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LONDON UNIVERSITY

CAVING CLUBS

JOURNAL

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The Journal  
of  
London University Caving Clubs

CHELSEA COLLEGE CAVING CLUB  
IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAVING CLUB  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 4

October 1967

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EDITORIAL

Most of the caving which is described in this number of the Journal reflects the annual Summer migration to slightly warmer lands and often larger caves. The beginning of the new academic year has brought its technical problems in the production of this issue; several promised articles having as yet not appeared.

With the university term again in full swing it is hoped that potential authors can be bullied into recording their experiences on paper for future editions.

Further copies of the Journal may be obtained from R. C. Lethbridge, Zoology Department, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London, S.W.7., at 1s. 6d. inc. p. and p., or 5s. 6d. for one year's subscription. This address will change in July, 1968 and will club librarians please note this change from last year's. While the Journal will soon sell out, the Tackle Lists Supplement in the last edition will always be available for 1s. 3d. (inc. p. and p.) from Hon. Sec., I.C. Caving Club, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Road, London, S.W.7.

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TO HELL AND BACK? OR THE

BERGER EXPEDITION

This summer two members of London University, Tony Waltham (I.C.C.C.) and Julian Coward (U.C.L.S.S.) went on the 1967 Expedition to the Gouffre Berger in France. The Gouffre Berger now ranks as the second deepest cave in the world (after the Pierre Saint-Martin) and is about 3,700 feet deep. It is situated a few kilometers north-west of Grenoble.

The expedition was led by Ken Pearce who had been to the Gouffre Berger four times before. The object of the expedition which was only partially achieved this year, was to explore past the sumps and attempt to get through to the resurgence at Sassenage.

A good description of the cave down to Camp II (see survey) is given in the book "1000 metres down" (by Cadoux and others) which tells of the exploration by the French. The cave was discovered in 1953 by Jo Berger after whom it is named. The French made several expeditions down the cave in the next years and in 1955 got down to a depth of 985 metres but were stopped at the top of Hurricane Shaft. In 1956 an international expedition reached the terminal syphon at a surveyed depth of 1130 metres (3723 feet). Since then several expeditions attempted to get to the bottom but only in 1962 did a British team led by F. Salt reach the sump. In 1963 Ken Pearce led an expedition to dive the first sump which he found to be 100 foot long followed by 100 feet of stream passage to a second sump. The other divers on this expedition could or would not dive and so Pearce did not fancy the second sump. In 1964 Pearce made another attempt to dive the sumps but bad weather prevented the team from even reaching the bottom. Due to flooding a party was trapped for about three days below the Grand Cascade and another for about a day in the canals. Fortunately both parties had emergency food with them and managed to wait in a relatively dry spot. That trip showed the necessity of having a reliable telephone down the cave to warn the cavers of the onset of bad weather.

During 1965 and 1966 the French made attempts to reach the sump, but both were unsuccessful. In 1967 three expeditions were made to the cave; a small Italian team descending in July; a party from Pegasus and Pearce's crowd descending in August. When we arrived at our surface camp we heard that the Italians had got two men to the bottom. This was the first time a non-British team had reached the sumps since the first international team descended in 1956.

Pearce's Expedition this year was one of the best organised and best equipped expeditions that have ever attempted the cave. There were about thirty members on the Expedition of whom only twenty-two were to go down the cave (the rest were the surface party) and four of these were divers. The remaining cavers were there mainly to carry equipment up and down the cave! Unfortunately the cave entrance was about a mile and a half from the road and the surface camp that we used over a mile from the road, so we spent the first two days carting equipment from the road to the camp and from the camp to the cave. And a lot of equipment there was: almost three tons of it in all. Tony and I had arrived at the camp about a day after the rest of the expedition but even then there was a lot of kit to be carted around. We spent Tuesday, 8th August, setting up camp and sorting out kit to take down the cave. On the 9th August, we were ready for our first trip down the cave to take tackle as far as possible in a day. Unfortunately I was not feeling too well that day and so did not go down. However, about twenty did, leaving in small groups around noon. Very spasmodically we heard from the underground party on the telephone, but they were using the old Italian telephone line which was not in a very good condition. The last we heard from them on the telephone was at Garby's which they reached in the early evening.

We next heard from them at 7.0 the following morning when they phoned from the entrance to say they would be back at camp in a few minutes. We wildly scrambled about and started to prepare a large stew. The party returned at intervals, but by nine they were all sprawled out in the sun enjoying or otherwise the stew and endless cups of tea and coffee. They had done a very good job, and had in their twenty hour trip taken the tackle to camp I and some of it beyond to the balcony.

