



YEAR BOOK 1961-62



Originally published by the Shropshire Mining Club, 1962

Digitised and reproduced by the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club, 2010 as part of a long term project to make the Club's early archives and publications more accessible.

While an attempt has been made to reproduce the "look" and layout of the original publication, this is not intended as a facsimile, so some corrections to typing errors, and alterations to pagination and layout have been made.

Editor, 2010 Edition: Kelvin Lake



© Copyright Shropshire Caving & Mining Club 2010



THE
SHROPSHIRE
MINING
CLUB

YEAR BOOK 1961-2

Editor D. R. Adams

'Beech Mount', Station Road, Newport, Shropshire

Introduction

This book has been primarily written for the interest of our Club members and therefore contains some information which to the outsider may seem superfluous. However it is hoped that most readers will find something of interest in it. Full Grid References are given for nearly all sites, and it is hoped that other Clubs may at least find in our work fresh grounds for exploration.

Many thanks are due to those members who have contributed subject matter and spare time to the production of this book. Particular thanks being given to Miss M.L.Irwin who has given up many evenings to assist us with the typescript. Without her help completion of this record would have been extremely difficult.

CLUB MEMBERS

President: D.B. Corbyn Esq.

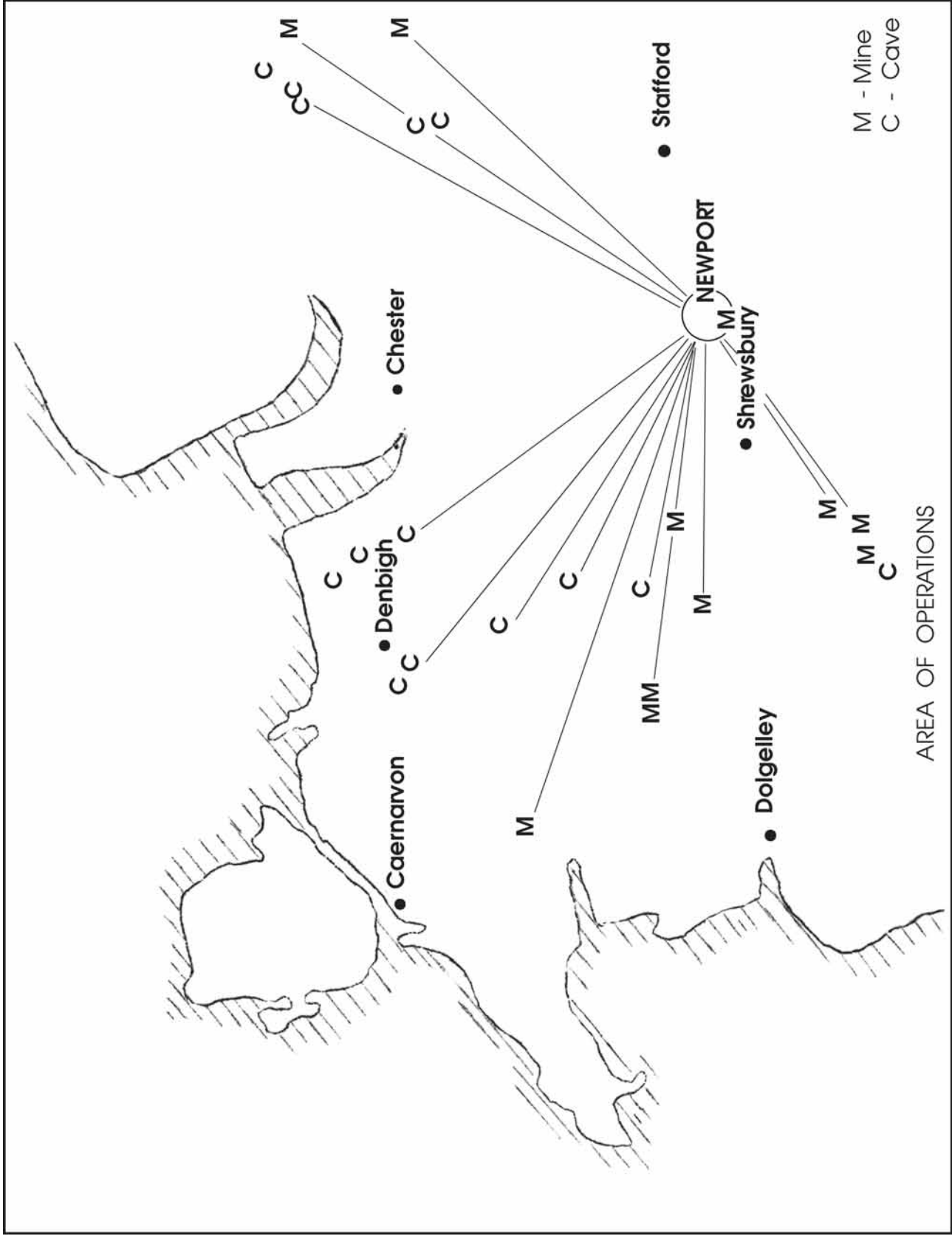
Leader & Secretary: D.R.Adams.

Treasurer & No. 1: M.R.Gaut.

M.J. Bolderston.	I/C: Social Activities
M.C. Bridgwood.	Club Room etc.
J.M. James.	I/C: Equipment
C. Lears.	Photography, Ladder Maker
R.A.Meeson.	Photography, Drawings
A. Corbyn.	Geologist, Engineer
G. Hnederson.	Choral Leader
J.A.Pagett.	Archaeological Advisor
P.K. Watkins.	Archaeological Advisor

CONTENTS

Club Meetings	pp 1, 6, 10, 14, 17, 20, 24, 28.
The Caves of Les Eyzies, Vezere Valley, France	p 2.
Hitler's West Wall, Nr Boulogne, France	p 5.
Llanymynech Ogof, Montgomeryshire.....	pp 6, 7, 25, 27, 31.
Ceriog Cave, Nr Chirk, N.Shropshire.....	p 8.
Ritton Castle Mine, S.Shropshire.....	p 9.
Grindon Area, N. Staffs	p 9.
Huglith Mine, S.Shropshire	p 10.
Odin's Mine, Castleton, Derbyshire.....	p 11.
Lilleshall Quarry, Newport, Shropshire	p 12.
Redhurst Swallet, Grindon, N. Staffs.....	p 13.
The Eglwyseg Escarpment, N. Wales.....	pp 15, 30.
Afon Meirchion Valley, N. Wales.....	p 15.
Llangynog Slate Mines, N. Wales.....	pp 17, 19, 20.
Hillocks Mine, Monyash, Derbyshire.....	pp 18, 24.
Eardiston Copper Mine, West Felton, Shropshire	p 19.
Giants Cave, S. Shropshire	p 21.
North Wales Caves	pp 22, 32.
Perryfoot Cave & Gautries Hole, Derbyshire	p 26.
Croesor Slate Mine, Ffestiniog, N. Wales	pp 27, 29.
Caves in Limestone Quarry, Osewestry, Shropshire	p 28.
Cornish Tin Mining	p 36.
Giants Cave, Castleton, Derbyshire.....	p 37.



OFFICIAL FOUNDATION OF THE SHROPSHIRE MINING CLUB
ON 6th SEPTEMBER, 1961.

A meeting was held at No. 36, St. Mary Street₅ Newport in the Club Room, on Wednesday 6th September, 1961 to officially found the 'Shropshire Mining Club'. Those present included Mr. D.B. Corbyn and his son Andrew, Messrs. J.A. Pagett, P.T. Watkins, R.A. Meeson and Miss Wellman of the Wellington Group of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, also Messrs. M.R. Gaut, M.J. Bolderston, M.C. Bridgwood, M. James and D.R. Adams.

Mr. D.R. Adams opened the meeting by giving the complete history of the 'Shropshire Mining Club' to date, and explaining the reasons for it's proper foundation and it's future aims etc. He then showed those present the equipment which had been purchased for the Clubs use. This included eight lamps and batteries with two more loaned from Mr. Corbyn, ten helmets, 100ft. and 50ft. nylon rope and two 30ft. rope ladders together with numerous stakes, crowbars and hammers.

He then asked how many of those present would be prepared, having heard the foregoing to form a Club. All those present agreed to become members without exception. It was then proposed that Mr. D.B. Corbyn should become the Clubs first president and to be chief adviser to it. To this he agreed. It was suggested that Mr. D.R. Adams should continue as both leader and secretary to the Club which he accepted.

Some discussion was held as to who should take on the post of Club treasurer, Mr. M. Gaut was unanimously elected to take on this post.

The newly formed Club then went on to discuss the financial situation with regard to the equipment and as to how the initial expenditure should be repaid. It was unanimously agreed that the subscriptions should be £1.0.0d. per annum, it was then proposed that a further business meeting should be held on the 28th September to conclude the financial arrangements.

D.R. ADAMS VISIT TO LES EYZIES, VEZERE VALLEY FRANCE
SEPTEMBER, 1961.

It was the evening of the 21st September that John Handley and I approached Les Eyzies. Even travelling at 40 m.p.h. down narrow roads we were conscious that the lime stone country around us was riddled with cave openings. Everywhere there were signs inviting the tourist to visit 'La Grotte'. Nearing the village we passed the cave 'Les Combarelles' about which I had read prior to the trip. The small guides cottage stood near the entrance with smoke curling upwards from the chimney.

An English speaking Frenchwoman bid us a hearty welcome as we entered the village and gave us some information about it. We camped in a pleasant meadow on the banks of the Vezere. That evening sipping beer at a table outside the local Inn, we were entranced by the stillness of the place, nothing moved there was not a sound. It was as if prehistory was all around us, thousands of years had passed but little had changed. Here there was no sense of time, the cavemen had gone but their caves, their dwellings and, their pictures remained, tomorrow we would see them.

