

**THE FOREST OF DEAN
CAVING CLUB**



APRIL 1971

NEWSLETTER No 31

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Hon Sec - John B Court

Hon Editor - R E Bailey

FOREST NEWS

Recently the committee's of R F D C C and Gloucester Speleological Society got together for a discussion about caving in general in the area. As his Tuesday evening digging gang was on night shift or engaged in politics Ian Standing came along and chaired the meeting for an amicable evening. It was agreed to continue the practice of arranging meets so that there is, if possible, no clash in dates. But on long distance trips eg

Yorkshire, meets would be arranged for the benefit of both clubs. Roger Solari enquired about possible support for a summer trip to the Pyrenees. The bat census was brought to the attention of the meeting, both clubs would encourage their members to help. By far the biggest topic of the evening was the now world wide cause of conservation. Old Ham was the chief cause of concern, the main routes in the mine being defaced with chalk and paper arrows, in places stone walls have been torn down, carbide, of course, is everywhere. As a positive step it was decided to organise a mid week evening trip to clean the way down to Railway Churn.

WIGPOOL

After reading about a dangerous shaft on the common, Andy Solari contacted the local council to make sure none of 'our' holes were filled in and that we should be contacted over any complaints about holes or shafts in the Wigpool area.

WESTBURY BROOK

Exploration is continuing and some remarkable finds have been made - see Roger Solari's article. It's a sobering thought that we can spend a hard day (literally) underground in the area so far uncovered and that this is only about a tenth of the mine above water. Progress north is impeded by falls, a digging session on the second level is being planned. To speed up exploration and for safety certain fixed aids have been left in place, please treat them with care. A safe way into Boulder Churn has been made by 'Banging' up through deads just above the entrance to the original route through. There has been a case of vandalism already, some moron has engraved "I love me" in a particularly fine mud / clay face, this type of feature is of genuine scientific interest and should be treated as such.

To those visiting the mine a repeated word of warning, caution must be observed, it is possible to come out in the top of a fifty foot high rift, and you would take a lot of finding.

THE BIG SPRING CLEAN UP

Recently Old Ham was visited by a determined band of cavers armed with sacks, plastic bags and wire brushes, their object being to clean up the mine and restore stone walling etc that the ignorant and jobs had either left behind or pulled down. The route from the entrance up to and including Railway Churn has now been cleaned and stone walls rebuilt, there are still a few patches of carbide waste left, but this should tread into the path in time. There is only 99% of the mine left to do now, but perhaps that with a clean entrance series visitors will be tidier through the rest of the mine. Unfortunately this looks like a regular chore the local clubs will have to perform.

HEADQUARTERS

Clearwell has resounded to the thunder of hammers these last few Wednesday nights as the heavy gang (John, Diana, Malcolm and Andy) give a display of high speed floor board laying.

Cont

Progress is good and it should not take many sessions to finish off the floor. Once this is done the small room (no, not that small) can be cleaned up and put in use. It is planned to build a loft, for tackle storage, in the rafters of the top room. We intend to have a permanent exhibition / museum on show to those interested, the main idea behind this is to gather mining relics under one roof. The club would not “ own “ the items but would hold them until, we hope, a Forest museum becomes a reality. Relics that are on loan will be clearly marked and the owner will have full control over them.

TRIPS

April 4th - A Mendip trip to August Longwood.

April 24th - 25th - South Wales weekend.

Venue required for Sunday May 23rd.

June 19th - 20th Yorkshire.

NEW MEMBERS

Stuart Harold - Peter Woodfield - Barry Cooke - Jolyon Hodson - Heather Mc Donald - Peter Blake
Welcome to the club.

Those members who have not paid their subs by the April meeting will have to reapply.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Descent No 16

The National Geographical Magazine, March 1953 (Ice Caves of the Pyrenees)

Caving in Derbyshire.

BSA Bulletin, New Series No 2 Dec 1970.

The Society for Mines Research in the Bristol Area, Journal 1970.

SKITTLES MATCH WITH GSS

We won, in spite of me putting three balls straight through, I've done that before as well.

OUT OF THE WOOD

Cotswold Stone Mines. The Nailsworth, W mine has been sealed off, and another mine entrance is to be filled in.

