

MENDEK CAVING GROUP.MEMBER NO. 57.JULY/AUGUST 1968NEWS AND INTEREST.They've gone Peter Goddard has moved to:-24 Swan Close,  
Hanworth, Middx.

Don Searl has moved to:-

14 Hilda Vale Road,  
Farnborough,  
Orpington, Kent. BR67AN.

Pam and Robbie Charnoc's address in the U.S.A. is:-

apt. 1B  
2202 Pinewood Ave.,  
Baltimore,  
MD, 21214  
U.S.A.MRO The MRO has bought £72 worth of new equipment including ropes, an exposure bag, carrying sheets and telephones.The Committee at its next meeting will consider the applications for probationary membership of:Ron Saunders, 21 Rushmoor Ave., Hazlemere.  
Dave Heddon, 21 Montana Road, London S.W.7.Elected - John Miriam, 115 Shirley Ave, Croydon CR0 8SQ, has undergone the seven deadly tortures (the pain of buying each member of the committee a pint) and has been elected a full member.Novices the Leading there of

The committee is worried that there is no system of providing leaders for groups of novices or new members. It is the intention to table a motion at the HYGM: 'Requireing all full members to lead a party not more than twice a year'.

Members with views on the subject are invited to get in touch with the Secretary so that the general feeling may be obtained.

DONT MISS THE BAR-B-QAT THE HALF YEARLY MEETING, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5. NEAR THE  
COTTAGE: BANGERS AND LOTS AND LOTS OF BOOZE. (AND LOTS AND LOTS)  
MORE DETAILS FROM BRIAN HILLMAN OR GREG SMITH.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Symposium on Cave Hydrology and Water Tracing (CRG Transactions  
Vol 10 No. 2)

The success of the symposium held last Feb. can best be judged by a glance at this 125 page publication.

Water Tracing in St. Cuthberts Swallet  
by R. D. Steiner.  
Chemical Analysis as a Method of Water Tracing  
by T. D. Richardson.  
Use of Lycopodium Spores  
by T. C. Atkinson.  
Percolation Waters in Karst Areas  
by D. P. Drew.  
Pulse Train Analysis  
J. D. Wilcock.  
Calcium Hardness in Studies of Cave Hydrology  
by A. F. Pitty.

The papers by Atkinson and Drew also contain the results of the latter's work on Mendip. Pulse - Train Analysis is a study of the resultant waves emerging at the resurgence after a flood wave has passed through the cave - a analysis of these then can lead to information on the unexplored regions of the cave.

CRG N/L No. 111 Notes on the Far East Extension to Gaping Gill

Belfry Bulletin No. 242 Problems in Lake Chamber of St Cuthberts  
No. 241 Towards Wockey - the chances of.

LUCG Jnl. No. 6 Tatham Wives Hole (Geomorphology), discovery of Smethill Beck Cave and I.C. in Grenoble.

Ditto No. 7. Far East - Gaping Gill (8pp) the exciting new extension of some 2,000 ft +.

Wessex Jnl. No. 117 Contains notes on the survey of Cuckoo Cleaves.

Peter Mathews.  
Hon. Recorder.

COURSE ON LIMESTONE GEOMORPHOLOGY. (University of Bristol)

A weekend course with a bias towards Mendip is to be held on 23/24 November 1968.

35/- (including lunch, coffee and tea on Saturday and coach excursion on the Sunday). Bristol 8.  
Further information from A.B. Hawkins 20A Berkeley Square/

## NEW EDITOR

The committee has received advance notice of Mike Brace's intention of retiring at the HYGM. Nominations or offers to be nominated should reach the secretary by Thursday September 19th.

To avoid any misunderstandings about the job, here are some details :  
The Editor is responsible for the production of the newsletter. Inevitably this means that he must be a frequent visitor to both Mendip and Thursday evening meetings. The work involved in gathering news, typing, duplicating and distributing newsletters is considerable and it would help if the new Editor had a close friend to assist. The Editor is also responsible to the committee for the production of the Journal but the actual work is done by the journal Editor (he hopes).

A.M.D.P.M.

## THE AGGY MEET.

A small depleted but valiant band turned up at Llangattock namely,

Brian Hilman  
Shiela Killingback  
Dave (?) B.A.C.  
Barry (?) B.A.C.  
Greg Smith  
Allan Wicks.

We entered the cave - Agen Allwed - at the mature hour of 11.30 a.m. on Saturday morning intending to do a Summertime trip, returning via the notorious Coal Cellar passage.