The next day dawned bright and fresh, first we wandered up the little village street and purchased a guide book. Then travelling out of the village the way we had come, we came first to the cave of Font de Gaume. The guide appeared from a small roadside cafe. Did we need lights? We motioned to our helmets and lamps, the guide replied with a long sentence of incomprehensible French, which ended with the word 'bien' so we took them. We followed him along the narrow path which traversed the valley side to the entrance, here we joined several other people who were waiting. The guide gave us a surly look pressed a switch and produced glorious electric light!

The guide moved on into the cave and pointed out to us the wonders of primitive cave drawings and paintings which we were seeing for the first time. Hardly visible scratch marks on the rock were transformed by the guides fingers into bulls, deer and bison, their flowstone covering proving their age beyond doubt, several large polychrome paintings were most interesting. The cave itself was composed of water worn lime stone with many flowstone formations. Unfortunately some parts of the cave showed evidence of damage by the Germans during their occupation.

The guide book states that:

'The cavern is a corridor 120m. long with three secondary corridors leading from it. The first decorations appear 65m. from the entrance, after traversing the elevated passageway called the 'Rubicon'. On both walls thanks to an appropriate lighting system can be seen - often superimposed on each other - numerous monochrome and polychrome paintings whose realism is startling. All the quaternary fauna are represented, here; wild cattle, horses, reindeer, mammoths, wolves etc., and all the artistic styles from the Perigordian to the Magdalenian can be distinguished.

In some places the stalactites hanging from the ceiling make the Grotte even more imposing'.

Leaving Font de Gaume we moved on down the road to Les Combarelles, here however John stated that he would not accompany me, as he wished to have a further talk with the Frenchwoman we had met the previous evening. So I went on alone carrying my helmet and lamp just in case this cave was not equipped with electric light.

A woman presumably the guide's wife led me to the entrance and switched on the half expected electric light. She showed me how to work the switches and left me to myself. Presuming that the guide must already be within. I moved down the long passage which had obviously been deepened for easy access, manipulating the switches as I went. After a while I was able to distinguish the scratch marks of primitive cave drawings on the walls, which took some seeing.

Eventually I arrived at the end of the electric light, where the remaining passage was barred off, switching on my own light I crept through. Halfway down the main passage I met a tourist with the guide who nearly jumped out of his skin and demanded, to see my ticket. I showed it to him but he was still obviously puzzled as to how I happened to be in the cave, he ended with a long stream of words which I could not understand. I had turned to continue my way back, when an unmistakably American voice shouted, "say don't go away, he's gonna show you the cave". I rejoined them and the guide began to show us all sorts of cave drawings which I would never have noticed by myself, the American interpreting where necessary.

The guide book description is as follows:

'Two galleries open up at the base of a small shelter which formerly contained a little Magdalenian Site. The left gallery which is more important is a narrow corridor some 234m. long. The first figurations appear 118m. from the entrance, but from here on the two walls are delivered with very many finely engraved signs, sometimes isolated sometimes overlapping, there are some three hundred of them, but thirty is about all the visitor can see without tiring: horses in postures of movement or rest, bison, reindeer, mammoths, wild goats, bears, felines etc.

The gallery on the right side of the entrance has several engravings in the same style as the others'.

Moving on from Les Combarelles, we arrived at that most famous of all French caves 'Lascoux' near Montignac. Here once again John wished to rest, so I went in without him. On the way up the hill I met a most strange American, he wore a large sunhat and dark spectacles with rims so thick that they concealed most of his face, the visible parts of which being unshaven anyway. A grimy woollen pullover holed in many places, and a pair of khaki trousers laced up with binder twine completed his attire. Evidently he was a cultured man and had written a thesis on the cave, I purchased a copy.

At the ticket office a large crowd, was gathered so I sat down to read his thesis. It was utter nonsense, but so amusing that it was worth the money.

After some time had passed we moved up to the cave, the guide opening a massive bronze door which closed behind the party. We descended some steps through a similar door, and found ourselves gazing at the most fantastic works of prehistoric man. Enormous bulls 12ft. long were painted upon the walls. Most surprising was the drawing of a Unicorn. Horses were in abundance, also stags, with a splendid picture of them crossing a river. The ceiling was also beautifully decorated.

The colouring and the lighting were so perfect that it seemed to be more of a magnificent stage set than a group of pre-historic paintings. Even the air was perfumed, everything seemed to be very artificial, but it was not. In fact one of the Frenchmen there was so sure that it was a farce, that he began a heated argument with the guide.

The cave consisted of a large chamber aptly named the 'Hall of the Bulls', with a passage leading out to the right to a chamber called the 'Nave' and a narrowing passage leading ahead.

The guide book summed up my feelings as follows:

'This cavern with its abundance of engravings and paintings and their truly miraculous state of preservation is one of the most beautiful in the world. The animals - cattle, horses, deer etc. - are striking representations of the life and movement in every position. It is a triumph of Perigordian Art'.

It was one of the most awe-inspiring and magnificent places in which I have ever stood, and leaving it I was sure that the visit had been well worth while.

Exploration of Hitler's West Wall near Boulogne

We drove out of Boulogne late on the evening of the 27th finding a camping spot on a headland overlooking the town. As we left the vehicle to search for a level patch, we were at once conscious of a most sinister atmosphere which surrounded everything.

Enormous baulks of concrete loomed up out of the night. Tunnels led down into the earth, massive steel skeletons could be seen hard against the night sky. Somehow it had an eerie quietness of death.

We stumbled eventually into the remains of a large shattered gun emplacement, which gave us the answer to our question. It was Hitler's vaunted Western Wall, or rather the remains of it. We found a level patch to camp on, but I do not think that either of us alone, would ever have slept in that place, together we felt better, and gloomy or not, it deserved to be explored.

The next morning greeted us with showers, collecting helmets and lamps we began to explore the passages. The whole place was a labyrinth, steps led down to damp corridors connecting long disused stores, sleeping quarters and numerous other compartments. All the gun emplacements were connected underground and in the rear, more secure areas, there were signs of small crawling tunnels for emergency use only. The corridors had drains at intervals, and rotting remains of electrical fittings were still to be seen.

Three inch steel doors rusted solid covered the apertures guarding each outlet.

The heaviest gun emplacements lay behind the Boulogne - Calais coast road. These, which consisted of several large concrete chambers, still bore faded German Inscriptions (No Smoking etc.), and all showed signs of the vicious battles of their last days. Here men had fought and died. They were shattered by shells, pock marked with bullet holes and the whole area round about was covered with grassed over bomb craters. Entrances particularly showed signs of hand-to-hand conflict. What was now a silent gloomy shambles, had once seen the hell of total war.

All the way to Calais it was the same, every hill, every yard of coast, was guarded with these gaunt shattered memorials, to a tyrannical regime sixteen years long dead.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Meeting

28th September

Miss Wellman, a founder member sent her apologies and stated that she wished to withdraw from the Club, however, Mr. Colin Lears took her place and was admitted as a new member. The main topic was the subject of repayment of initial expenditure. The Club also decided to open a bank account. The meeting was concluded with a talk by Mr. D.R. Adams on his visit to the French Caves.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition To Llanymynech Hill (NGR.SJ/265.219)

1st October

Although the Mine had been visited on three previous occasions, this was the first Club Expedition, the object being to instruct new members, to test new equipment and if possible to survey the Ogof. J. Pagett and P. Watkins began by making a ground survey. Due to a faulty cap lamp the party became divided M. Gaut led the way in with M. Bolderston and R. Meeson. D.R. Adams and A. Corbyn following at a distance, C. Lears remaining to do a little excavating in the hope of finding evidence of occupation in which unfortunately he was not successful.

To the surprise of those who had explored the Mine previously the two parties entered a system of passages which had not been seen before, M. Gaut reported on his return, that the passages

continued on for some way and that he had not reached the end of them.

We decided, that to survey the Mine on this occasion was out of the question until the newly discovered parts were fully explored. The reason for the passage not being noticed on the three previous expeditions was no doubt due to the fact that it's entrance was usually flooded. This was the end of the summer and possibly the driest time of the year underground.

After lunch it was decided to practice ladder work by descending the old shaft above the Ogof which had been explored previously. The ladders were rigged, but on descent it was found that a new method of shackling the ladders together left a gap of approximately 2'6" at the junction, which 30ft. down the shaft made life rather difficult. All six members however negotiated this without mishap and arrived at the bottom, where they set out to re-explore the workings. To their surprise they again came upon another system of workings which the lowering of the water-table had made accessible. These were thoroughly explored, but hopes of their leading into the Ogof were not realised. The known workings were re-explored and the party returned to the surface, finding the job of negotiating the ladder gap much more difficult than the descent. The day was concluded with a quick examination of the quarry face in fading light.

This was an extremely successful first expedition of the new Club.

P.T. Watkins, J.A. Pagett, A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

2nd Expedition To Llanymynech Hill

8th October

The object of this was to explore the newly discovered passages and if possible to attempt a survey. The survey began immediately on arrival, first the known main gallery then new passages. These were mainly low crawls with occasional chambers showing evidence of long-chisel working. Eventually the long chamber was reached from which it was possible to climb up into a similar chamber directly above. From here a passage led through a narrow squeeze to a small chamber from which led a further passage which developed into a figure of eight shape. The lower portion was filled with debris which M. Gaut tried unsuccessfully to clear, it being cemented together with flow-stone.

The upper portion was extremely tight, however A. Corbyn eventually got through this and proceeded to report with some measure of astonishment, that he was in a large chamber just below the entrance. D.R. Adams immediately recognized the squeeze as the one which M. Warner had negotiated on the visit of the 8th January. The workings were therefore a complete circle. With no further doubts M. Gaut struggled through the squeeze, followed by D.R. Adams and R. Meeson. The chamber was surveyed and the expedition returned to the surface. The survey had included all but the well known galleries of previous visits.

The Nineteenth Century Mine near the Ogof previously visited on January 8th, was re-entered, but as already noted this mine being mainly composed of clay, it was neither safe or practicable to explore it completely.