Mendips - A new cave preservation group has been formed, by what I have heard on the news they seem fond of gates.

cont

Yorkshire - Permission to visit Leok Fell must be obtained in advance, the situation there is rather grim, there have been strong complaints from the landowner over unauthorised cavers visiting the fell, after a case of poaching by potholers access is on the point of being lost.

Mendips - An impressive extension to Rhino Rift has been made but no details are available yet.

Ex - member Ted Lewis has passed over some information that came his way on the Fairplay Iron Mine which lies immediately behind the Westbury Brook Mine. Little is known of this venture, my late grandfather thought that there was some funny business about it, and there seems to be no records of output. The following is an advert for the pit head gear.

FAIRPLAY IRON MINE

About 2 miles from Cinderford station, 2 ½ miles from Mitcheldean Rd station, and about 5 miles from Newnham and Ross.

By direction of the Chastan Syndicate Ltd.

Mr Lillyd Thomas, FAI (Machinery Auctioneer)

Will sell by auction on the premises, on Wednesday 3rd July 1907 commencing at one pm in the afternoon.

PLANT AND MACHINERY - Comprising etc.

Cornish Beam Engine, 76 inch massive 30ft under beam.

Vertical and horizontal winding and pumping engines. (see etc for description)

Conveyances supplied by Mr James Hawker, Lion Hotel, Cinderford, will meet the 12.22 pm train at Cinderford Station. Fair to Fairplay Pit one shilling.

DRYING SHED

Lot 1-20. Comprising - three wooden tanks 3ft x 4ft. Three iron spanners, various tools, about 10 cwt of tram rails and 1 ½ inch bolts and nuts.

Lot 21 - 57. Three wagon wheels, 2 bolsters, 6 axle wheel pipes and iron balance. Fifty wrought iron straps for pump rods. Various pipes, bolts, bars, wheelbarrows, tram rails and axles.

SMITHS SHOP

Lots 58 - 80. Thirty inch bellows, steel and iron bars, barrel of black lead, old wagon bed and pinch bar.

BACK OF DRYING SHED

Lots 81 - 106. Some carriages, two cast iron T bobs or quadrants, 24ft long with iron stays for same. 5 feet iron gudgeon shaft and rod. Three cast iron bed plate, carriages and balance weight. Two old tram beds, iron arches, blacksmiths crane and rod. 4 inch dia' feed pump, 70ft of 6 inch pipes and 20 ft 3 inch pipes. Egg ended boiler 36 ft long 6 ft dia' Clack piece with valves.

NEAR LAND PIT HEAD

Lots 107 - 108 and 109. Rope sheave 8 ft dia'. 11 ft face. Pit framing and iron shoes.

NEAR LAND HOUSE

Lots 110 - 115. Cast iron A plates for tram crossings. Boiler plates, some iron stricken plates.

cont

- Lot 123. 48 ft of 5 inch steam pipe from cylinder to boiler.
Lot 124. 45 yds of 4 inch steam pipe from boiler to pug mill engine.
Lot 125. 50 ft of 4 inch steam pipe, feed pipe from engine pump to boiler.

MIDDLE BEAM ENGINE HOUSE

- Lot 129. Beam winding or pumping engine. Single cylinder 8 ft stroke steam chest supported on iron column. Feed pump and gearing, massive 25 ft overhead beam, con-rods, crank, main shaft, flywheel 16 ft 8 inch dia' , 9 inch face, 11 inch square bore and 2 winding drums.
Lot 130. 100 yds flat 3 inch wire rope.
Lot 131. Coil of 2 inch leather belting.
Lot 134. Four damper weights and length of piping with wheels for top of boiler.
Lot 135. 30 ft of 9 inch steam pipe from cylinder to boiler with 2 valves.
Lot 136. 50 ft of 5 inch feed pipes from pump to boiler with 2 valves.
Lot 137. Egg ended boiler, 45 ft and fittings as fixed.
Lot 138. Egg ended boiler, 45 ft no fittings.
Lot 140. Spur wheel 11 ft 3 inch Dia' 10 ½ inch face, bore loin square with crank pin, bore 11 ½ inch square.
Lot 141. Massive double crank shaft for same 7ft 10 inch.
Lot 142. Pinion wheel 3 ft 8 inch Dia' for 13 inch shaft.
Lot 143. Two carriages for same and 4 counter-balance weights .
Lot 146. 35 yds of 3 inch pipe from pond to rear of engine house.
Lot 150. Horizontal engine 10 inch cylinder, 34 inch stroke with 8 ft flywheel, 4 inch square bore, main shaft, pinions and spur wheel.
Lot 151. Pug mill, 2 pairs of rolls.
Lot 152. 40 ft of 12 inch exhaust pipes from engine house to pond.