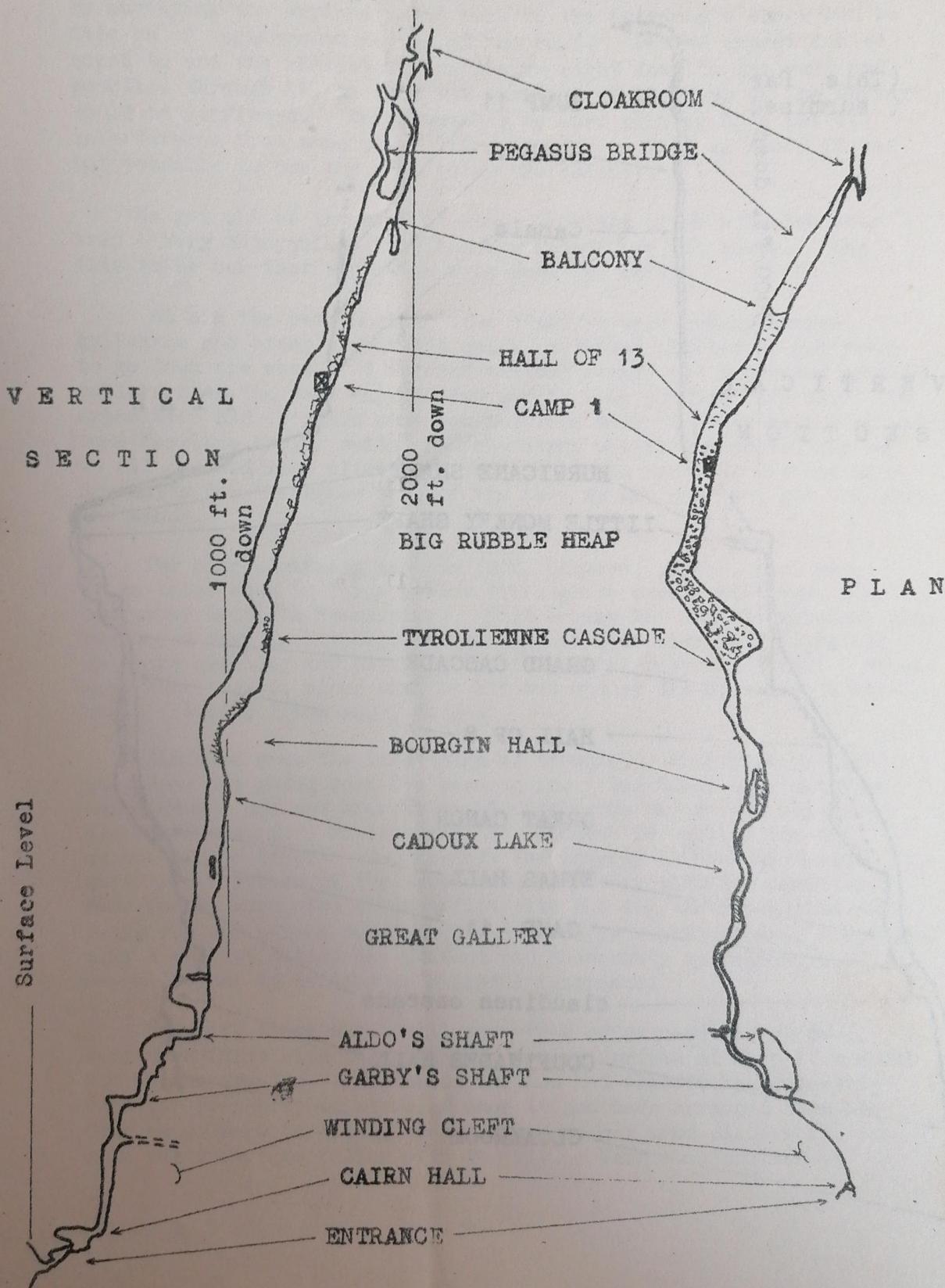
Meanwhile two other expedition members had turned up at camp and as by now I was feeling somewhat better, the three of us set off on a "warming up" trip down to Camp I. The top part of the cave is very much like a dry Yorkshire pothole (are there any dry ones, in fact?) and certainly no harder than the usual SSP, although there are some large pitches (three 80' one 130' and one 140'). However, it is unimpressive, fairly small and rather muddy, reminiscent of say Lost Johns in places. But at the bottom of Aldo's Shaft (140') one suddenly comes into a main river gallery. This is where the cave gets large, far larger than anything in England. In places the river gallery continues larger than the Main Chamber of Gaping Gill - you literally cannot see the walls or the roof much of the way down to Camp I

We hurried on as we wanted to be out of the cave as early as possible, as the next day we were all to have our big push to the

SKETCH SURVEY of the GOUFFRE BERGER.

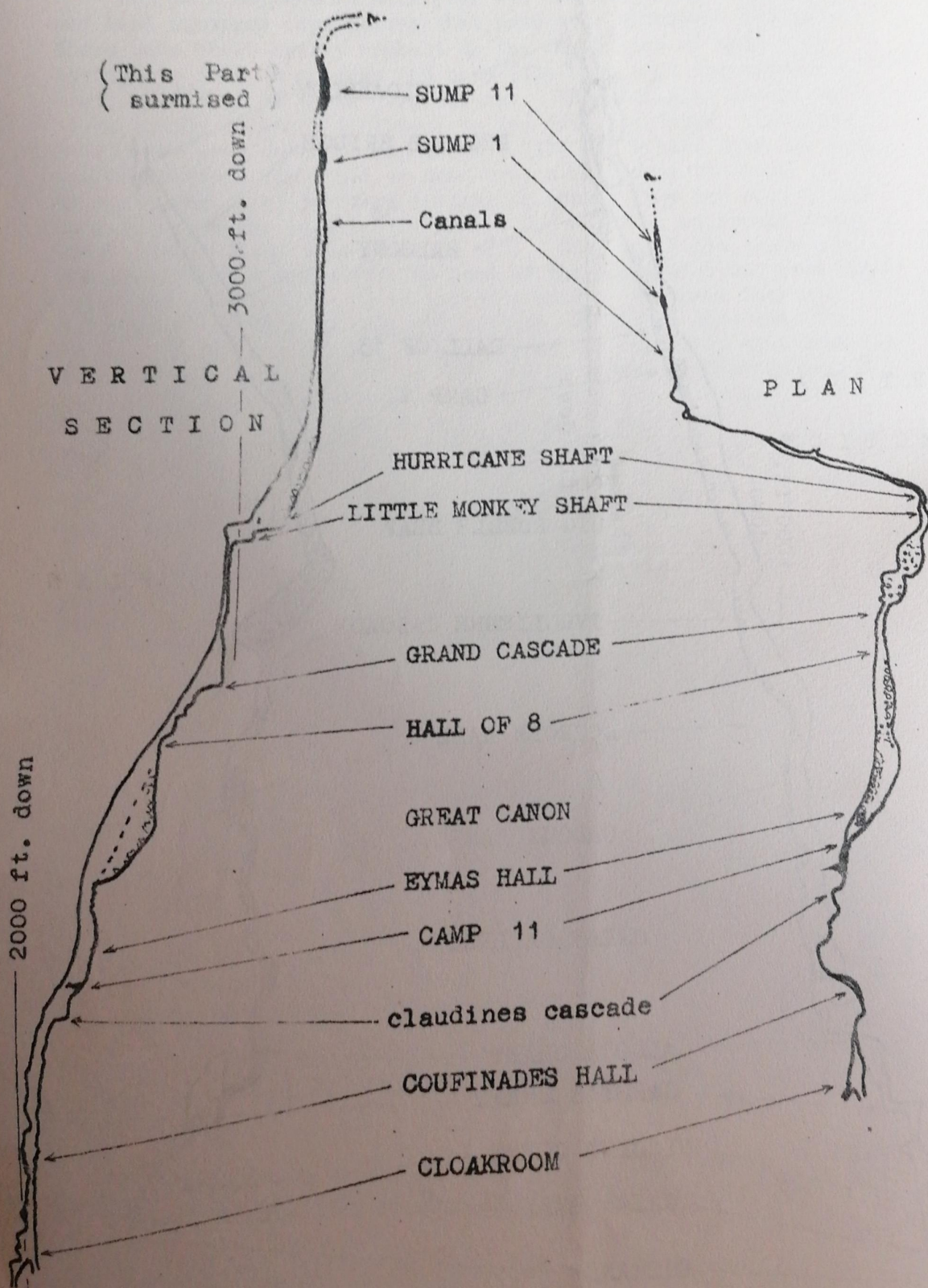
From CADOUX, WATKINSON (and hearsay).