On working out the results of the survey later, it was found that the circular working in the Ogof was 316ft, in length.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Ceriog Cave, Nr. Chirk

15th October

NGR. SJ/265.375

This cave had previously been visited on the 13th November 1960. The object of this visit being to explore the cave further, and survey it if possible. Surveying began immediately on entry. The passages were high but narrow, opening soon after the entrance into two fairly large chambers. The narrow passage then led into a fissure some 20ft. in height but only just sufficiently wide to pass through. At the end of this a known passage continued onwards, and an alternative passage led off to the left at right angles, in the bottom of this was 9 ins. of very sloppy mud. Undeterred D.R. Adams dropped into it, finding a right angled bend to the right, the roof became very low so he had to lie in it to get through, a further right angle bend showed him that the passage which led on was two-thirds blocked with flow stone. Meanwhile M. Gaut was forcing himself passed the obstruction in the known passage R. Meeson, A. Corbyn and D.R. Adams followed him. This is a low narrow somewhat painful crawl leading into a small chamber, entered by the previous expedition. There were two ways out of this, one was a narrow awkward squeeze which M. Gaut and R. Meeson managed to negotiate. D.R. Adams took the alternative exit, the slit in the floor which brought him to a crawling passage with the usual 9 ins. of sloppy mud.

A. Corbyn followed him, and the party was rejoined in a narrow lofty passage which gave way to a maze of small earthy tunnels with several chambers. Here roots hung down from the roof, and several insects were observed, which giving the impression that this part was not far below the surface. Attempts however, to find even a rabbit hole going upwards were in vain, we then returned somewhat tired to the entrance where much time was spent attempting to wash off the mud into the river. It was not possible to survey the complete system beyond the end of the big fissure. The visit was considered a muddy but worth while undertaking.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Ritton Castle Mine, Snailbeach 22nd October

Area. NGR: SO/345.977

The object of this was to explore the stope found by M. Gaut and D.R. Adams on their expedition of April 19th. M. Bolderston and D.R. Adams descended this stope on a 150ft. rope finding that it led into a winze. This was a horrible place, with a bad stench. Nevertheless, ladders were rigged and it was descended again, the winze was about 20ft. in depth but as the ladders did not reach the bottom and the stench was worse at that depth, we withdrew, obviously there was something dead down there.

The **Nipstone adit** was found to be flooded as on our first visit in 1959. An amazing thing when it was remembered that on subsequent visits a stone had been dropped 50ft. down the stope before hitting the water. Obviously there must be great difference in the water table between wet and dry periods in that area. **Robert's Level** at Snailbeach was re-explored.

A. Corbyn, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Grindon N. Staffs. 29th October

Previously visited on the 27th November 1960, the object of this trip was to re-explore in greater detail the caves in that area. Thor's Cave (NGR: SK/098.549) was revisited and a search was made of the cave known as the 'Fissure' mentioned in the Rev. G.H. Wilson's Book; 'Cave Hunting Holidays in the Peak'. Not finding any other it was decided that a somewhat insignificant opening

near Thor's West Window must be the one. Despite the massive archaeological finds mentioned in the book, and the large numbers of people who worked there the cave was very narrow and not more than 25 to 30ft. in length. There could not have been sufficient room for more than two people to have worked there at any one time. A nearby cave higher up the hill was re-explored, and some interesting stalacmitic formations were examined.

Beeston Tor Cave (NGR: SK/107.540) was next visited and was penetrated as far as previously, where it became too narrow. On the return to the entrance an interesting fissure approximately 40ft. in height was discovered. A. Corbyn and M. Gaut spent some time trying to find an exit from the top. An iron ring was secured to the rock face near by, but the reason for it's presence was not apparent.

A. Corbyn, C. Lear, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + +

Meeting

2nd November

The Club were complimented on the very successful first five expeditions. The financial situation was examined, the future programme prepared, and the meeting was concluded with a short discussion on the 'Techniques of Mine Exploration'. Six members were present and D.R. Adams was in the chair in the absence of Mr. D.B. Corbyn.

+ + + + + + + + +

Expedition To Huglith Mine Nr. Minsterley

5th November

NGR: SJ/408.021

Leaving the vehicles at the summit of Huglith Hill a stope line was followed down the southern side in the hope that an adit entrance could be found. A small adit was discovered but the main entrance had been destroyed, near it the stopes were of great depth and dangerous to enter. The area near this entrance showed many signs of industrial occupation now fast being buried in the undergrowth. A local farmer gave us some further details about the Mine, which had been worked until the mid 1940's.

Westcott Cooper Mine was revisited and a smaller Mine nearby. In the Westcott Mine which had been visited several times previously, the sump was crossed, but the passage ended almost immediately, a stope above this was also climbed but was of no great extent. The expedition concluded with a visit to the other

entrance of the Huglith Mine, which had previously been visited on the 11th April 1959, but was found to be fouled with refuse.

A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition To Odin's Mine Nr. Castleton 12th November
Derbyshire NGR: SK/134.835

Previously visited 1st May, 1960. A party of six Leeds University Students were encountered near the entrance and the Club joined forces with them, it being agreed to work together, they to use the Club's ropes and the Club to use their election ladders. The party entered the Mine negotiated the chimney without difficulty and met three other cavers awaiting to descend the winze. Some time elapsed before the other party caught up and the ladders were rigged, these were very light and could be rolled very small for carriage however, as it was the first time that the Club had used this type of ladder some difficulty was experienced in the descent, mainly in finding ones footing on the narrow rungs, and with the very lightness of the ladder made it difficult to disengage ones foot particularly when wearing. 'Commando' soles. Nevertheless all descended safely. It was over half an hour before it was possible to move on and leave the other party to complete the descent of the ladder. As the party now numbered fifteen, the whole operation took approximately one hour. The Club moved down the steeply sloping passage and eventually into the large chamber reached on the previous visit. The tunnel half way down the wall which had been noted previously was explored, this led to a Tee junction, the left hand passage being blocked and the right hand leading to a winze, which was possibly 40ft. in depth. The others not having caught up with their ladders, the party returned to the big chamber. A passage beneath the entrance led us to a winze around which it was possible to climb on a ledge. This passage was actually-part of a large vertical stope. In fact, the complete Mine consisted of two or more parallel vertical stopes with bunches left in between, or passages supported on stone lintels or even timber. No doubt it would be possible to descend the stope to a main gallery below, but this would be at some depth possibly 300ft.

The other party then arrived with their-ladders, but did not consider it possible in view of the time involved to attempt another pitch. A nasty accident to a girl member of their party was narrowly averted, when she missed the ledge around the winze

and nearly fell down it, M. Gaut saving her with a timely grab, this was lucky as the winze proved to be at least 300ft. deep. The return to the entrance was considerably extended owing to the large number of people which was far in excess to the ideal number of a caving party.

This expedition together with Llanymynech, Ceriog and Grindon completed the Clubs training period, it now being sufficiently proficient to tackle most obstacles and from now on the Club will concentrate on fresh ground.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A Meeson, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams

+ + + + + + + + + +

Visit to the Lilleshall Quarry

19th November

NGR: SJ/732.160

This was the first time that the Quarry had been re-entered since the complete exploration and survey of 2nd October 1960, (see S.M.C. account No. 1 'The Lilleshall Stone Quarry') however this visit yielded somewhat surprising results, firstly other people possibly village lads had gained access to it and had even succeeded in building a raft which floated on the water. The water level itself had dropped a further foot in the year, making approximately 3ft. since the first visit in 1958. A tunnel among the fallen slabs not seen before, was eagerly examined by M. Gaut who believed that it may lead on to further large workings, however it became too narrow. Near here it was noticed that the water in the northern end of this working, and that in the main chamber were connected as had been suspected during the survey, the aperture just being visible above the water level.

At the northern end of the Quarry a further surprise awaited us, when a way was found into a large sand stone chamber which had some quite beautiful stratification on the walls. No further exit or continuation was found, so the known part was returned to.

At the southern end of the Quarry where there was a steep slope up into another chamber a further passage was discovered, a narrow slit about a foot high and 20ft. wide formed by the dropping of a complete section of roof strata. M. Gaut succeeded in working his way some distance into this with the aid of a pick, but it became, too low. The party then retired to the entrance and blocked it securely.

J. Corby, A. Corbyn, M. James, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.



THE OGOF WASNT THE LARGEST
OF MINES

RAM



CEIRIOG WAS
A BIT WET

RAM

Expedition to Redhurst Swallet

26th November

Nr. Grindon N. Staffs. NGR: SK/097.557

This on information from a plan supplied by G. Platten. On arrival it was soon discovered that some of the directions supplied (presumably copied from "Britain Underground") were incorrect. The mouth of the swallet was according to the description, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile upstream from Redhurst Bridge over the river Manifold. Having parked the vehicles at this point and moved upstream the party arrived at Wetton Mill Bridge. Here a Mr. J.B. Cliffe was encountered, who proved to be some authority on the area. He guided the party back to the almost invisible swallet entrance immediately opposite the vehicles in a position approximately 100ft. **DOWNSTREAM** of Redhurst Bridge on the west bank of the river at water level.

The Club were amazed on their arrival in the area, to discover that the river Manifold was completely dry there not being a trace of moisture in it. It was later found however, that the river was quite deep under Redhurst Bridge and disappeared down several swallet holes within 50 to 60ft. of it.

The entrance to the swallet was almost choked with river flotsam which showed that the river usually flowed directly into it. After a few feet the party reached the first descent marked on the plan, unfortunately this was found to be full to the top with water, there was no way in that day. Mr. Cliffe stated that he had never seen the water so far up with the river so low outside. The roaring of the river down it's subterranean course could be plainly heard not only in the cave but also near the soak-away swallet holes a few feet upstream. The party adjourned to these, and spent some time clearing the debris in order to see into the passage but did not succeed. Mr. Cliffe was thanked for his help and particulars were exchanged with him for future use.