CRAB ENGINE HOUSE

- Lot 158. Horizontal engine, 16 inch cylinder 20 inch stroke, main shaft, with 11 ft flywheel geared to hauling drum 11 ft Dia' by 10 ft wide with gearing to shaft of pump crab winch.
Lot 161. Cornish beam pumping engine. Single 76 inch cylinder, 12 ft stroke with steam chest on massive girder and column supports. Under beam 30 ft long by 7 ft Dia' with balancing tank, feed pump and about 8 ft of piping.
Lot 162. Two tram bogies, 4 ft gauge.
Lot 166. Pump lift of about 170 yds of 19 inch flanged pipes in 9 ft lengths, with snore piece 11 ft by 19 inch gland, ram chamber solid ram 9 ft by 14 inch and 2 heavy clack pieces.

AT INKERMAN PIT

- Lot 171. Vertical boiler and engines, pair 16 inch cylinders 9 inch stroke with drum 10 ft by 2 ft 6 inch with brake. Fitted on wrought iron frame on 4 wheels.
Lot 175. Pit top head-gear with 8 ft pulley, pit cart ' taking '.

cont

TRAMWAYS

Note - The lot No's 187, 188 and 189 are offered subject to the same not being removed until the third day of Aug 1907 with the right of user over the tramways by the vendors and purchasers upon payment of a way-leave rent of six-pence per ton to the purchaser of the lot 189, the users providing their own vehicles.

Lot 187. 80 yds of tram rails, from pug mill house to winding engine house.

Lot 188. About 600 yds of angle wrought iron tram rails from Fairplay Pit to Edge Hill main tramway.

Lot 189. 4,090 yds of wrought iron tram rails on main tramway from Edgehill Mine to tramway belonging to the crown, near the corner of Haywood enclosure weighing about 80 tons with spikes and sleepers.

Lot 199. About 5 tons of cast iron tram rails 4 ft long.

Lot 191. Ten wooden trams, 6 ft by 3 ft 6 inch with detachable side and tail boards, each with 4 plate wheels (of 1 cwt each) 3 ft 10 inch gauge, Diameter of wheels and axle shaft, 2 ft and 3 inch respectively. Total length overall 7 ft 5 inch.

Lot 192. Ten ditto lot 191.

Lot 195. Nine ditto lot 191.

LOST

One Bonatti screw gate crabs, flat sided. Down Buckshaft Scowel Hole.

The three club leaders for ladders are still missing, also a length of rope. Please look through your own kit to see if there are any strays.

WANTED

Outside light for the club room and a waterproof switch to suit.

ANY OLD BRASS

Every Thursday and Saturday dealers set up shop in Ross market house to sell ugly bits and pieces to the tourists at high prices. For sale on one stall is the mangled remains of one of the familiar ' Stinkies ' without even the remains of a reflector - the price tag on this collectors gem is £ 3. 50.

WHO'S - WHO

Who wears the trousers /

Who's in the dog house ?

Who's at it again ?

NEW BOOK

The Industrial History of Dean.
By Dr Cyril Hart.
Price £ 6. 50.

Contents.

The charcoal industry to 1679 - the charcoal iron industry to 1794 - the coke industry (1795 - 1894) - the iron working industry in the late nineteenth and twentieth century - mining of iron ore and ochre - coal mining - silver culture and woodland produce - wood chemical works and distillation works - fulling mills, corn mills and agriculture - paper and leather board - stone clay and lime - communications and transport - Miscellaneous industries of the past - Deans changed industrial scene.

Appendix - Twelve district maps.
Indexes - 1 subject - 2 place-names - 3 personal names.

Publication date - 15 April 1971.