The Upper Part.



THE GOUFFRE BERGER.

The Lower Part



bottom. However, on the way we stopped to do the Radio-location fixes. Radio-location is a method by which it is possible to find the position on the surface of the radio-location unit in the cave, By surveying the surface point back to the entrance a check can be made on an underground survey of the cave. On the expedition we hoped to use the radio-location device right down to the sump and possible through it, so that the position of the sump on the survey could be confirmed. Unfortunately we were picking up a lot of interference from some power lines and due to this we found it was not possible to use the unit below the balcony.

We got out of the cave at about midnight after a twelve hour trip - very enjoyable mainly because Pearce was not there. Was this to be our last enjoyable trip down the cave?

At six the next morning (the 11th) we were rudely awoken by Pearce and after a good but quick breakfast started to get ready to go down the cave. I watched various people get ready and counted pullovers as the more experienced people were putting them on. The expedition had obtained some combinations made of "baby-nappy" material, some Terylene boiler suits, and new light weight dry-suits, and so we all dressed much alike down the cave! As usual we did not wear dry suits for the upper part of the cave as one need not get wet above the knees.

The camp equipment such as food, cookers, plates, etc. were to be taken down in large yellow fibre-glass boxes which were donated by Turner Bros. in Manchester. Most caving kit and all personal gear had to go down in kit-bags and so I spent some time in getting all my spare clothing and sleeping bag in several polythene bags! These were then forced, along with an air bed and my dry-suit into a kit-bag. Finally I was ready to go.

And then came the first sign of trouble. Four members said they were not going down the cave again. And these were not just hangers-on - one had been to the Berger twice before and all were excellent cavers. Their reason for dissent is unclear but the source of the trouble was probably the tragedy at Mossdale with which most members of the expedition were very closely connected. Some people were also dissatisfied with the way the expedition was being run and others complained about Pearce's callousness. Personally I did not notice any blatant bad leadership by Pearce, but maybe I spent my holiday in blissful ignorance.

However, there were still seventeen of us ready to go down. I went down first with three others, and we arrived at Camp I at about 9.0 in the evening. As the expedition had insufficient sleeping bags for everybody to sleep at once it had been arranged that the four of us were to get to camp quickly to get some sleep while the main party were to follow with the kit. When they arrived we



vacated our sleeping bags, had some breakfast or was it supper (all meals were the same anyway - soup, stew, cake and milo) and then spent the morning carting kit down the cave. One of the group suddenly said that he was going out of the cave. He reckoned he was extremely unfit and didn't know what he was letting himself in for. We thought it was an isolated incident but when we got back to camp I we found another had woken up early and was changing to go out. It seemed to be catching! The main party woke up finally and we had a breakfast cum lunch (soup, stew, cake and milo) and continued to move the mountains of kit down the cave. Two more people then went out, which was too many. We were then left with thirteen people but with kit for twenty and so we held a council of war. Finally we decided, rather prematurely as it turned out, that it was not worth going on as there was little hope of reaching the sump, let alone diving it. All the kit that had so labouriously been carried in was carried back up the cave. After a long hard grind we reached the bottom of Aldo's shaft and heard on the telephone that it had been raining for the past hour. This was not dangerous at this point in the cave but could make the pitches rather damp. We were waiting at the bottom of Aldo's when suddenly the water became quite a large stream down the 140' pitch. Those who could find their dry suits donned them and some hurried up in dry grotts, trying unsuccessfully to keep dry. The kit was left more or less where it was while we all hurried out to be greeted on the surface with drizzle and, back at camp, soup, stew ..... !

The next day, Sunday, we spent getting drunk at Grenoble.