The river was then explored both up and downstream but as little was found of further interest the party moved to **Beeston Tor Cave** (St. Bertram's) previously visited on October 29th. Here M. Gaut and A. Corbyn resolved to dig further into the narrow sticky passage in which the cave ended. The remainder examined the fissure discovered on the previous visit. C. Lears on examining a hole in the farthest corner of the fissure heard noises, and upon investigating saw A. Corbyn digging on the other side. The hole was not large enough for them to pass through, but they were able to shake hands through the aperture. The two had some difficulty in escaping from the adhesive mud in which they had been digging.

G. Henderson joined the Club for the day, A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

On December 3rd, seven members of the Club joined the recently formed Wrekin Archaeological Group on a visit to the Roman City of Viroconium. The party was led by Messrs. J. Pagett and P.T. Watkins.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Meeting

7th December

G. Henderson was admitted to the Club being the twelfth member. The future programme was prepared and the financial situation was found to be satisfactory.

The Club then went on to discuss the following points which had arisen on the conclusion of the training periods:-

Discipline: It was agreed that a rigid code must be formed and strictly adhered to.

- a) The leader should always have control of the party, and no one must attempt to precede him in anyway. However, it was also agreed that as many people as possible should, learn to lead in their own particular spheres; e.g. M. Gaut to take over in the leaders absence, and to take charge of difficult climbs' etc. A. Corbyn path-finding in narrow awkward spaces etc. C. Lears to take charge of the working and maintenance of ladders. Various other appointments would be discussed at later meetings.
- b) No rushing on ahead, follow the leader.
- c) No leaving the party, stick to it.
- d) Always sound floors in unexplored mine passages with a crowbar before proceeding.
- e) Always use safety lines on ladders.

The President also made a suggestion that candles should always be carried for emergency lighting, and that whistles should be procured for signalling.

Ladders: It was decided not to proceed with plans to make electron ladders due to the present financial state, and the fact that they were not immediately required.

Photography: C. Lears to undertake this, it being decided that experiments must be made with magnesium tape for underground lighting.

It was decided to purchase a duplicator in order to produce the Club's Year Book and accounts of specialised activities. Various social topics were also discussed and the meeting was concluded with a talk by the President on his recent visit to Russia.

Expedition to the Eglwyseg Escarpment

10th December

Nr. Llangollen N. Wales. NGR: SJ/234.477

Previously visited on 27th August 1961. This was approached from the direction of Trevor along the 'panorama' road. Nothing of interest was seen from the vehicles, but this area definitely requires a great deal of attention particularly the observation of stream risings.

At World's End the main adit was found to be flooded so work concentrated on the short passage higher up the hill which led to the boulder choked pot, down which the stream was flowing. A considerable quantity of water was falling down the, pot with great force, but nevertheless it was completely cleared of small stones with the exception of a large boulder which defied all attempts at removal. The question remains as to whether it would be possible to enter any large cave system via this pot to make the difficult work of splitting and removing this boulder worth while, or whether it would be more advantageous to concentrate on finding possible entrances elsewhere.

A piece of stalacmitic material was discovered on the spoil heap of a blocked shaft at the head of the glen.

G. Henderson, A. Corbyn, C. Lears, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Eight members of the Club attended lectures given by the 'Cave & Crag Club' on an 'Introduction to Caving', at the Youth Centre, Wellington, on December 12th & 19th.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to the Afon Meirchion Valley

26th December

Nr. Denbigh N. Wales

Dell Cave NGR: SJ/024.692 was first visited. This is described in the Shepton Mallet Caving Club, Occasional Paper No. 2. 'Caving in North Wales' P. A4, as follows:-

'500yds. N. of Garn on the road from Henllan to Bont Newydd, a stream passes under the road and if this stream is followed W. a wooded dell is reached. In this dell the stream enters a large cave mouth.

The 15ft. high entrance gives access to a straight passage which takes the stream when it is running. After 70ft. the cave makes a sharp turn left through an 8 ins. high arch, too narrow to pass, and appears to lead to a roomer passage'.

The Club's examination of the cave was in agreement with the above report, although thick mud and stream flotsam did not allow

them to penetrate more than 50 of the 70ft. mentioned. Small holes at the sides of the entrance appeared to lead no-where, the stream being completely frozen over, was not running.

Afon Meirchion Cave NGR: SJ/023.697. This took some considerable effort to find being over ½ mile up stream from the confluence of the Meirchion and the Elwy. However, the walk or rather struggle along the bank of the frozen river was exhilarating, several interesting ice patterns being noted. 'Caving in North Wales' describes it as follows:-

'In the east bank of Afon Meirchion approx. 3/4 mile upstream from it's junction with the river Elwy. A resurgence cave that is only active in the winter months. When the cave is not active a water worn passage can be followed for 80ft. until a still, clear pool is reached. This pool usually forms a sump. In very dry conditions the pool dries up, and a very tight 30ft. long crawl leads to a clear pool forming a sump; the way on can be seen under water, but it is very tight'.

C. Lears eventually tracked down the elusive cave by observing it from the opposite bank of the river. The entrance was large, but rapidly gave way to a low crawling bank with a floor of fine gravel. After negotiating a pool, a short but well formed stream passage opened out, ending in another pool. A sharp edge of rock hung about 8 ins. from the surface, but beyond, there appeared to be a large chamber. Forgetting the cold outside, D.R. Adams ducked under the edge and arrived soaked in the chamber, only to find that there was no way out, (such is life!).

The party was now at the pool mentioned in the account as being 80ft. from the entrance. Only in very dry conditions would it be possible to continue down the narrow squeeze mentioned in the description, with this in mind the party returned to the surface.

The Derbyshire Caving Club discussing these two caves in their Bulletin No.1. 1961, 'North Wales' P. 14, states the possibility that Afon Meirchion Cave is a resurgence of the water which flows into Dell Cave. 1000ft. separates, the two entrances, of much less than 300ft. is known. There is then the possibility of a cave system 700ft. in length between the two, which awaits exploration.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

The members celebrated New Years Eve at the Buckatree Hotel, Wellington.

+ + + + + + + + + +

To ease the difficulties of transport on Club Expeditions the renovation of a Wartime American Jeep Trailer for towing behind the Land Rover, was begun during the latter days of 1961.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Meeting

4th January

The Club discussed the possibilities of further work being carried out in the Eglwyseg Escarpment and also in the Valley Afon Meirchion. Plans for the forthcoming visit to Alstonefield were discussed, also the future programme. It was thought that more people should have an official capacity in the Club, and it was decided that C. Lears should be responsible for the operation and upkeep of the ladders, also M.J. Bolderston should look after the social side of the Club, and the Club Room itself. The financial prospects not being bright, it was decided to have a 1/- levy per expedition per week. It was stated that a duplicator had been purchased for the Club, to enable the Year Book to be printed. It was also stated that work on the trailer was proceeding satisfactorily.

Nine members were present, and D.R. Adams was in the chair in the absence of Mr. Corbyn.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Llangynog N. Wales

7th January

NGR: SJ/055.265

This to explore mine workings with which the town is virtually surrounded. Craig Rhiwarth was tackled first. The side of this mountain facing the town is exceptionally steep; and the ascent up an old haulage-way was quite tiring. Some distance up, a stope-head was discovered and explored, it had presumably been worked for lead, however no galleries were found to lead from it. A further steep haulage way leading to a large underground slate quarry was climbed, this was a quarry similar to that explored at Fairbourne with several very large open chambers with short connecting passages. Several small iron winches in a reasonable state of repair were noted. On returning to the entrance a glorious sunset was observed. The rock face was explored for some distance to the east in failing light but no further entrances beyond a few blank openings were discovered. However, this was a most enjoyable day, and there is no doubt that more time will be spent in this area.

G. Henderson, A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

Expedition to Alstonefield N. Staffs

14th January

This was undertaken in conjunction with Wellington Youth Club to meet members of the 'Cave & Crag Club' at their Club in the yard of the George Hotel, Alstonefield.

After an early start the Club reached Alstonefield at 9 a.m. rather expecting to find the yard of the 'George' a hive of activity, but on arrival no sound was heard and there was no movement of any kind. The party circled the building to make sure of the exact location of the Club Room, pair of long woolly underpants rather muddy and a battered miners helmet visible through the windows gave the answer without doubt. The party settled down to wait, "perhaps someone suggested they had gone to church!" It was approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ hour before the first figures emerged and tottered bleary eyed down the steps, obviously it was the 'morning after the night before'.

The party were invited into the Club Room which was the top storey of a barn divided into three compartments, a kitchen at one end, a living room at the other, and a large dormitory in between with accommodation for approx. sixteen people in two and three tier bunks. Muddy clothes were drying everywhere obviously the previous days expedition had been a 'wet one'.

As it was unlikely that the days expedition would start for some time the party left the Club Room to go in search of the 'Big Level' as mentioned in the Rev. G.H. Wilsons' book, 'Cave Hunting Holidays in the Peak'. Evidence of mining at a point high above the Manifold E.S.E. of Beeston Tor was soon found. The levels however, were completely concealed in dense scrub, one level was found which went in for some way fairly straight with high stopes above and one or two natural cavities visible in the walls. A search of the steep sloping hillside was made for the 'Big Level' which is reputed to go in, in excess of 1000ft. but it was not discovered. The party then returned to the 'George'.

It was nearly 1 a.m. before the complete party of about twenty-three people moved off on the days expedition. The destination was the 'Hillocks Mine' about seven miles distant (NGR: SK/145.672), here the Club were given the privilege of leading the way in and pitching ladders for the whole party. The mine was a long passage very roughly cut which became progressively lower until it became a crawl. It was somewhat reminiscent of Llanymynech. The passage widened and went on, but a short drop to the left led into a long

straight beautifully 'U' shaped passage to the left of the entrance passage. This ended in a drop about 30ft. in depth which was the first ladder pitch. At the bottom of this a short passage led both ways, but it had been discontinued. The way on was down and round a few bends to the second ladder pitch which was most awkward, the passage being high but extremely narrow.