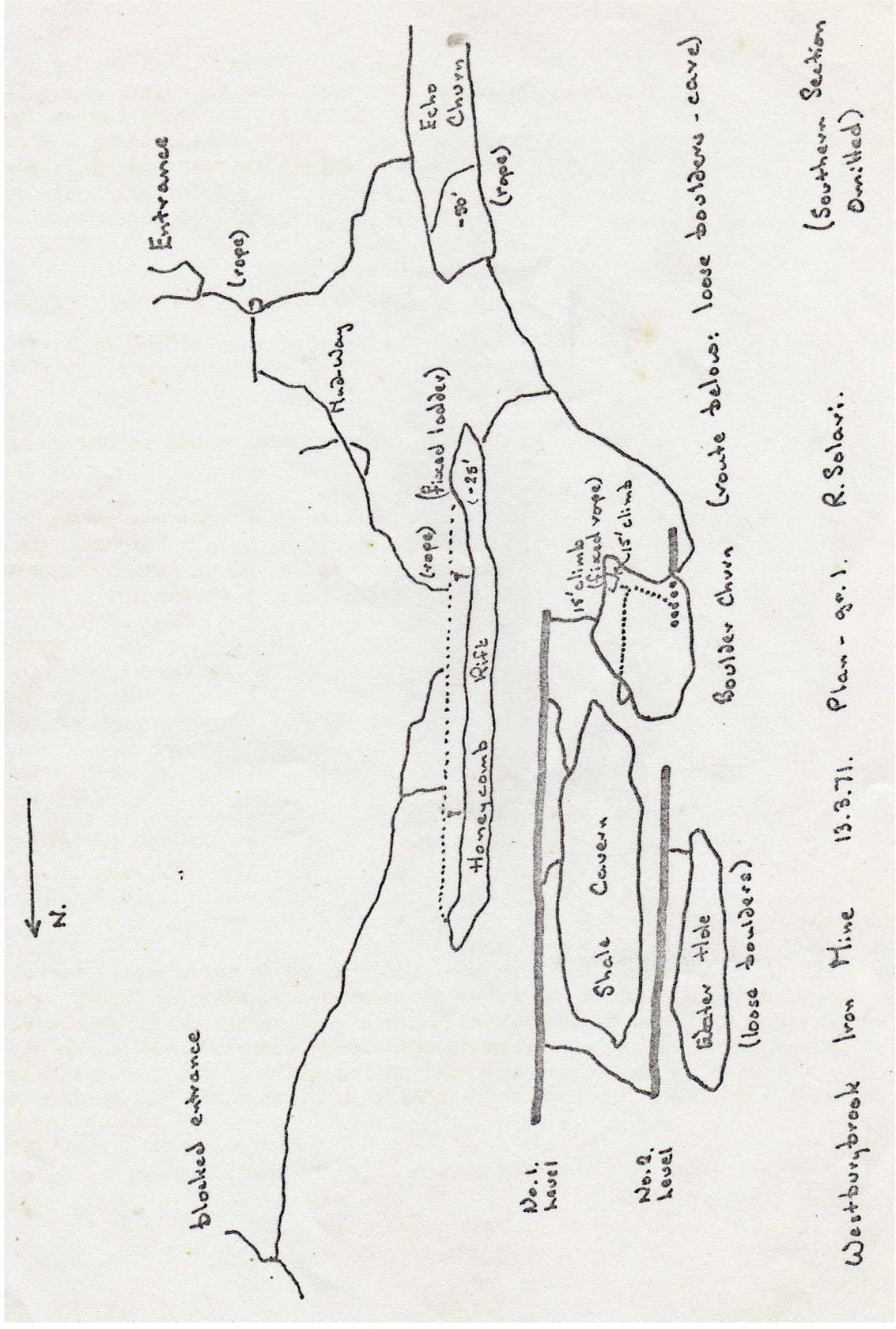
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN WESTBURY BROOK IRON MINE

Following the decision to buy ' heavy ' ladders from BUSS I have taken the liberty of using one in Westbury Brook Mine. Following the discovery of honeycomb rift (which I will make no attempt to describe) by Diana, John and myself, by following a passage from the rift at the entrance, the quantities of mud and lack of quantity of passage in this route, called for a by-pass. At the Southern end of the rift a 25 ft pitch leads to the passage between Echo Churn and Boulder Churns. The ladder fixed here now means that Mud Way may never be visited again.