We had food and spares galore especially since Hilman had thoughtfully brought an ammo. box full, but what we didn't have was the foggiest knowledge of where we were going.

Hilman and Wicks knew the way to Turkey Pool like the back of their hands .....but alas that was all. Nevertheless things didn't turn out as badly as might be expected.

Arrived at Main Passageway we proceeded to its end, Brian, Barry and Dave having a look at the rather disappointing 20ft high cliffs of Dover. We then turned back and went along the Main Streamway through boulder chokes II and III through Keyhole Passage and along the streamway to Turkey Pool, where we all dug into the food, especially Hilman's (poor soul?) which amongst other things consisted of sardines and cheese.

Beyond Turkey Pool, we left the streamway only to return to it shortly there after to go up a small inlet passage coming in from the right. From thereon we went through a host of passageways only to conclude that we were in Sand Caverns which we continued to explore pretty throughly.

Once back at the main streamway the party split up. Greg and Allan pushed up the main stream for twenty more minutes, concluding that it was perhaps the best streamway that they had been in, whilst the others started the long haul back to the entrance. The parties rejoined at the junction to Main Passage and left the cave together.

The trip lasted about eight hours and was most enjoyable.

This concluded the caving for the weekend: Barry and Dave left for Cornwall the next day to continue their holiday, Allan went awimming in the river Usk (disgusting Ed.) with some Chelsea members, whilst Greg, Brian, and Shiela 'there's a hole in your backside' Killingback left to view the ruins of Mendip only to get temporarily stuck in Abergavenny.

Tojo Wicks.  
(Swiss Dwarf)

### COME IN 12" Ladder

Following a destruction test on 10 year old MCG ladder down Manor Farm shaft by (15½ stone :) Pete York of WCC: it has been decided to withdraw all 12" spacing ladder, as we consider it unfit for MCG members use.

Several lifelines showing deterioration will also be removed from the tackle store. These will be promptly replaced by new ones.

Any members requireing tow ropes please contact the name here below.

Greg Smith.

ASYNTHESIS OF THE NEW SWALLETS AND FLOOD ALTERATIONS IN CAVES, OBSERVED BY THE MCG IN THE BLACKMOOR AND VELVET BOTTOM AREA.

### FLOOD IN BLACKMOOR AND VELVET BOTTOM.

It has always been my dream to try and picture Blackmoor and Velvet Bottom as they were befor mining activity almost completely changed the topography and obliterated the various swallets. The great torrent which swept down on the night of the 10th and the morning of the 11th of July has helped to remedy the situation, by removing embankments and re-opening

covered swallets.

The floods have now revealed the positions of two swallets, Middle Flood Entrance and Upper Flood Entrance, high up the valley.

The first to be investigated (Middle Flood) was noted by Arthur Cox. He reports attraction to it by 'Glooping' sounds. It lies just below the breach in the track to our old cottage. Don Searl was also attracted to it and with Simon Knight he dug it to reveal an interesting length of passage. (See Don's account). We had long known there was a swallet near, as water can be seen entering a leat above the track. Water was only evident in very wet conditions rising lower down the valley. Although Upper flood (just off the track nearer the cottage) has no water in it, it should dip back under the valley. (Upper Flood : See Greg's Account). Theoretically it should here intercept the Middle Flood

Lower Flood. Lower down the valley a very impressive hole has been opened several feet below the Excavated shaft and more in the centre of the valley. This consists of a shake hole 30' across with a circular hole 7' deep in the bottom. This hole leads to a rift passage some 3'-4' wide and 8' high, with several small inlet passages. A squeeze then leads to a continuation of the rift which is now some 20' high. At the end of the rift one can turn left, either above or below a rock jumble. The lower way was also the main course of the water; as to one side there is a jumble of loose rocks, with sods of turf and grass indicating direction of flow. Digging here would prove difficult. Forwards however one comes to a small chamber then a squeeze and an aven (See Fig. 2)

The aven rises approx 25'-30' and probably closely reaches the surface. There is a lot of stal and it appears that it could be an original swallet entrance shaft. There are patches of stal in other parts of the cave; generally one is left with the impression that most of the fill was removed by the flood.

The flooding has not changed the appearance of the Excavated Shaft and it is reported that the cave beneath the shaft has also remained the same.

Lower down Velvit Bottom a long depression (swallet ?) does not appear to have taken any more water than any other part of the valley. Timber Hole appears to have taken some water, as too the hole a little up the valley on the same side. Also interesting to note, the depth of water below the rain gauge where MCG used to camp was about 2'6"!