There was no way out from the foot of the ladder but M. Gaut discovered a way on from halfway down, it leading into a chamber which D.R. Adams was able to reach via another pitch from the upper passage with a rope. From this chamber access was gained into a veritable labyrinth of large workings which the party did not have time to fully explore. A shaft was noted going upwards for approx. 200ft. The return journey was extremely tiring, but all considered it well worth while. It was believed that only a small number of people other than the Club actually reached the second pitch.

The mine itself was considered to be of an early date, though not so early as Llanymynech which it greatly resembled. Chisel work was very evident but there were many narrow shot holes visible showing that an early type of explosive had been used extensively. The opinion was formed that the mine may have been begun in the Seventeenth Century, worked in the Eighteenth Century, and finished with explosives in the early Nineteenth Century.

On their return to the Alstonefield Club Room the Club were most grateful to it's owners for the washing and changing facilities it offered, and there was no doubt that there would be a return visit.

G. Henderson, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

2nd Expedition to Llangynog

21st January

The **Lead Mines NGR: SJ/054.255** and the Cynrian Mountain were explored, but no sizeable workings were discovered, and one insignificant adit only was entered.

A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to the Eardiston Copper Mine

26th January

Nr. West Felton, Oswestry. NGR: SJ/367.246

(On information from the 'Shropshire Magazine' dated April 1955). This was situated in an old sand stone quarry.

A beautifully shaped passage led inwards with several bends for approximately 200ft. the latter part containing 5" of water. An interesting feature was that in the weak parts of the passage stone-vaulting had been used rather than timber supports, this although narrowing the passage to approximately 15" looked decidedly longer lasting. It was in the second of these narrow sections that the accumulation of silt on the floor rose to within 4" of the roof making further progress impossible. There was no spoil heap outside the mine, the stone doubtless having been used for building purposes.

A. Corbyn, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams

+ + + + + + + + +

Meeting

1st February

The expeditions of the previous month were discussed and the financial business transacted. It was found that the 1/- levy was producing satisfactory results. It was stated that work on the trailer had been completed, and that it was now ready for Club use. Future plans were discussed and suggestions put forward for the forthcoming Easter Camp.

Eight members were present, and Mr. D.B. Corbyn was in the chair.

+ + + + + + + + +

Third Expedition to Llangynog

4th February

This time, exploration centred on the south side of Y Gribin. A large underground slate quarry was found at NGR: SJ/048.259, entrance was gained via a 30ft. ladder pitch the original timber supported entrance having collapsed. The quarry consisted of vast chambers up to 80ft. in height, and often 200ft. in length, connected by wide spacious passage ways. The floors of the chambers were littered with large blocks of slate often very smooth and slippery. The necessity for use of adequate head gear was demonstrated, when a large piece of rock dislodged by a member climbing above, dropped on to D.R. Adams' helmet. He was unhurt except for a large bruise on his knee on which the rock had bounced! A large colony of bats numbering 40 to 50, and belonging to one of the Horseshoe varieties were examined with great interest by the party. They were found hanging up, under ledges at the lower end of the entrance chamber. The quarry had been in use up to comparatively recent times.

The trailer was used for the first time on this expedition and proved to be extremely successful, it was very light to tow and enabled all the members to travel in one vehicle lessening the petrol expenses considerably.

G.M. Henderson, A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Stapley Hill S. Shropshire

11th February

This to examine the site of the supposed **Giants Cave** NGR: SO/316.993. After visiting the Bronze Age stone circle of Mitchells Fold, the party moved on over rough country to the given cave site. It was a rectangular ledge on the hillside approx: 10ft. x 20ft. presumably artificial, enclosed by stone slabs placed on edge. It had three entrances, one on either side, and one with a paving slab in the front. Paths led from each side entrance along the hillside. The party were informed by the inhabitants of the cottages below, that these paths were originally cobbled. The ledge was backed with several tall boulders which could possibly weigh 30 tons or more. The farmer described the story of the cave; this was presumed to have existed until the early part of the century. The original occupant of the cottage a Mr. Parry now 85 years of age, remembered seeing the cave blocked up to prevent cattle becoming trapped in it, in fact it may have been blocked to cover a carcass of a cow already trapped. It had always been generally believed that the entrance was to the left of the boulders behind a small holly bush. The party commenced to dig here, but came to natural solid rock after a few inches. The possibilities of an entrance under the boulders was suggested and a hole 2ft. in depth was dug, revealing a variety of different types of stone, and several pieces of quite modern pottery, this proving that the earth had been disturbed in the non-to-distant past. However, it was generally agreed that the cave could not exist in the place indicated by the local inhabitants, although it may have existed near by. The ledge was presumed to be a lean-to hut base of uncertain age, it was also presumed that the cave if it existed would be artificial, the rock in the area being too hard to form natural cavities, and more possibly to be an ancient mine working it was decided to consult Mr. Parry for further information.

A mine adit near-by previously visited on 1st January 1961, was found to contain the 2ft. or more of water which J. Mason had unsuccessfully attempted to drain on two previous visits. This was

explored by A. Corbyn and R.A. Meeson, who waded in and reported that it continued for 150ft. to a fall over which it was possible to climb, but the level ended almost immediately in a small stope upwards not more than 6ft. in height. The water level remained at approximately the same depth throughout. Another mine level lower down the hillside visited on a previous expedition was found to have been converted into a reservoir by the 'Clun Water Board'.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

Further information regarding the **Giants Cave** was received later the same week, when M. James visited Mr. Parry at his home in Wellington. Mr. Parry although now totally blind for 20 years could remember the exact details of the site and stated that two calves had strayed into the cave and had died of some unknown disease, the cave was then blocked up. This would be when he was aged about 7 or 8, about 1884/5.

Apparently the stones forming the rectangular enclosure had been much higher than they are at present and stood outside the mouth of the cave which led in underneath the tall boulders mentioned. When it was blocked, several very large boulders were rolled into it, and several feet of rubble was filled in on top making the level area that exists today. Apparently the cave was not more than 20ft. in length and it is unlikely that anything would be gained by re-opening it.

+ + + + + + + + +

2nd Expedition to Area 3 miles N.E. Denbigh 18th February
N. Wales

This on information from 'Caving in North Wales' by the Shepton Mallet Caving Club. The first cave visited was **Cefn Cave** NGR: SJ/021.705 which is the largest in the area and is open to the public, a fact which was obvious by the large number of small boys found in there. The cave has three large entrances leading to a series of interconnected passages most of which were high enough to walk through but some were quite low. Two flights of well constructed steps were noted. It was decided that it had natural origins, but had been enlarged, and possibly used as a dwelling or show-place at some time.

Bont Newydd Cave NGR: SJ/015.710 was next visited. This had obviously been used as a store. A long straight entrance chamber gave way to two small passages which became too tight after a few feet.

The last visit was made to the valley of the small stream which flows down behind 'Brasgyll Cottage' to join the Elwy, the NGR: of the bridge behind the cottage is given, as SJ/006.714. The stream flows through a most spectacular deep cut gorge. Moving upstream from the bridge the first two caves were short and uninteresting, the third cave 175yds. above the bridge has a large entrance giving access to a passage 60ft. in length, ending in a crawl up a mud slope to a large chamber. The fourth cave was short and muddy, the fifth was also short, but had a hole in the floor giving a view of a narrow rift. It bore round to the right to end in a series of small rim stone pools. The place had once boasted a good collection of stalactites, but these had been heavily damaged, several bats were noticed.

When preparing to vacate the area a further cave was found which proved to be the largest and most spectacular of the Group. This was not mentioned in 'Caving in N. Wales' and therefore presumably had not been noticed by the Shepton Mallet Club, although there was evidence of visits by other cavers. A water channel into the E. bank of the stream led to the foot of a solid rock face. However a few small boulders to the right of the face were removed to reveal a small aperture about 12" x 15" through which it was just possible to squeeze. This gave access to the upper regions of a large water cut chamber about 35ft. long by 15ft. high. The chamber was extremely irregular, so that it was possible to stand and move about in it at almost any level. There were several passages leading out, but all become too tight after a few feet. While some members were still negotiating their exit, the surface party dislodged some stones in the water channel causing a large quantity of water to flow into the chamber. When all the party had regained the surface the hole was widened until it was possible to hear the noise of rushing water descending into the cavern. It still being safe to re-enter three members once more descended to find that the water was entering the chamber from three different underground entrances and that the bulk of it was disappearing down a passage at floor level at the far end. Water was beginning to trickle in through the entrance before the last of the party dragged himself clear.

This may point to an underground system near by but entry would be very difficult.

Also on the same expedition a stream rising with good possibilities was noted at NGR: SJ/023.704 in the S. bank of the Elwy just downstream of it's confluence with the Afon Meirchion.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

On 22nd February the Club entertained 5 members of the North Staffs. Speleological Research Society in the Club Room. The construction, use and upkeep of wire ladders were discussed at length, and several places for future exploration were suggested. In conclusion the visitors were sincerely thanked for their information and particulars were exchanged.

+ + + + + + + + + +

On 24th February the Wrekin Archaeological Group visited Old Oswestry Hill Fort (Pre: Vis: 18-6-61), and part of Offa's Dyke. A small natural cave entrance was noted in a quarry, at NGR: SJ/251.323. The party consisted of 9 members of the 'S.M.C.' and 6 others, and was led by Messrs. J. Pagett and I.T. Watkins.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Meeting

1st March

The expeditions of the previous month and the future programme were discussed. It was decided to enter the forthcoming Town Hobbies Exhibition and it was also decided that the Easter Camp should be in the mountains W. of Blaenau Ffestiniog. With regard to equipment, it was stated that a further 150ft. of nylon rope was urgently required, and that a start should be made by C. Lear's on the construction of wire ladders similar to the N.S.S.R.S. pattern. It was also decided that the photographic side of the Club should be got underway as soon as possible and that special expeditions should be organized for the purpose. The upkeep and maintenance of equipment was also brought to the notice of the members and M. James was elected to take charge of it. Six members were present and D.R. Adams was in the chair.