On Monday we considered the situation. We were faced with about ten days with apparently nothing to do as the expedition had collapsed. We'd come to France to look at the Berger and so some of us decided to go in and try to get as far down the cave as possible. We also wanted to do the radio location fixes and to take some photographs in the cave. So, late on Monday six of us set off without really any idea as to how far we'd get but I know we all secretly hoped to reach the sump. Camp I was reached easily after sorting out some of the kit we needed at Aldo's.

The next day I did the radio location fix at two places while the others sorted out some more kit at Aldo's. Pearce had come down with a large party to get the remaining kit out of the cave and had given us some diving gear which he asked us to take down as far as we could. Pearce still hadn't given up all hope of diving the sump! We all returned to Camp I in the evening, had the usual supper and went to bed. The next morning we phoned the surface, found the weather to be reasonable and so pushed on to camp II. We packed up camp and hurried into the Hall of 13. This is really a beautiful place, the whole floor is covered with gour pools and at

the bottom is a magnificent group of stalactites (the ones that are so often photographed). We could only stop a moment here as we had to hurry on. Beyond the Hall of 13 the passages are very well decorated until you again meet the stream at the canals. These are mostly passages with water up to your waist and after a few hundred yards you walk out at Coufinades Hall. Here we decided to leave some of our kit as bad weather had been forecasted on the telephone and so we wanted to be at camp before it struck. We went on to The Cascades. In an effective dry-suit these are very enjoyable and sporting rather like an enlarged version of the upper Swildons streamway, with the water falling over many drops of five to ten feet, which are free climbed except three of them. The largest Cascade in this section is Claudines, which is about 50 feet. This involves some acrobatics to get on to the ladder as it is held away from the water by a long steel maypole. Soon after this there is another small pitch and then Camp II. At Camp II we saw the friendly sight of the Pegasus Tent. Three of the Pegasus had come down before us but when we got to camp they were further down the cave. The next morning (Thursday) we returned to Coufinades Hall to collect the kit we had left there and when we got back to camp we found the three Pegasus were going down to the sump that day. Three of us went down with them. The Pegasus set off first and we were to follow with some tackle that was being brought down from Camp I. It took a long time coming but finally we were able to move off. It is hard to imagine how large the Berger is unless you have been there. Nothing in England compares with the size of the cave, and this is especially true at the Grand Canon which is gigantic. You go down it on a ledge on the right hand side, with a large drop on one side of you. Luckily the ledge is fairly wide and safe. Soon we came to Gaches Shaft and then to two little cascade pitches and the Grand Cascade. This is a 100 foot pitch, but it is strung out on the walls of the shaft with pegs to keep the ladder out of the water. Monkey Pitch is surprisingly easy, the only difficulty being a dicey traverse at the top. And so we came to the last pitch, Hurricane. I thought this was going to be the hardest part of the cave as I had heard stories that it is 200' and wet all the way. In fact it is 140' and dry all the way! No more difficult than Aldo's. At the bottom of the pitch you descend a steep slope of boulders to a fine bit of streamway. Two large streams join the Berger down here, making this bit of streamway very large and impressive. After several hundred yards the water starts to get deeper and deeper until finally you are swimming. The cave is full of change! When at last we dragged ourselves out onto a shingle bank the sump was before us - and very inviting it looked too, as sumps go. A nice clear stream, the underwater passage visible from the bank, and very little scum on the surface. We all drained out the water from our so called dry-suits, had a snack, collected some pebbles from the sump, and then started back.

Hurricane was certainly more difficult on the way out than coming, as were all the other pitches. We arrived finally back at camp, tired but elated after a ten hour trip from Camp back to camp

Whilst we were in the lower part of the cave a party of six including Pearce had come down to Camp II from the surface but they were all asleep when we returned.

We fumbled for our pits and were soon asleep. A few hours later the rest of our group got up and prepared to go down to the bottom. The three of us stayed in our pits and were still there eighteen hours later! What was the point of getting up into the cold and damp when there was nothing to do!? We did however, get up for a few minutes to see the party go off to the bottom. A party from Pegasus set off soon after, also heading for the bottom. They were all away for about twelve hours, and we did manage to get up for a few minutes when they returned!

They had had an enjoyable trip to the sump, which Pearce had dived. At the time he would tell us nothing at all of what he had found past the sump - a bit rough for us when we had carried his bottles and diving gear all the way down. But what could we do, we were just his pack-horses.

The next morning (Saturday) we started off up the cave. After eating as much food as was left we set off - craftily leaving a few hours before Pegasus so that they had to de-ladder! In spite of having no food to take out there was still a very large load each to carry. Most of the way we were able to chain the kit up the cave, but after the canals we each carried a large load to Camp I. There was very little food there, but luckily Pegasus had been more generous with their catering - and so we were able to get some food off them. We spent the night at Camp I before going out on Sunday. Most of the so called surface party and the "non-caving cavers" came in to the entrance pitches to help us out with the kit, as they had done on all previous retreats. And very welcome was their help. In spite of our increased numbers, taking all the kit up the pitches was arduous to say the least. Finally I was at the bottom of the last pitch, and as I tied my lifeline yelled as always "A good line please". The voice of Barny came down "But there is only me lifelining" how will I get up without anybody pulling, I thought, but the next moment I was yanked off my feet. My hand clutched for the ladder, reaching about five rungs during the 90 foot ascent - my feet touched two rungs and my teeth gripped about ten rungs on the way up! I could hear the pulley at the top squeaking and had horrible visions of being drawn right through it! "What a lifeliner Barny must be" I muttered. Miraculously I stopped near the top and saw Barny gripping the rope between two fingers: "Did I pull hard

enough?" he said. I gave him a blank stare, untied and went to thank the 25 people who had pulled so well behind Barney!

Then I was in daylight - all the trees looked greener, the sky bluer and the earth browner. It was good to go down, but even better to be out.