On Saturday 13th January 1971, a party of BUSS with Malcolm Sterry and Di Court descended WB with 2 heavy ladders 2 light ladders Ropes 6 x 5 ft maypoles 2 ammo boxes of cameras 1 bag of surveying tackle, 3 stakes string hammer 2 entrenching tools and 4 ft metal stake. The party assembled at the foot of the afore mentioned pitch, and the may pole was constructed (with considerable difficulty owing to the preponderance of mud - an event sadly not recorded through the lack of half of Deej's flash gun, and the inability of Deej and Di to operate mine). The pitch was then ascended and the heavy ladder fixed in place.

After a look at the Honeycomb, various groups wandered around the top of the rift and the erratic series of chambers behind. After a very ambitious attempt at climbing up to an obvious large passage (prompted by a lightless Deej), the may pole was called for, rejected on the assumption that the climb was in excess of 30 ft and a very easy alternative then found. The result was a long Walk-in (20 minutes very fast running) ascending to a blocked (very) entrance. Several of the more obvious routes down were inspected, but although the walk-in represents the northern limit of the known mine, a descending walk-in north (comparable to the Mud-Way / Echo Churn tie-up) was not realised. However the entrance to the walk-in is complex and a difficult to find route back is almost certainly existant (all previous passages have had some hidden turning in them). The draught is confusing, going up the walk-in, compared to down (relatively weak) at the entrance. Over the latter half of the walk-in the floor is covered with shattered rock and complicated with several nasty boulder falls, indicating the proximity of the quarry above. 1 ¼ hours were spent in the area, but this only provided a superficial examination of what could be the main route to the northern parts of the mine, an alarming thought since trips beyond this walk-in would be marathons as yet unknown to the Forest. As it is, an average exploration trip is 7 hours, and the amount of work conducted in this time is usually apparently little. It's going to be a long grind to the Stenders.

Cont



(Southern Section Omitted)

R. Solari.

Plan - gr. 1.

13.3.71.

Westburybrook Iron Mine

The heavy ladder is belayed to a metal stake at the head of the pitch in Honeycomb Rift and I suggest that this is a permanent fixture to the 'Show Piece' of the Forest. Mud floors in the area have been partly fenced, but owing to the very conservative number of stakes taken in, this has by no means been completed, and care should be taken to keep to the paths so far made. A single span of 15 yards protects the mud at the Honeycomb itself and special care here, for the time being, is called for.

In closing, I ask you all to respect the mud, and ladder (which we could easily put at the end of Mud-Way and condemn you to this incredibly festerous passage) and the string - off particularly before its completion.

I say this after the desecration of the mud at the bottom of Echo Churn (I Love Me) and in No 2 level near Boulder Churn and the stealing of a variety of relics (some of which have been recovered) . These relics are unusual in their rarity and state of preservation. The vandalism has reached such a stage that we are afraid to disclose our discoveries (both in extensions and finds such as a second hod) .

We all enjoy exploring the mines - we all hate the desecration of Old Ham with litter etc - we cannot possibly condone the immediate denudation of WB before the vast majority of local cavers have had the chance to see its glories. With a little bit of common sense and thoughtfulness we can preserve Westbury Brook Iron Mine in its natural beauty. This is a unique mine, we cannot let it join Old Ham, Old Bow, Wigpool and others where familiarity has breed contempt.

NB - The mud at the bottom of the fixed ladder is very tacky, don't wear boots with loose soles, I am talking from experience.

There is a second heavy ladder temporarily abandoned in the mine, and is probably to be put on the rope climb in Boulder Churn. Though absolutely necessary we are thinking of the aspects of rescue (despite the successes at Buckshaft) .

If you find the ladder, please leave it where it is. We are helping you please help us.

Finally I must thank B U S S for their part in the exploration, in providing excellent support and their equipment, and I apologise for taxing their patience.

Roger Solari.