+ + + + + + + + + +

2nd Expedition to the Hillocks Mine

4th March

Nr. Monyash, Derbyshire.

(Pre: Vis: 14-1-62). Although the ground was snow covered the roads were clear and good progress was made. An open mine adit was noted from the road at SK/146.613 and invited possible exploration. The Neolithic Sacred Site of **Arbor Low** was next visited and was found to be quite spectacular in the snow although all the stones in the circle had been knocked flat at some time. On reaching the neighbourhood of the Hillocks Mine much time was spent digging the Land Rover out after ramming a 3ft. snowdrift,

also another Land Rover which had done likewise. The Club also met members of the Eccles Caving Club who were surveying the Knotlow Mine near by.

The mine was descended as before without event and the party proceeded to spend some time exploring the number of passages leading out from the shaft chamber, these developed into small crawls and stopes which had been blasted out with low power explosive. There was one anxious moment when M. James climbing high in the shaft chamber found himself unable to get down, A. Corbyn and C. Lears returned to the first pitch to collect a rope which enabled him to climb down in safety, this incident emphasised the need for further nylon ropes mentioned at the last meeting. An icy welcome met the party on their return to the surface, but they now had a much fuller knowledge of the mine than had been gained on the previous visit.

G. Henderson, A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, C. Lears, M. James, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Photographic Expedition to Llanymynech Ogof

11th March

(Pre: Vis: 1st & 8th October 1961). This was not really successful due to a defect in the camera flashing mechanism, which enabled only 5 possible photographs to be taken. This disappointment was largely offset when A. Corbyn discovered the hoped for connection between the main cave and the shaft chamber. This above the place where the entrance to the circular working, often floods in wet weather. A connection had been made fairly recently by persons unknown, who must have put a fair amount of work into it. Nevertheless the ladders were rigged in the shaft for photographic reasons, practise, and to experiment with a life-line pulley designed by C. Lears, this was proved most successful and should contribute greatly to the life-span of the nylon ropes, especially when life-lining from below. A. Corbyn with various assistants spent some considerable time attempting to clear a blockage in an opening high in the shaft chamber but was not able to penetrate far. The passages beyond the shaft chamber were re-explored. On conclusion members agreed that there were several passages in different parts of the Ogof which might reward attempts to clear them.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, M.C. Bridgwood, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams. C. Lears being in charge of the photography work.

Expedition to the Perryfoot Cave

18th March

Nr. Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire NGR: SK/098.814

On information from the N.S.S.R.S. This water worn cave had been the scene of a cave rescue emergency a fortnight earlier, when a girl was trapped by the hips for 10 hrs. It proved to be extremely tight and muddy with comparatively few chambers of any size. Several passages appeared to lead to an extremely tight main stream passage. These were explored fairly fully by the Club, other cavers were found to be at work within, attempting to enlarge the system and were given assistance when their lights failed, particulars were exchanged with them and the Club moved on to explore Gautries Hole SK/102.814 near by.

Here a large number of British Speleological Association Cavers were at work attempting to pump out a lower level and make a film. Their equipment consisted of a Land Rover equipped with P.T.O. Generating Set and telephone communication connected by cables to the party underground. A hole under a high cliff dropped immediately into the main stream passage which was followed for a while, until a passage to the right was taken which led to a mud slope, up this another passage led, to the upper regions of a large chamber.

These passages were all fairly easy crawls along nicely shaped water worn courses. In this chamber the party of 'B.S.A.' Cavers were at work. Their ladders enabled the Club to join them, only to find, that they were standing in 3ft. of water, an artificial pool held in check by dams constructed from one gallon paint tins filled with mud. An electric pump connected to the Land Rover via the cable, was pumping water into this from the lower level. Filming was being carried out when, the party joined them and the place was brilliantly lit with electric light. The benefits of telephone communication with the surface while, doing work of this type were noted. Assisting to move out some of the 'B.S.A.' Cavers gear the party returned to the surface.

M. Gaut and several other members reported the presence of mine workings to the S. of the main road behind the Perryfoot Farm SK/101.811. An excellent and most interesting days sport.

G.M. Henderson, A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, M. James, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut & D.R. Adams.



FIRST
ENCOUNTER
WITH
ELECTRON
LADDERS
(ODINS MINE)

RAM



RAM

2nd Photographic Expedition To Llanymynech Ogof

25th March

This was more successful than the previous visit, a number of pictures being taken which would have good results. Ladders were again rigged for the benefit of the camera. Another group of cavers were also doing photographic work within the Ogof, a sign of the increasing number of cavers in the Shrewsbury Area.

Ceriog Cave was also visited, but no successful pictures were taken due to a recurrence of trouble with the flasher mechanism. The possibility of further caves in the river bank near by should not be ignored. The party being of a photographic nature was led by C. Lears.

A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, C. Lears, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams. Miss E. Brookes and a friend also accompanied the expedition.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition To Find Site For Easter Camp

1st April

A site was chosen near the derelict mine buildings of the **Croesor Slate Mine** near Ffestiniog N. Wales SH/670.467. The track up to the mine from the village of Tan-y-Grisiau was very steep passing between mountains of spoil and many derelict buildings. However, after fording the stream it levelled out for the next mile to the camp site. This was situated in a sheltered spot at the head of a beautiful valley above which rose the not unsightly spoil heaps of the mine, towering high into the sky. The main adit was found to be large enough to drive the vehicle into, but it was not entered on this occasion. High above it were several other adits and an enormous quarry hole with precipitous sides right on top of the plateau, with an endless vista of mountains beyond. Truly an excellent place for an Easter Camp.

C. Lears, M.R. Gaut, D.R. Adams, & Miss E. Brookes.

+ + + + + + + + + +

On April 3rd & 4th the Club participated in the **Town Hobbies Exhibition** displaying their equipment together with samples, maps, drawings and tools etc., showing every aspect of it's activities. This was a great success in which all members took an equal share and greatly enhanced the reputation of the Club in the Newport Area.

Meeting

5th April

The previous months expeditions were discussed and members were complimented on all the hard work which had gone into the Hobbies Exhibition. The financial state of the Club which was causing alarm among some members, was proved to be not so serious, and the remainder of the meeting was spent in discussing arrangements for the forthcoming Easter Camp.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Expedition to Lime Stone Quarry

8th April

Nr. Oswestry NGR: SJ/251.323

This was to examine a hole seen in the quarry face on the previous visit of February 24th. It was found to go in for 8 to 10ft. ending in a hoard of rubbish left by an owl or some other bird. Sounding with a crowbar and the removal of part of the rubbish by A. Corbyn, did not give any indication of its continuance, so it was abandoned. Several other holes were noted in the face. Sounding the rock with a crowbar at the northern end of it, M. James heard a hollow sound. On taking out a few loose segments he revealed a small natural passage which rapidly narrowed to a 3" slit, but appeared to widen and become bigger further on. All attempts to remove the shoulder of rock barring progress failed, and the attempt was given up for the day. A further likely hole was seen filled with clay, a large quantity of which was removed, but no entrance was gained. On completion it was decided that some possibilities of good sized passages were evident, but a great deal of work would have to be done to gain access.

A. Corbyn, C. Lears, M. James, & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

At a meeting held on April 12th, Mr. Ibbotson a local mountaineer gave the Club a most interesting talk on his sport, some part of which could be applied to caving also.

+ + + + + + + + + +

2nd Expedition To Lime Stone Quarry Nr. Oswestry **15th April**

Experiments in the use of a simple sodium-chlorate-sugar explosive detonated electrically proved successful, the entrance to northern hole being widened considerably. However, attempts to drill shot-holes in the offensive shoulder were extremely laborious, and were eventually abandoned.

G. Henderson, A. Corbyn, C. Lears, M. James, M.J. Bolderston, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Report on Mine Explored During Easter Camp

20-23rd April

Information on this mine was gained from the 'British Caver' Vol:34. P.91. Where it is called the **Croesor Slate Mine** NGR: SH/665.463. Mountains of spoil were visible out side the entrance of a vast area which has been used for work shops etc ., all now in a ruinous state.

The mine adit went in almost due south, dead straight for a ½ mile, it was of grand proportions and it would be quite possible to drive an open vehicle right into the mountain. Several large chambers were noted to the left of the passage, and there was a considerable draught of air. The lines had all been dismantled, but the wire haulage line remained. An adit led directly into a series of vast stopes to the left and right, going both up and down. Large chambers had contained quantities of machinery and work shops. To the right of the junction chamber a haulage way went down for some considerable distance quite steeply, running eventually into water. Passages led off from it at intervals, ending in mid-air over the water filled stopes.

Back in the junction chamber passages leading east revealed areas which had been completely stoped out to the surface some 200ft. above. On the western side of the junction chamber was a haulage way leading upwards. The western passages left the entrance adit just before it reached the junction chamber. These led across a further haulage way into two other chambers but had been filled with spoil further on. Returning to the haulage way, this had a huge sledge at its base, some 6ft. wide and 15ft. in length with a 1½" diameter wire cable leading upwards. This way was parallel to the one leading upwards from the junction chamber into which it connects. Following the wire cable upwards it was found to pass round a 8ft. pulley and was attached to a massive counter weight which could weigh 10 tons or more, and was none too safely positioned. A loading platform nearby gave access to the foot of another series of huge stopes open to the sky. This actually came up in the base of a gigantic quarry pit (SH/665.453) out of which there was no easy way, enforcing a stiff climb to the level ground which was some 350ft. above the adit level. If the stopes leading down to the water are included, the whole stoped area could be in excess of 500ft. in depth and possibly 300yds. In width, the stope ceilings being up to 50ft. from the floor. In fact the mountain is practically hollow. Slates of all types had

been produced, and had been sorted in large yards near the adit entrance.