For some unknown reason I was up very early the next morning, and we spent that day lying in the sun and wondering what was through the sump. The rest of the week was also spent in enforced idleness with occasional trips to attempt to bottom Grenoble or Sassenage. All the kit was gradually and painlessly taken up to to the car-park, and finally on Friday I was dragged up there! And we waited for the coach to arrive. And waited and waited. On Saturday we were still waiting. Apparently it had broken down in England and the coach driver and owner had spent a day mending it. Eventually it arrived on Saturday, and we were home on Sunday.

All in all we had had an enjoyable expedition. I think Pearce appears to do the cave the hard way, as on our trip we never had more than 12 hours caving a day, and moved from camp to camp nice and easily. We still only spent  $6\frac{1}{2}$  days on the attempt. From what I can gather, on previous trips Pearce has twenty hour days (four hours sleep) and still takes two weeks to get down. Thank goodness the expedition collapsed early on!

Just before we left for England Pearce condescended to tell us what he had found through the sump. He passed the first sump of about 100 feet to a 100 feet of stream passage and then entered the second sump. This was very long - about 300 feet. He came out into a sloping bedding plane about six feet between the two sides. The passage continues for about 100 yards dropping gradually to a pitch of about 50 feet. Pearce estimates that the drop in the streamway is also around 50 feet, and so the total known drop below the sump level is about 100 feet. If we add this figure to the surveyed depth of the cave (over 3700 Feet) we find the cave is apparently the deepest in the world. Gratifying, but open to grave doubt. On large scale maps of the area the heights of the entrance (1460 metres) and of the resurgence at Sassenage (330 metres) can be seen and it is found that the difference in heights is about 3700 feet. As the apparent depth of the Berger is over 3800 feet something must be wrong! Almost certainly it is the depth of the survey. A better survey of the cave should show the depth to be overestimated. It appears unfortunately that the Berger could never be deeper than the Pierre Saint-Martin. It is interesting to note that the sump in the Berger is 3700 feet below the entrance but the sump in Sassenage is 50 feet above the entrance. Is it wise to continue to attempt the connection from the Berger?

J. Coward

Boating in the Krizna Jama

Situated a few miles east of Postojna in Northern Yugoslavia, the Krizna Jama has been famous for over a hundred years for its unique system of water galleries. Almost the whole of the two mile long main streamway consists of a continuous succession of long lakes. This August we managed to visit the cave, together Roger Graham of M.U.S.S. and two friends of his. The main difficulty is getting keys for the gated entrance, but Roger knew a man in Postojna who knew some cavers in Rakek, who knew a caver in Stari Trg who had a key and was willing to come with us!

Sited at the end of a good gravel road which penetrates deep into very thick woods, the entrance archway is dry, as the water rises a few hundred yards away. Straight inside was a large, gently descending phreatic passage about 80' high and wide. A well trodden path led us on past various large and small side passages. Bones of a cave bear were pointed out to us and one side passage led us to a magnificently carved series of phreatic rifts and tubes. Then, after about 1000' we came to the first lake. There was no detectable current (it was a drought) but the water disappeared to the left and we were to go upstream.

We selected three two-man boats from the half dozen which the Yugoslavian cavers keep moored on a wide sandy beach, and after an inept launching we started paddling away. From here the passage is a phreatic tube 20'-40' high and wide and is usually about half full of water. At first we had to cross a series of huge gour pools and were continually getting out to pull the boats up over huge calcite barriers. But soon we entered a realm of glorious quiet where the silent lakes stretched on for up to 350 yards each and the steep, damp walls of the passage dropped into unusually clear water. In places we had to navigate between large bosses and stalagmites half submerged in the water but often we were in a stark rock tunnel; in one place with the roof only three feet above the water. Separating the lakes were boulder piles where we had to carry the heavy, wooden boats. This was the most strenuous part of the cave but the distances involved were never very long.

After about an hour in the boats we landed on a beach and our Yugoslavian friend handed round the slivovitch (plum brandy)! Thoroughly warmed we then walked up the Subi Rov. After a few boulders this again large passage had a fine sandy floor dotted with stumpy stalagmites which went on and on, making Lancaster-Easegill look silly! We climbed the final boulder slope for 100' and found this too liberally covered with stalagmites. However, we then returned to the boats and one more lake took us to the Kalvarija, which must be one of the world's most beautiful under-

ground scenes. The chamber was half filled with a huge boulder pile and we left the boats at its base and climbed up. Almost no boulders were to be seen for it was covered in flowstone and on this were hundreds of white stalagmites, 5'-30' high. From the roof hung beautiful curtains and stalactites, while the walls were guarded by massive pillars and the water flowed round the edge over a series of rapids and gours, dodging in and out between the forest of stalagmites.

Unfortunately we now had to return for we were a mile from the entrance, even though the lakes do continue as far again. But the view back as we re-crossed the lake provided one of those unforgettable memories that makes caving different from anything else.

J. & T. Waltham

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REVIEW - N.P.C. JOURNAL

Summer 1967 40 pp Price 7/6

This is the first large edition of the Northern Pennine Club Journal to appear for four years, and it is devoted to original explorations by the club. Of the ten articles, eight are illustrated by surveys, though C.R.G. grades are not given for all of these.

Featured in the first report is the Gingly Hole extension, which starts as a small rift in the old terminal chamber. This was caused by a recent subsidence and little work was required to make it, and subsequent sections of the system, navigable. The whole exploration took just one weekend. It appears to be characterised by rift passages, several pitches and fine formations contrasting with the mud. Two separate sumps mark the termination of the pothole, and though access to each is by a different route they are each at the same altitude within the cave (depth 553 feet). A dry broken pitch of 200 feet is encountered on one of these routes.