CLUB TRIP TO AGEN ALLWED - MARCH 7th

Out of the 23 cavers who were coming, fortunately only 10 turned up. John Court took a party towards Turkey Pool leaving Jim Hay, Di Court, John Berry and myself to sample the rigours of Southern Stream Passage.

After a breather in Main Chamber, the others made the mistake of letting me lead. I took the tight, awkward, high level route, which even I regretted after a while, and arrived exhausted and sweating in Southern Stream itself. This passage needs little description. It is over 5,000 ft long, low, awkward and monotonous. About half way down, a waterfall is descended and the passage continues as a high narrow rift a few boulder obstacles. At the end one is forced to traverse and suddenly it is all over and you emerge into Main Stream passage of Aggie.

This passage is massive, and the water flows sluggishly towards the terminal sump. We, however, splashed upstream climbing cascades and wading deepish pools, finally reaching the 5th boulder choke after 3 ½ hours caving.

After admiring the formations, abundant in this area, we plodded back. This stream way is notable for its slippery, peaty rock which tends to make progress tiring and somewhat slower.

We all splashed down to admire the murk of the terminal sump and then back into SSP we headed. The trip out was monotonously uneventful (even Jim had stopped talking) and was broken for me only by a sudden vision of sausages, egg, beans and chips which flashed across my eyes.

At last we were sitting under the 15 ft climb that led into the upper rift. The others were still under the impression that this was the best way out and I hadn't the courage to enlighten them. Eventually I made a bolt for the lower route and everyone followed (blind faith perhaps) and as we drew further away from that dreaded rift, so their questions grew more embarrassing. Back in the main passage, no one had the energy to clobber me so we wandered up to the Cliffs of Dover for a quick look and then headed out, being underground for 8 hours.

A hasty change in the snow and down to the Drum and Monkey for a few pints was the next item where we drank to all those lucky club members that hadn't turned up.

John Elliott.

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE REGISTRY

Following the establishment of the Cambrian Cave Registry which intended recording all cave sites in Wales and the surrounding areas, GSS and RFDCC decided in 1966 that the Gloucestershire area would be more efficiently recorded as a separate area. In this, the clubs were somewhat mistaken as little progress has been made since.

The position of the Registry at the moment is as follows :-

1000 Rough notes sheets were printed and distributed.
500 more have since been printed and are now available.
2000 final registry sheets have been printed.

A set of 2 ½ OS maps covering all the limestone has been purchased.

It is intended to have a firm push at establishing the Registry this time but the results will depend to a great extent on the response of the individual caver. Ultimately there will be a copy of the complete Registry in each club library which will provide valuable reference sources and prevent duplication of effort.

Listed below are the new area Registrars who will act as a collection points for information on sites of any speleological interest. If you know of a site of any description that you think is known only to yourself or a few others, fill in one of the rough sheets and hand it to any area Registrar. The information need not be complete and it can be handed to any of the Registrars but it will at least get the site on record. Rough sheets are available from any of the Registrars or from the Butchers Arms.

Area Registrars :-

Area	1	Jim Hay.
----	2	Roger Solari.
-----	3	John and Diana Court.
-----	4	Ian Standing.
-----	5	Colin Graham.
-----	6	
-----	7	
-----	8	Maurice Febry
-----	9	John Berry

The boundaries of the areas are defined on the next page but note that we are short of Registrars for the two areas west of the River Wye. Any volunteers.

Jim Hay.

The Registry area has been sub-divided into nine smaller areas for convenience, each with its own area Registrar. Where possible, roads and rivers have been used to define the area boundaries which are as follows :-

- AREA 1 The area to the north of the Gloucester - Monmouth road (A 4136) and bounded in the west by the Lydbrook to Ross road (B 4234 - B 4228).
- AREA 2 The area bounded in the south by the Gloucester - Monmouth road (A 4136) and in the east by the Lynbrook - Ross road (B 4234 - B 4228).
- AREA 3 The area bounded in the north by the Gloucester - Monmouth road (A 4136) in the west by the Lydbrook to Lydney road (B 4234) and in the east by the river.
- AREA 4 The area bounded in the north by the Gloucester - Monmouth road (A 4136) in the east by the Lydbrook to Lydney road (B 4234) and in the south - west by the Monmouth - Aylburton road (A 466 - B 4231 - Bream Cross - Aylburton road) .
- AREA 5 The area bounded in the north by the Monmouth - Aylburton road (A 466 - B 4231 - Bream Cross - Aylburton road) in the east by the river Severn and in the west by the River Wye.
- AREA 6 The area bounded in the east by the river Wye and in the west by the Chepstow - Monmouth road (B 4293)
- AREA 7 The area to the west of the Chepstow - Monmouth road (B 4293)
- AREA 8 The area to the north of the Stroud - Cirencester line including the Cotswold as far north as Bredon.
- AREA 9 The area of the County to the south of the Stroud - Cirencester line.