Malcome Cotter.

## MIDDLE FLOOD ENTRANCE

On Saturday 27th July, Don, June, Malcome and Val spent the day observing and noting the effects of the great flood. One of the places of great interest was a substantial stamping of the bank and<sup>a</sup> depression about 3ft. deep, just below the broken track across upper velvet bottom. It was obvious that the depression had taken a considerable amount of water, direction of water flow towards the depression being clearly denoted by flattened grass at between 10-15' radius. This would indicate an easy access for water, taking into account that the main flow of water would tend to sweep past the entrance. Although it may have been subject to a considerable pressure of water at the peak of the flood.

On Sunday now joined by Simon and Wife Val, it was decided that Val and June with daughter Pam would slum it by the sea. Malcome and guest Valeri would do some field work, while Simon and I would make a trial dig at this newly apparent swallet.

We started digging about 11.30 a.m. and soon beheld exciting results. It was 'going' in the form of a horizontal passage under the high bank, choked by small rocks, clay and washed in turves, which proved difficult to remove. They had jammed solid between roof and floor but after removal of the first 5ft. of turves the going was easier. Loose sharp gravel and small rocks with a cavity now became the order. The cavity now varying between 6" - 12" in height receding away to an enlargement soon became apparent as a chamber, if only we had a speleological hoe.

By 5.00 p.m. we had reached the chamber. I was in the chamber when June, Pam and Val arrived back from their trip to the sea. without staying to find out the extent of the discovery June immediately returned to fetch Malcome, who was just leaving for London. On arrival it only took Malcome minutes boilersuited, to join us in the chamber.

Throughout the excavation a very strong inward draught was detected. The passage into the chamber was horizontal, 20' long and an easy crawl, with a roof of cemented rocks. The far wall of the chamber consisted of what appeared to be hanging bed rock. As its angle of dip was steeper than the other side of the valley, it suggests a rift in the valley floor somewhere.

The chamber was at maximum height about 6' 6" and about 10' X 8' in area. It was obvious that the chamber had been flooded to the roof which was hanging with loose pieces of root and other vegetation.

The way on is downwards and to the left in what appears to be

a partly blocked rift. No attempt was made to try and clear the choke as it was time to make the trip home. (See Fig.3)

Don Searl.

UPPER FLOOD ENTRANCE. 4th/5th August.

Work started in a hole dug out by Don Searl and Simon Knight the previous weekend, but this was left when the dig in the final chamber collapsed.

Determined to find something Malcom disappeared down an old mine leat, whilst Dick Peat and I waited outside Wally. Somehow we embarked on a conversation with a fellow camping nearby, who casually remarked about a shaft his friend had nearly fallen down the night before.

Puzzled that he had pointed past Middle Flood, I asked him to lead us to the shaft. This he willingly did and to our surprise it looked as if it had not been descended by anyone - probably because the shaft was hidden by long grass, making it barely visible from surrounding tracks and footpaths.

"Just another mine" I thought as I scrambled down, following the passage to a small drop of about 7ft. But upon moving a few boulders in the floor I found myself peering into an old abandoned stream passage (with a solid rock roof all you Blackmoor Pessimists!).

"Blimey we're in", I cried, and adding other choice words to fit the occasion, grabbed Dick's carbide lamp and sent him to get the others.

Wally was the first to arrive and we both shot down the lower passage, which led to a decorated chamber with another drop of 6'. The way on continued through thick black mud and floor debris until we were halted by stalagmite flow which met the mud in a pool. This point was about 100ft away from the entrance.

Returning to the aforementioned chamber we teamed up with Malcom and Dick to explore 'upstream' which was decidedly cleaner and ended in a boulder choke. Access to another passage was gained after slight rock bashing and this came out into a small chamber. From the chamber a small inlet passage in the side soon proved blocked after a short distance.

A dig was started in the lower mud barrier and on Sunday the existing cave was surveyed by Malcom and Peter Munt.

(See Fig.4)

Further progress will be reported in future newsletters and the

forthcoming Journal.

At the request of the Bristol Water Works the MCG has fenced  
Upper Flood Entrance.

Greg Smith.

Fig. 2.  
LOWER FLOOD ENTRANCE  
BLACKMOOR.