Quarry pits and adits below the main mine and on the opposite side of the valley gave access to another series of large underground chambers probably worked at an earlier date. The mines above Tan-y-Grisiau cover a colossal area, but access to them is difficult, the main adit being barred by a steel door and other adits not being immediately visible. The only other adit which was explored was behind the Mine Masters House, this proved to be a chimney, and was not followed far, it had probably been used in connection with the air circulation. That the underground workings of this mine were of great extent, was obvious from the disturbance of the surface of the crest of the ridge, over 500ft. above.

The study of this area proved well worth while, and a great deal was learned about the methods used in the mining of slate. The size of the worked area was incredible. Care should be taken by any further parties visiting this area to beware of exploring side passages and adits as these often end in mid-air.

A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, C. Lears, M. James, M.R. Gaut, & D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + +

This expedition concluded the caving activities of the season 1961/62, for the summer the main interest was centred on travel, exploration and camping, while at the same time keeping a careful watch for new caving areas.

D.R. Adams.

+ + + + + + + + +

Reports on Individual Subjects by Club Members

The Eglwyseg Escarpment

A limited amount of work has been done on the Eglwyseg Escarpment early this summer by C. Lears, A. Corbyn & M. James. Firstly they looked out on the known points of interest, i.e. World's End and Trevor. Having done this they then explored the greater area of the Escarpment, all with very few results. Unfortunately, the Eglwyseg, which in theory should have extensive systems, is reluctant to reveal its secrets.

There is a considerable thickness of peat on it's surface which is necessary to form the acid which assists in the production of caves, but how much effect it has had, is a problem. It would have needed to be there in pre-historic times to form caves for today, also there are no streams from neighbouring hills which flow on to the Eglwyseg which may form caves. This means that the Eglwyseg

has to rely solely on the rainfall for the necessary water which may not be quite enough to form large caves to any extent. This theory is supported by the fact that all resurgences are small trickles barring those at World's End and Trevor.

In conclusion it is possible that the diligent searcher may be rewarded in a very small way, but this is doubtful.

Llanymynech Ogof

Two further visits were made to the Ogof during the summer, the first on 24th June in order to carry out archaeological investigations.

Higher up the hillside a pit with two passages was found (Prev. disc. 26-2-61). One passage on the south side was found to be blocked, the passage on the north side was entered with difficulty, it opened up into a fairly large chamber 30' x 12', a small off-shoot to the left was blocked after one yard by spoil, it possibly did not continue very far. The floor at the end of the chamber was composed, of rotting vegetation 3ft in depth presumably a discarded badgers set. The roof at the end of the chamber was 7ft. in height. To the left is another possible gallery choked by back-filling. The gallery ends in a large fall which, can be seen on the surface and it was possible for a dog to reach the surface from this point.

This chamber appears to be part of a long gallery which has collapsed at several points on its length. These falls can be clearly seen going around the hillside in either direction. In some places it may be possible to dig into the gallery. In the Ogof itself, the small passage was entered to the right of the cave entrance leading to the large chamber (since named 'Mandible Chamber'). This area was thoroughly examined, and the first squeeze into the big circuit was approached. On clearing the rubble to enlarge the hole C.Lears discovered a piece of black burnished ware of Romano-British Native Type, this encouraged further digging and much to the astonishment of the excavators a human lower jaw bone was unearthed, possibly of a young slave who had died in the Mine. Further digging produced more bones mainly animal and two wetstones similar to those found in the Forum at Viroconium, possibly of 3rd Century date. These finds were later presented to Mr. J.A. Pagett of the Wrekin Archaeological Group for verification.

Several small adit entrances all blocked were noted to the N.E. of the Ogof entrance. Some small shaft furnaces further on at the head of the valley were also noted these may be Roman but are more likely to be 19th Century Lime Kilns.

C. Lears, M. James.

On 1st July a second visit was made to Llanymynech which began with the examination of an adit in the western end of the quarry face, this went in for about 40ft and was probably a prospect.

Digging was commenced in the small blocked adit entrances to the N.E. of the Ogof found previously. These appeared to give access to a small stope now almost completely filled with soft earth although it was obvious that a dog could pass through the passage between. A portion of deer antler of some age was unearthed during the excavation. The adits were little more than 1ft in height, quite square cut, and could well have been worked in Roman times.

The small Lime Kilns noted on the previous week were also re-examined, they had been constructed, with dry stone walling lined with clay. A quantity of slag was evident and a small spoil heap containing coal was found near by, the kilns are but a few yards from a small limestone quarry.

The work here was done by Messrs. A. Corbyn, R.A. Meeson, C. Lears assisted by M. Gaut, P. Gaut, D.R. Adams, Mr. & Mrs. Corbyn & family, under the leadership of M. James.

North Wales Expedition (R.A. Meeson, C. Lears, M. James & Zip) Graig (SJ/202.506)

Here there are 14 swallets or swallet depressions and 2 resurgences. The first swallet next to the farm is active but is filled with rubbish, the next 11 are merely depressions ranging from 3-12ft deep perhaps active in very wet weather. The last 2 are most interesting. No.13 is an active depression 16ft deep and in the lowest corner there is a 7ft deep pot which is bolder choked and has a possible side passage. No.14 is 14ft deep and active, but filled with an easily removable layer of decayed vegetation. The 2 resurgences are on the north side of the wood approx: 200yds apart and have little importance, a dye test, would show whether this is the water from the sinks, probably so.

An excellent camp site is available in the wood, and water can be obtained from the farm.

Scarp (SJ/189.524)

A small scarp can be seen from the road 150yds across a field fronted by a plantation of small firs planted on the scree. There are two short caves, one a blank end. 6-7ft in, the other goes approx: 15ft to a tight left hand bend, which may be worth digging, in all not much promise.

Llandegla Caves (SJ/187.584)

These are in the scarp which runs parallel to the road 200yds north of the farm called "Rhos-Isaf" they are the old bone caves investigated by Boyd Dawkins. Four caves in all, all short and of little speleological interest. No.3 has calcium deposits on

the roof and walls, which is soft and crumbly like chalk. A further cave not previously recorded 200yds below Llandegla Caves in an isolated scarp in the next chamber followed by a long crawl turning to the left to a terminal chamber, length 68ft, a nice, sporting cave.

Perthi Chwarew Cave (SJ/188.586)

The large obvious cave entrance 100yds north of the above opposite a quarry, the large entrance soon narrows down to a crawl dropping steeply, then rising and ending near the surface, length 40ft.

Two further caves are in the quarry on the opposite side of the road to the above. The first is a passage 25ft approx filled with rubbish and not investigated, as the end was within sight. The other is only a rock shelter 8ft long.

Llanarmon Caves (SJ/193.563)

Looking north from the bridge in the village a huge entrance 14ft. high and 18ft. wide can be seen, it goes in for 70ft. quickly narrowing down in size. 15ft. in there is a narrow aven 25ft in height.

A second entrance can be seen 15yds. south of the same bridge in the scarp, on top of which is a motte called Tomen-y-Faerdre, it goes in 8-10ft. to where the water meets the roof.

Wales-only-Pothole (SJ/195.595)

This does not exist, being merely mining subsidence with a shaft 10yds. distant, all being very unsafe.

Maeshafn Cave

This was found to be exactly as described by the Shepton Mallet Caving Club, and was very tough.

The River Alun I

Several small swallets were noted in the river bed north of the Loggerheads Inn, one of which was dug to a depth of 7ft. but it became obvious that a vast amount of rock would have to be moved possibly for very small results, so the attempt was abandoned.

River Alun II

Near the Leet Caves at SJ/188.649, is a possible blocked entrance but no attempt was made to clear it.

At SJ/186.650 a small resurgence was noted coming but of a rift on the west bank of the river.

A small tributary whose bed runs through Pentre was found to sink in 2 places below the Cilcain Water Works at SJ/189.653. A sizeable natural entrance was noted at SJ/192.657 filled with rubbish.

The Leet Caves (SJ/189.638)

These are found on the east bank of the river, the largest goes in for 30ft. to a chamber from which go two passages, to the left situated one above the other. The lower, one goes for 4ft. to a pool of water, the upper one goes for 50ft. through a good water worn passage to a muddy choke, from behind which a good echo can be heard. Attempts were made to dig this out, but after the digger became trapped and 25 mins. were spent freeing him, the attempt was abandoned.

The second further up river, was merely a rock shelter with a 15ft. aven. The third has a large entrance with two passages leading off left and right, one does a tight right turn and goes for 15ft, the second becomes too tight after 7ft.

Halkyn Lead Mine

Here some years ago, the miners struck a series of natural chambers two of which contained lakes 40yds square, and of unfathomable depth, hundreds of thousands of tons of spoil were tipped into them without affecting the water level or making any visible alteration.

It's thought at the mine that the water of the Halkyn deep drainage level, which runs from Cathole near the Loggerheads, drains into the Dee at Bagilt. The mine'ven closed for 3 years.

Dell Cave (Pre: vis: 26-12-61)

This was inactive and easily penetratable to a small arch 70ft. in, this was deepened and a further 12ft. of passage was gained to a terminal chamber 2'6" wide x 9' long x 18" high.

Afon Meirchion (Pre: vis: 26-12-61)

This was penetrated as far as the very dry weather terminal pool reached by the Shepton Mallet Caving Club.

Resurgence

The small resurgence previously noted at the confluence of the Afon Meirchion and the Elwy, was dug, no progress could be made.

Calltfaenan Caves

The first found to be as the S.M.C.C. reported, it being a little tight in places. A second entrance was found by the Club, who got in 15ft. after a short dig. The passage continues for another 20ft, but is blocked by a dead sheep.