Area 7 theoretically includes the whole of South Wales but is meant only to include the limestone immediately to the west of the Monmouth - Chepstow line. Both areas 6 and 7 are included in the Cambrian Registry but are included in the Gloucestershire Registry because of their proximity to our caving area.

SUCCESS AT BUCKSHAFT

The club, heavily supported by BUSS and non-members, at last managed a successful rescue practice from Buckshaft Scowel Hole. Following the plan of action detailed in the last newsletter, no real snags were encountered and the casualty was surfaced after 4 ½ hours.

The following account is derived from the surface log with added comments to explain delays etc -

- 10.00 Entrance pitch rigged with a single ladder and 100 ft P P Staple rope handline.
- 10.05 Ambulance arrived, slightly delayed, having had to call in for petrol.
- 10.20 During unloading of the ambulance, the carrying sheet was found to be missing. Decided to abandon rescue and go caving instead.
- 10.21 Found carrying sheet neatly packed away in haversack. The most unlikely place of course. Practice on again.
- 10.30 Telephone powered up, connected and checked. Casualty (Di Court) plus two others left for the bottom with sufficient tackle. Some trouble encountered with rubbish at the bottom of the entrance pitch.
- 10.45 Casualty party still rubbish clearing.
- 11.00 Telephone plus four others started down with all primary equipment bags and tackle.
- 11.02 Telephone reaches bottom of entrance pitch.
- 11.04 Casualty going on down. A lot more rubbish had been thrown down the hole since our last visit, making going very difficult.
- 11.07 The next party down (inside pitch party) was asked to stay on the surface until the entrance pitch was clear. Space was restricted at the bottom of the pitch.
- 11.08 Malcolm, who had been helping clear rubbish, returned to the surface.
- 11.09 Telephone party managed to clear the rubbish at the bottom of the entrance pitch that was blocking the normal route down (muddy pitch).

- 11.14 Telephone party reported that conditions below the muddy pitch were not as bad as first thought. This meant that the exit pitch could be used as planned.
- 11.16 Telephone party caught up with casualty party as they finished rigging inside pitch.
- 11.17 Inside pitch party started down from surface with remaining tackle.
- 11.20 Telephone party asked if inside pitch party had left surface yet.
- 11.21 Telephone party reported second reel being connected.
- 11.22 Second reel connected and tested. First reel and spare phone left at the top of inside pitch.
- 11.26 Phone started down inside pitch.
- 11.29 Phone tested after accidental dis-connection.
- 11.30 Surface party started rigging exit pitch for counterbalance hauling.
- 11.32 Phone reached casualty at site of accident at bottom of inside pitch.
- 11.38 By this time the primary packs had reached the casualty and a start was made on preparing the stretcher etc.
- 11.41 Casualty party enquired about whether the casualty's boots should be removed or not. Advice was that they should be removed to keep the exposure suit clean but it was decided to leave the boots on to prevent possible damage to the casualty's toes. Future practices should include plastic bags to put over the casualty boots.
- 11.50 No stretcher lashings could be found in the pack. Lashings then found attached to carrying sheet.
- 11.52 Spanner found on surface that should have been underground with the bag of stemples.
- 11.54 Bottom phone disconnected while help was given with equipment.
- 11.59 Inside pitch party wanted spanner if it could be taken down by spare surface worker - otherwise not worried.