Other articles deal with the club's exploits in various Pennine regions, including small caves on Penyghent, Whernside, Newby Moss, Mallerstangdale and Ravenstonedale. Durham Cave Club has contributed a short article on discoveries in Hope Level Cavern, Co. Durham, and J. O. Myers has produced a most interesting report on the natural caverns in Silverband Mines in Westmorland.

It is extremely refreshing to read a journal filled with discoveries, however small, instead of "run-of-the-mill" club news, outings and meetings. It is only regrettable that it has taken so long to prepare.

R.C.L.

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U.C.L.S.S. Pindus Expedition 1967  
or  
Proventina II here we come

Following in the footsteps of former members of the Society, (see previous edition of the Journal), the expedition took to the road, and after passing through many 35mm film cassettes of impressive scenery, eventually arrived at the village of Aghios Georgios in Epines province, N.W. Greece. The village, noted for its local taverna, the proprietor of which allows very reasonable credit terms, lies at the southern end of the Pindus mountain chain. These mountains are composed in the main of Jurassic limestone, together with some shales and schists in the central metamorphosed core of the range. The village is situated in the valley of the River Louros. This valley takes the form of alternating broad, alluvial river flats and narrow, steep sided gorges. Aghios Georgios was situated in one such gorge, and it was the area surrounding the village and the gorge that was of immediate interest to the expedition.

After settling into camp and recovering from the effects of certain local beverages, exploration of the surrounding area commenced. Several small pots and caves were found, two of which involved 30' ladder pitches, but no major discoveries were made. Along the sides of the gorge were many indications of a former large cave system, - "fossil" stalagmites and flowstone etc., the most impressive item being a rock arch measuring fifty feet wide and thirty feet high formed by the collapse of a large cave. The caves that were found showed evidence of belonging to a former large system. All the formations were "dead" (although during the wet winter conditions, deposition would doubtless recommence). Several of the caves contained large stream passages, no longer active, which suddenly choked up. In some cases digging was attempted, but to little avail.

Near Aghos Georgios, a large stream resurged from the foot of the hill and discharged into the Louros. Attempts were made to "force" this resurgence despite the fact that the villagers had almost bricked up the opening. By judicious removal of copious quantities of masonry, it was established that the water welled up from an impossibly tight bedding plane fissure in the

stream floor. Although no large system was entered in the area a sizeable system must exist within the hill behind Aghios Georgios in order to accommodate this stream.

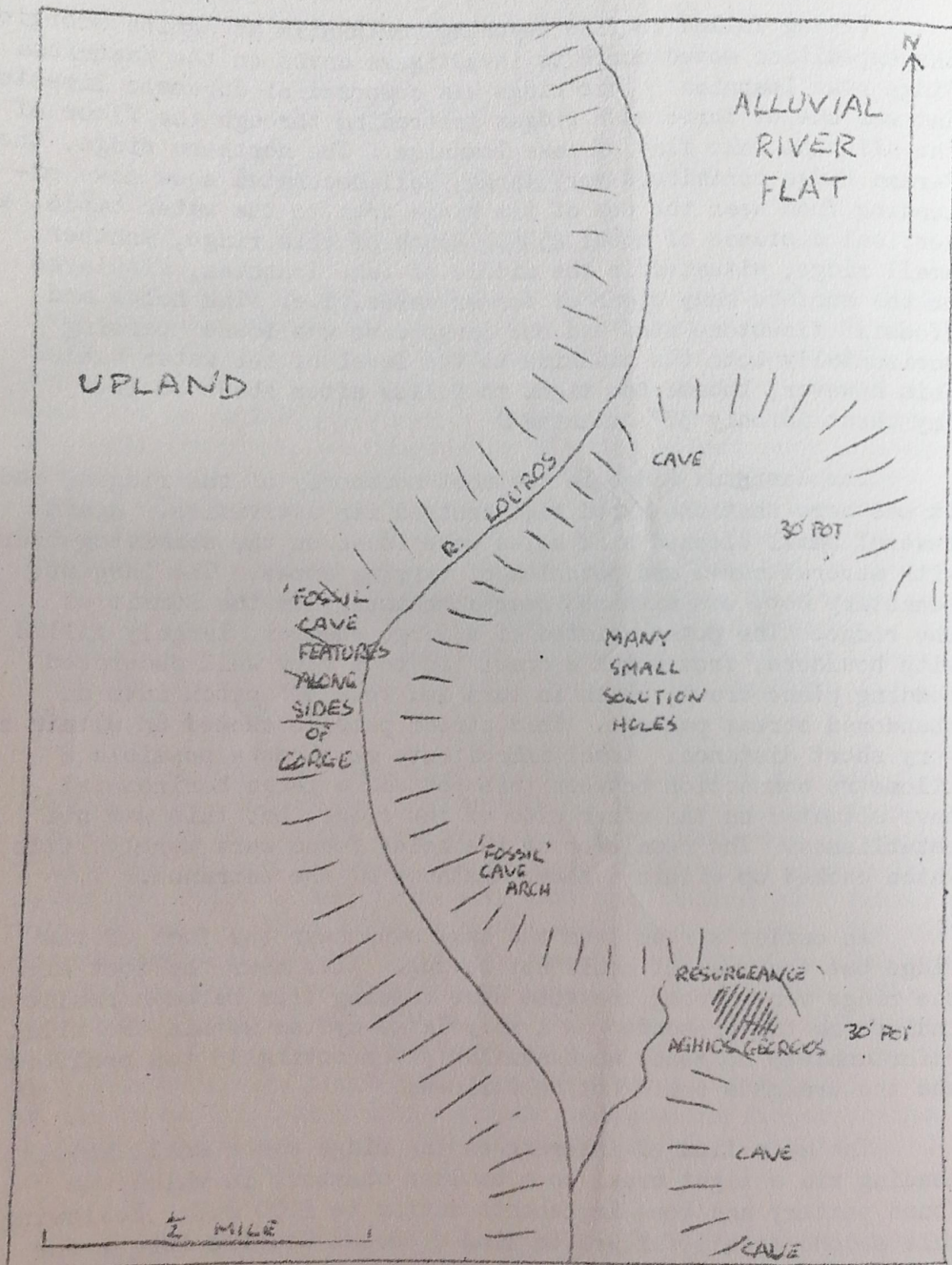
Having failed to find anything worthwhile at Aghios Georgios the expedition moved north to investigate caves on the Kastritsa Ridge near Ioannina. This ridge was composed of Jurassic limestone and was one of three such ridges protruding through the floor of the alluvial lake flat of Lake Ioannina. The northern ridge, the Perama Ridge contains a very large, well decorated show cave extending from near the top of the ridge down to the water table, a vertical distance of about 250'. South of this ridge, another small ridge, situated in the middle of Lake Ioannina, displayed on the surface many signs of former caves, i.e. sink holes and "fossil" flowstone etc. and one large cave was found, passing horizontally into the hillside at the level of the water table. This however, became too tight to follow after about 80 feet (my chest is only 37" deflated !)