The Afon Meirchion Valley

Several small resurgences were found in the river banks, also a large quite impressive cave entrance in an isolated valley scarp 100yds above Afon Meirchion Cave, and high up on the valley side, this does not appear to have been recorded.

The first and largest entrance led into a large chamber after 4ft. in the centre of which was a 15ft high aven, reaching up and curling over to a dead end. To the left a very tight tube led 8ft to the outside. In front a passage led on for 8ft until it became too tight. To the right a passage continued onwards, but was very tight due to an infill of vegetable matter, this was dug, and after a great deal of labour C.Lears was able to crawl in for a further 32ft to where a badger set finally blocked it. At this end the passage was quite large and the prospects for its further continuance are good.

A short distance round the scarp were four more entrances three of which were too tight and one which went in for 20ft to come out in the scarp face, there was no other way in.

Cefn Natural Arch (SJ/016.709)

One tunnel was dug 10ft into the arch, a further one went in for 20ft. Excellent pebble conglomerate formations were seen in the arch itself.

Tan-yr-Ogof Caves (SH/915.779)

These are found on the Mountain Cefn-yr-Ogof, although they are 300ft above sea-level, they are obviously sea caves and of little interest.

Castell Mawr Caves

These were found to be as reported by the S.M.C.C. both major caves having some very good formations. Two caves pronounced inaccessible by the S.M.C.C. were reached with ladders, but neither have more than 10ft of passage.

Moel Hiraddug Cave (SJ/063.788)

Reported by the S.M.C.C. to be blocked after 40ft by the usual dead sheep. The remains of this were found at the bottom of an 8ft drop into a passage type cave 132ft total length, a double passage cave one passage directly above the other. These contained a good number of excellent stal formations somewhat disturbed by nearby blasting.

Quarry Cave (SJ/063.788)

Permission was gained from Mr. Evans, Manager of Hobbs Quarries, Dyserth, to visit a new cave on the quarry face. A descent of 50ft was made down the crumbly 300ft face to gain entrance to the cave. This was well worth while as it was extremely beautiful. It went in for 40ft to a terminal fall of rock caused by quarry blasting, the passage was roughly 5' high x 4' wide except for one short crawl. The first part of the passage was incredibly beautiful containing every imaginable formation of stalactites, stalagmites, rimstone pools, cave pearls, crystal formations, eccentric

stalactites, helectites and stalcurtains. The last part of the cave was sadly damaged by nearby blasting and not so well preserved. There is the possibility of further extension as quarrying is continued. A large quantity of good samples of stal formations due to be destroyed were removed for preservation in the Club Room. (A more detailed report can be obtained from the Club).

M. James

+ + + + + + + + +

The Method of Ore Extraction Employed At a Cornish Tin Mine

In Cornwall veins of tin-bearing rock occupy fault fissures at the edges of, and in granite masses.

Granite is an intrusive igneous rock which in Cornwall has been intruded into sedimentary rocks known locally as 'Killas'. These granite intrusions form such eminences as Dartmoor, Bodmin Moor, Carnmenellis area, the Lands End Peninsula and several smaller hills. When this granite was intruded the 'Killas' was locally sheared and disturbed, forming tears in the rock known as faults. When the granite cooled fissures were also produced in the granite itself because the outside cooled first.

In the final stages in the cooling of the granite, gases containing tin and various other substances were evolved. These escaped through these fault fissures to the surface and on their way up reacted between themselves and with the country rock to produce mineral deposits in the fault fissures, these deposits contain tin. Cornish tin mining is at present being revived as the easily won deposits in Malaya are consumed.

In Cornwall there are at present two working mines at South Crofty and Pendeen. The former mine is between Cambourne and Redruth and the latter is near St. Just. The writer worked in the latter mine at Pendeen for one month. (Geevor Tin Mines Ltd.)

At Geevor the tin bearing lodes are nearly vertical and the best ores are of E-W trend. The mine is worked from Victory Shaft - 1,500ft deep with 15 levels at 100ft intervals. At each level a shaft station has been established. From the shaft station, cross cuts are put out and when a vein is met a tunnel is driven along it. The roof and floor of these tunnels are left solid and ore chutes or 'box holes' are fitted into the roof. Ore is then blasted down into these box holes and taken by rail to a giant grid made of large railway lines. All the ore must pass through this grid (which has 9"-12" squares in it) or it would jam up the storage bins. That ore which will not pass through is broken up with sledge hammers. The ore goes through the grid and down to a skip loading station, up to the surface treatment plant.

This ore reaching the surface contains at least 20 lbs. of tin per ton. It is crushed, milled and the tin is concentrated by continual washing. The black tin so produced is practically pure cassiterite SnO₂ or Tin Dioxide and is sold to the smelters as such.

Geevor Tin Mines Ltd., produces about 1,000 tons of black tin per month and made £116,000 profit in the last financial year. About 300 people are employed at the Mine.

A. Corbyn.

+ + + + + + + + + +

Giants Cave, Castleton, Derbyshire (SK/117.826)

Expedition Members: M. James, C. Lears, A. Corbyn.

A spacious initial passage soon narrowed to a high rift through which a stream was flowing swiftly. After 100yds it widened and the roof dropped to within 4" of the water twice in a short space. These were easily negotiable but very wet. The high rift then continued for a further 50yds to an impassable sump. A way on was possible through a narrow passage in the roof. This led to a large chamber from whence the passage came to still water. Three wet crawls each 20yds long ended in a passable sump which had to be baled back over a dam. From here the high rift stream passage continued for some distance eventually arriving in a chamber where the water poured down a beautiful 30ft waterfall. An exciting descent was made down a permanently fixed iron ladder to the floor of the high rift passage. From here the party made their way for ¾ hour down the twisting streambed but had to return to the surface without reaching the end of the system.

M. James.

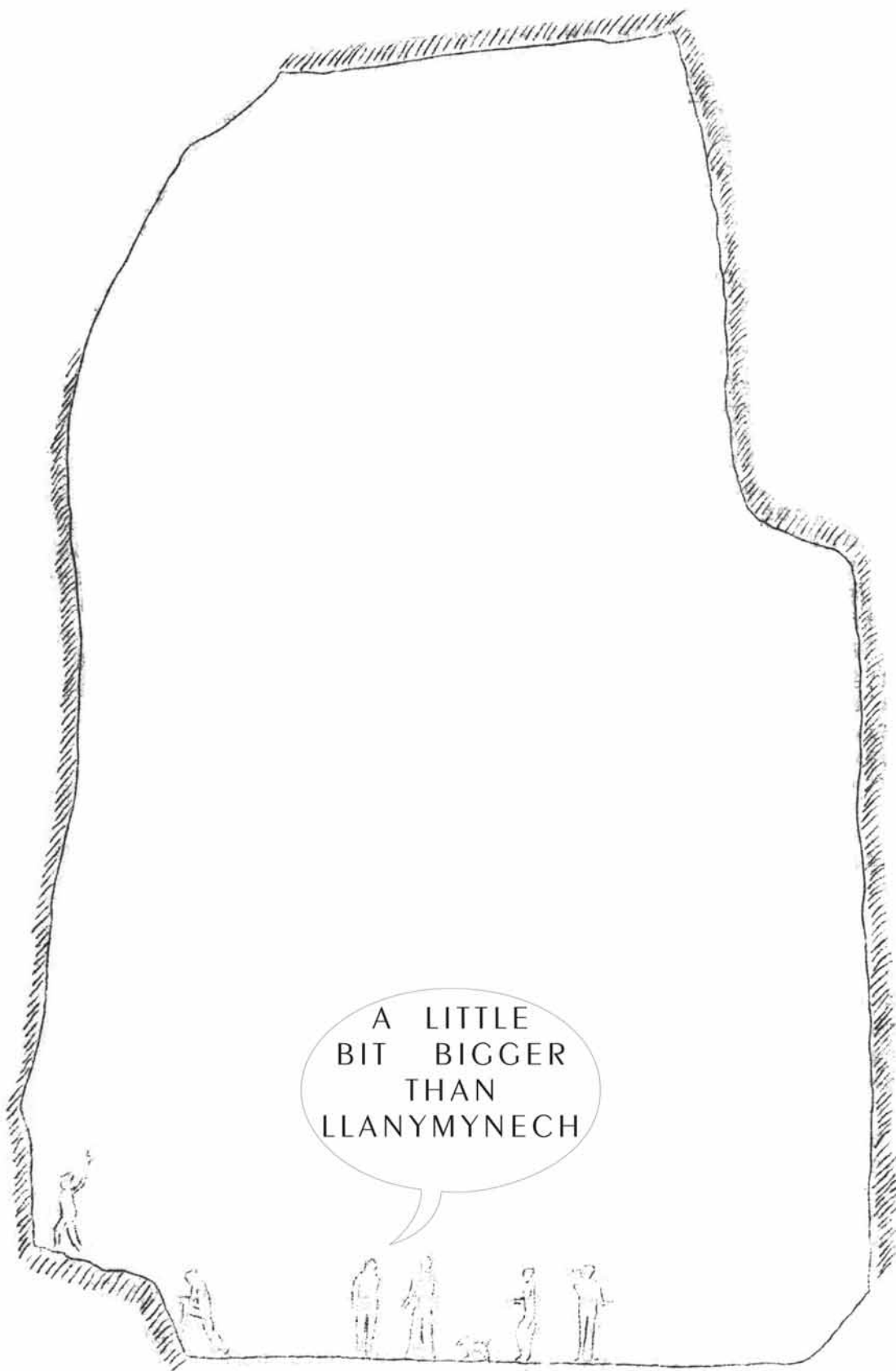
+ + + + + + + + + +

In Conclusion

Our Club has completed it's first year, and to my mind it has been quite successful. From a group of willing it has been quite we have made a team. We have travelled further and done more even than expected. We can look forward to the future with confidence.

We have made a good start, but still have far to go. Much remains to be explored. Perhaps next year will see us a little further on our way.

D.R. Adams.



EASTER CAMP 1962