- 12.06 Casualty party asked about position of ledge. Contact with underground then lost.
- 12.11 Contact regained. Inside pitch party sending up for spanner after all.
- 12.12 Handlines in position on inside pitch.
- 12.15 Casualty ready to move.
- 12.16 Main hauling rope (1 3/8 Nylon) attached to stretcher.
- 12.17 Pitch party asked for progress of spanner. Told it was on the way down.
- 12.18 Bottom party asked pitch party to move up out of boulders at the head of the pitch as they had two men spare for this position.
- 12.22 Bottom party asked which pitch was being used to exit from hole. This was because of doubts about getting stretcher across the added rubbish. Originally planned counter balance pitch to be used.
- 12.23 Phone accidentally disconnected on surface. Reconnected after short delay.
- 12.30 Bottom party repeated enquiry about which surface pitch was to be used.
- 12.33 Casualty started to move from bottom of pitch.
- 12.40 Casualty half way up inside pitch - short rest.
- 12.42 Casualty moving again and complaining about bumping.
- 12.48 Casualty reached top of inside pitch below boulders.
- 12.49 Bottom phone disconnected.
- 12.50 Casualty being moved through the boulders to the small chamber. Casualty complaining a lot.
- 12.55 Casualty reached chamber and level ground.
- 12.58 Surface party practicing on counter balance.
- 12.59 Connection lost on phone for short time.
- 1.00 Connection lost on phone.
- 1.02 Phone reconnected. Stretcher being turned around.

- 1.04 Stretcher waiting to move.
- 1.06 Replacement asked for one of the underground party not feeling too well. Nobody spare on surface.
- 1.07 Phone disconnected for operator to give a hand underground.
- 1.11 Surface party having trouble with counter balance system.
- 1.14 Not able to contact underground party by phone.
- 1.17 Casualty being moved up through last small chamber.
- 1.24 Unwell member reached surface.
- 1.26 Counter balance system not yet sorted.
- 1.33 Surface party having another go at counter balance method to try and improve.
- 1.39 No contact with underground parties.
- 1.46 Still trying to sort out counter balance system.
- 1.58 Message relayed to surface - casualty on last stretch.
- 2.06 All lines connected and stretcher moving up exit pitch by counter balance method.
- 2.08 Casualty reached surface.
- 2.25 All pitches de-rigged - all personnel and equipment out.

NOTES.

Pitches approx -	Entrance	60 ft
	Inside	80 ft
	Exit	50 ft

Although the practice generally was successful and satisfying to those present, it should be noted that :-

It took an hour to get the first party away.

It took 55 mins to start the casualty moving from the time the equipment reached the bottom.

Finally - thanks to all those that gave up caving time to take part.

RESCUED

As you should all know by now, the RFDCC (with the aid of BUSS) carried out a successful rescue practice at Buckshaft Scowel Hole on Sunday 14th March.

As I volunteered to be casualty, after a delayed start, myself and two others were the first down and rigged the Scowel as if we had been caving. When we reached the bottom of the inside pitch I lay down and started my act as a ' broken leg ' . From then on the rescue was carried out as if the injury was genuine.

As soon as the casualty bag, etc, arrived I was put inside it and strapped in without too much trouble, (although the casualty bag was abit big) . Next I was lifted onto the sledge. This was most unnerving as I couldn't move at all, and felt sure that the carrying party were going to drop me. We then had a long wait before moving up the slope and pitch, but surprisingly the time gap seemed extremely short. However during this wait I could feel the draught blowing over me, and began to feel cold.

Once we did get moving I was carefully handled , and it was noticeable how everyone was concerned that I should not come to any harm. Great care was taken to protect my face and feet in the tighter parts, and all instructions for movement of the sledge were given with care of the casualty as priority.

In what seemed a very short time we arrived at the bottom of the Daylight Pitch, and here the rigging of the sledge was changed for counter balance hauling.

From my point of view the haul went without a hitch and I was carefully pulled to safety, although once again for the first few feet I was a bit frightened to find myself suspended in the air having to rely completely on the rescuers.

The only complaints that I had were that I did get cold during the delay at the bottom, and that the stretcher straps cut into my legs when the stretcher was being hauled up the Inside Pitch. (I was quite comfortable on the Daylight Pitch) . The other thing was that the helmet used did not have a visor on it and a considerable amount of dirt fell in my face and eyes.

On the whole the ride on the stretcher was smoother than going in under my own steam.

Diana Court.