not including glue or cleaner. Glue to use is Evostick and the cleaner can be any white spirit or alcohol..

Orders should be sent to :- Sub-Aqua Products (Eastleigh) Ltd
63 Twyford Road,
Eastleigh
HANTS

If the order is sent on club note paper, there is a 10% Discount.

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QUANTITIES

5 - Sheets type 2 3/16 inch single skin Neoprene rubber.

1 - Reel Neoprene tape ½ inc wide.

2 - Pairs turn button fasteners

1 - Riri nylon zip (24" for 5 ft 6" - 26" for 5 ft 7")

1- Zip backing strip

! - Wet suit pattern (small 5' 5" to 5' 7") - (medium 5' 7" to 5' 11")

If you can afford the bit extra, it is worthwhile getting a second reel of tape and increasing the width.

Catalogues and prices are obtained from a number of club members or the club library. It is well worth having a word with someone that has already made a wet suit as there are a number of worthwhile mods that can be made. In particular, note that 5 sheets are only just enough and the cutting out should be done very carefully.

DATES OF TRIPS

The only dates known so far are as follows :-

Sunday 4 th January without	O F D I Day trip to South Wales. Preference will be given to members experience of O F D. I.
Sunday 11 th January	Cave rescue practice - Buckshaft area.
7 th / 8 th February	Hoped for South Wales weekend.
12 th April	Cave rescue practice.
30 th May	G C R G - A G M
12 th July	Cave rescue practice.
11 th October	cave rescue practice.

As you can see, cave rescue dates have been fixed early so that both clubs can avoid arranging trip dates that clash. Fuller information of trips should be ready for next month.

CLUB BADGES

It has been suggested that members may be interested in cloth badges for Anoraks etc. These are obtainable from Pennine Books to our own design and the cost would work out at about 6/- each. Anyone interested should let John Court know, but it will not be worth going ahead unless there are orders for at least 12 badges.

IRON MINE TRIP

There is a good chance that we will be able to arrange a trip to the last working iron mine in Wales sometime this year. The trip will probably be a joint trip with G S S and so keep it in mind when you are asked.

NIFE CELL SPARES

The club holds reasonable stocks of NIFE Cell spares and below is a list of prices which may vary by small amounts depending on where the club has been able to get the spares. Parts are marked with an X are available now.

2 Cell spares :-

Headset (less bulbs)	5/-	X
Lids complete (contacts & spring catch)	2/6	X
Cables	1/6	X
Main bulbs	1/6	X
Dip bulbs	6d	X

All the above are second-hand but in very good condition.

3 Cell spares :-

Headset glass	2/3	
Reflector washer	10d	X
Main bulb	3/3	
Dip bulb	9d	
Spot reflector	2/6	
Headset bezel	3/9	
Battery terminals	9d	
Steel vent	1/1	X
Contact assembly	9/6	X
Cable rubber tube	10d	X
Cable clip	5d	X

All the listed spares should be in stock soon and we also should have some 3 cell Edison at about 25/- each.

See Geoff.

MEMBERS LIST - 1968 / 1969

L Bailey	Rose Cottage, Aston Crews, Lea, Ross-on-Wye, Hfds
R Bailey	“
D Bailey	“
S Beddis	Kirjath, Coalway, Coleford, Glos.
J Berry	87 Gloucester Rd, Stonehouse, Glos.
C Bowen	Walton Cottage, Silver St, Chalford Hill, Stoud.
G Broadman	Greensleeves, Rocks Lane, Joys Green, Lydbrook.
P Cooper	Church Walk, Viney Hill, Lydney, Glos.
I Carter	50 Norden Rd, Newport, Mon.
D Court	26 Park Walk, Chase Park, Ross-on-Wye, Hfds.
J Court	“
A Day	23 Glencairn Avenue, Tuffley, Glos.
J Elliott	71 Imjin Rd, Priors Farm, Chelt, Glos.
K Faull	22 Victoria Rd, Lydney, Glos.
R Gardner	82 Ruspidge, Cinderford, Glos.
T Gardner	Green Gables, Parton Rd, Churchdown, Glos.
A Garman	Salesian School, Blaisdon Hall, Longhope, Glos.
C Graham	Nuppens Farm, Alvington, Lydney, Glos.
J Hall	Woodside Bungalow, Upper Ellwood, Coleford, Glos.
J Hay	10 Park Walk, Chase Park, Ross-on-Wye, Hfds.
J Howe	Whitecliff Farm, Newland, Coleford, Glos.
M Howell	14 Woodville Avenue, Mile End, Coleford, Glos.
R Jefferies	Flat 3, Tusculum House, Tusculum Way, Mitcheldean, Glos.
C Jones	Larkspur, Clays Estate, Sling, Coleford, Glos.
D Jones	Wild Barfield, Upper Ellwood, Coleford, Glos.
J Jones	“
G Rogers	21 Ruspidge Rd, Cinderford, Glos.

J Saunders The Bungalow, Blaisdon Rd, Westbury-on-Severn, Gos.
 P Schwarz 12 South Rd, Broadwell, Coleford, Gos.
 A Solari Fir Tree Bungalow, Wigpool, Mitcheldean, Gos.
 C Solari “
 R Solari 181 Reservoir, Selly Oak, Birmingham, 29
 N Southwick 49 Havelock Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham 20
 S Southwick “
 I Standing Grove Cottage, Watledge, Nailsworth, Gos.
 N Sterry 9 Oakhill Rd, Court Farm Estate, Mitcheldean, Gos.

 M Trivett 42 Roman Rd, Chelt, Gos.
 D Tuffley 1 Parks Rd, Mitcheldean, Gos.
 E Turner 26 Thompson Avenue, Lliswerry, Newport, Mon.
 C Turner 63 Monnow Walk, Bettws, Newport, Mon.
 R Turner 2 The Tumo House, Soudley, Cinderford, Gos.

 M Westgate 1 Prospect Rd, Cinderford, Gos.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Return to Roger Bailey or any Committee Member.