The Kastritsa Ridge is the most southerly of the ridges, and it was here that the expedition centred its activities. Again several small blocked sink holes were found on the summit together with several caves and potholes of varying sizes. The largest, Monastery Pot, was situated near a monastery on the summit of the ridge. The pot consisted of a large chamber, largely filled with boulders, from which a crawl led to a very well decorated bedding plane crawl, which in turn led to a 30' pitch into an abandoned stream passage. This stream passage choked up within a very short distance. Local inhabitants mentioned a possible 2 kilometre connection between this pot and a large horizontal cave situated on the other side of the ridge, but this was not established. The remainder of the holes found were merely rifts which choked up within a short distance of the entrance.

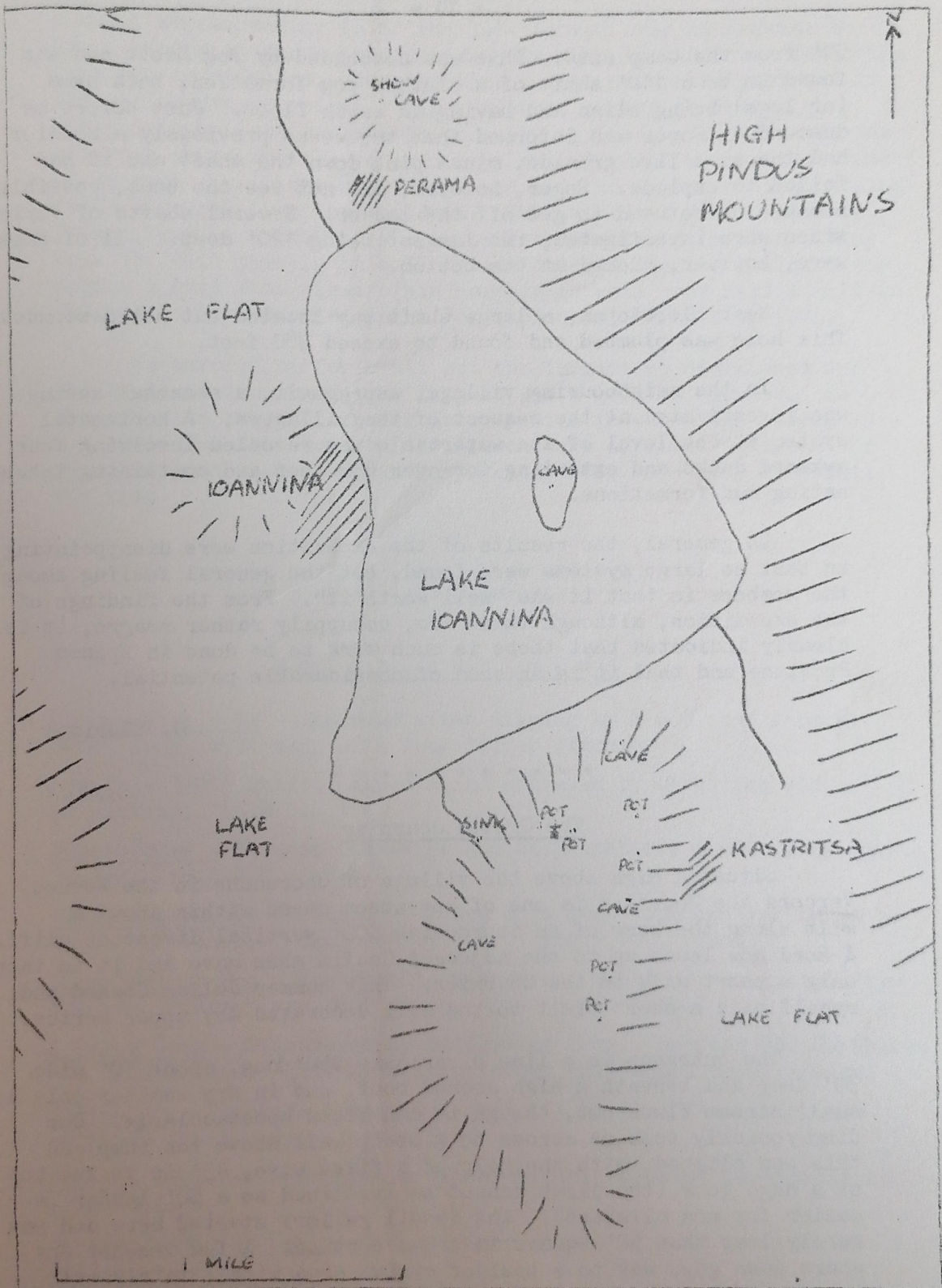
An outlet stream from the lake sank near the foot of the ridge but the swallet could not be dug. Also near the foot of the ridge very strong draughts were issuing from between boulders, indicating the presence of a very large system within the hill. Unfortunately no means were available for moving 15 ton boulders and the draughts could not be followed.

The main find of interest on the ridge was a small hole, leading via a tight crawl to a boulder chamber, in which was found pottery and bone implements dating to 2000 B.C. Following this second dismal failure to find a second Gouffre Berger the expedition moved, on the request of the Curator of Pre-History at Ioannina Museum, northwards into the high Pindus to the village of Elefotopas to investigate some shafts found by the Curator's agent in the area. The agent, a spastic hunchbacked dwarf showed the party several shafts, one of which was about





SKETCH MAP OF AREA AROUND AGHIOS GEORGIOS



SKETCH MAP SHOWING AREA AROUND KASTRITSA

50' from the camp site. This was descended by Rog Scott and was found to be a 110' shaft of a clothes peg formation, both arms (or legs) being blind and having an earth floor. Just before he descended, Roger was informed that two weeks previously a soldier had thrown a live grenade, minus pin, down the shaft and it had failed to explode. Roger, however, did not see the bomb, possibly because he refused to get off the ladder. Several shafts of various sizes were investigated, the largest being 120' deep. All of these were, however, choked at the bottom.

Near Elefotopas, a large shaft was located but not descended. This hole was plumbed and found to exceed 280 feet.

In the neighbouring village, Aspragheli, a seasonal spring was investigated at the request of the villagers. A horizontal system at the level of the watertable was revealed involving four awkward ducks and extending for over 650 feet and containing interesting mud formations.

In general, the results of the expedition were disappointing in that no large systems were found, but the general feeling among the members is that it was "well worth it". From the findings of the expedition, although these are, unhappily rather meagre, it is clearly indicated that there is much work to be done in Epines Province and that it is an area of considerable potential.

G. Eldridge

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#### The Grotte Gournier

Situated high above the village of Choranche in the French Vercors the Gournier is one of seventeen caves within about a mile along the base of an impressive 800' vertical limestone cliff. A Road now leads up to the adjacent Coufin show cave and it is then only a short walk to the Gournier. This summer Julian Coward and myself paid a short visit to the well decorated dry upper series.

The entrance is a fine clear lake 250' long, about 50' wide 30' deep and beneath a high arched roof, and in dry weather only a small stream flows out, though it can flood spectacularly. Our dinghy quickly took us across to a steep wall above the sump and this was climbed, with the help of a fixed wire, 45' up to the top of a huge gour (the climb cannot be lifelined so a 50' ladder is easier for non climbers). The fossil gallery started here and was rarely less than 50' square in cross section. A few immense dry gours soon gave way to a boulder strewn area with a fairly well trodden path across it - this cave specialises in comfort caving.

A small stream coming in on the left flowed over an immense boss and disappeared among the boulders, but then it was more clambering over the great chaos. Soon we came to the decorated part and it was well worth the visit. First a great series of active gour pools spread right across the passage and the whole left wall was gleaming white calcite covered by a thin film of water. We climbed on up more gour banks 8-10' high and came to a zone of huge stalagmites littered over the boulders. Then at the top of a rise we looked down on a chamber strewn with these fine formations, many over 15' tall perched on a flowstone covered mass of boulders and making a very fine view. This chamber is well over half a mile in and is the best turning point for a pleasant three hour trip.

We carried on for a bit but the formations diminished and the boulders increased, the largest was a good 50' across. We didn't quite reach the point about a mile in where the stream is met again but from here on the French have explored upstream for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to a tight sump and apparently this is a very sporting, wet trip.

A. C. Waltham

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NOTES AND NEWS

Tatham Wife Hole - Explored after digging by N.S.G. and others. 2000' long, 475' deep with four ladder pitches.

Mexico - 1100' shaft. Exploration achieved by abseiling and prosicking. (A.M.C.S.)

Ninebarrows - Between Eastwater and St. Cuthberts a 600' long cave. Explored by B.E.C. and W.C.C.

Aille River Cave (Ireland) - A new mile long cave consisting of tubes and canals. Explored by C.P.C. and B.E.C. (June)

Black Shiver Pot - New Brook's discovery, south of Meragill. Joys include 7" crawl and 260' pitch. 510' deep. (ULSA)

Contour Cave - Discovered by Bridgwater Tech., between St. Cuthberts and Ninebarrows. Half mile long though only short main passage.

Eastwater - Entrance collapsed. Details of plan for siting new entrance shaft under discussion

Ireby - Collapse near head of first pitch. Descent impossible at present time.

Kingsdale Master Cave - New entrance at end of main passage, now a beginners trip.

M E E T S   L I S T

- June 3 Washfold
- 4 Gingling
- 10 St. Cuthberts
- 11 St. Cuthberts
- 13 Agen Allwedd
- 17 Eastwater, Swildons, Giants Hole, P8
- 18 Stoke Lane
- 20 Meregill
- 21 Hull Pot
- 22 Spectacle Pot
- 24 Meregill, Giants Hole
- 25 Nettle, Mossdale
- 31 P.8

- Aug 20 Tathan Wife Hole
- 26 Stream Passage
- 27 Wades Entrance - Stream Passage
- 28 Gaping Gill

- Sept 24 Providence Pot - digging at entrance

- Oct 4 Easegill - Lancaster System
- 7 County Pot - Pool Sink Exchange
- 8 Cow Pot, Lost Johns

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