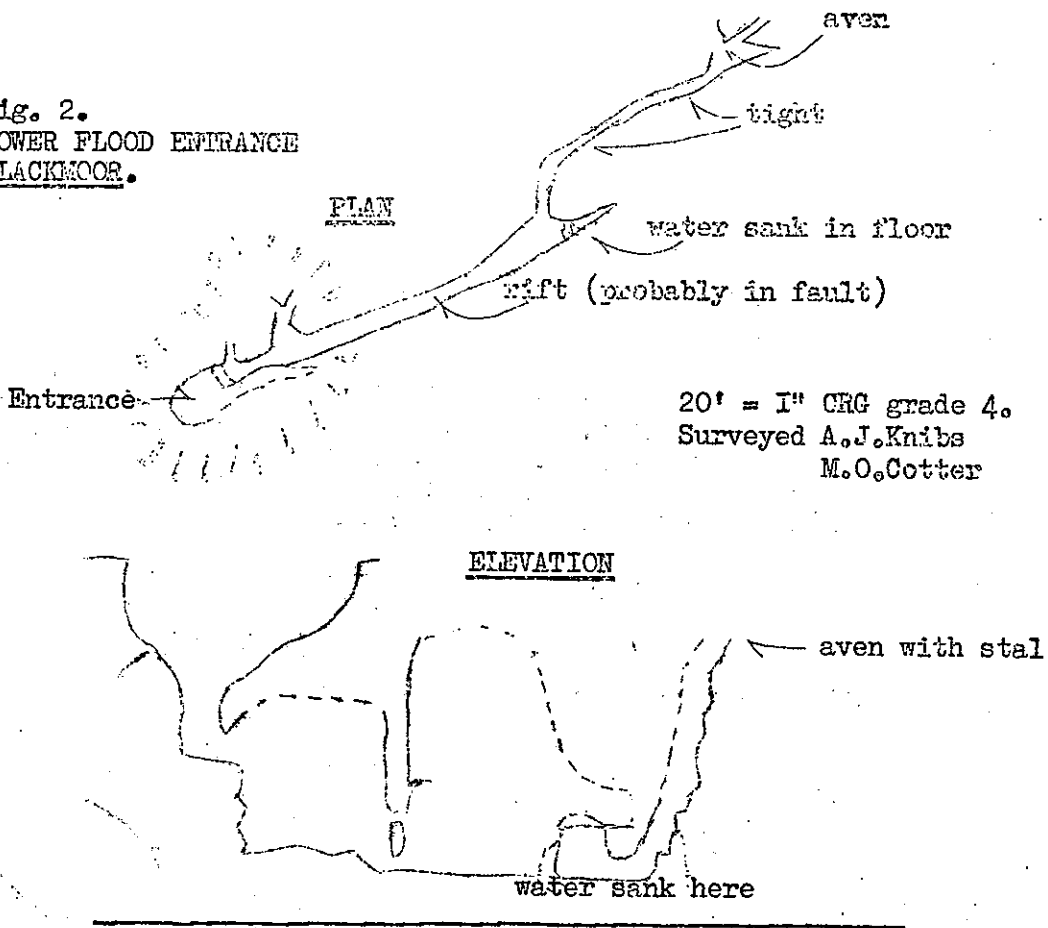
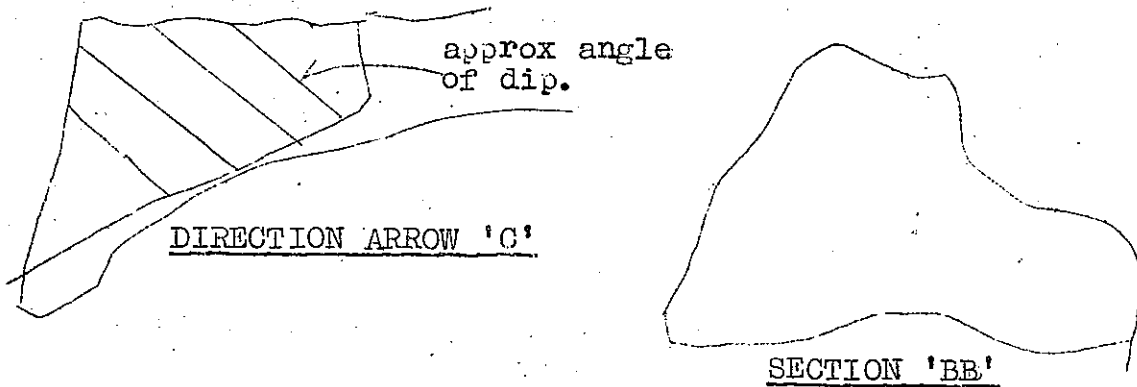


Fig 3 Cross sections, pto for rest of fig3.





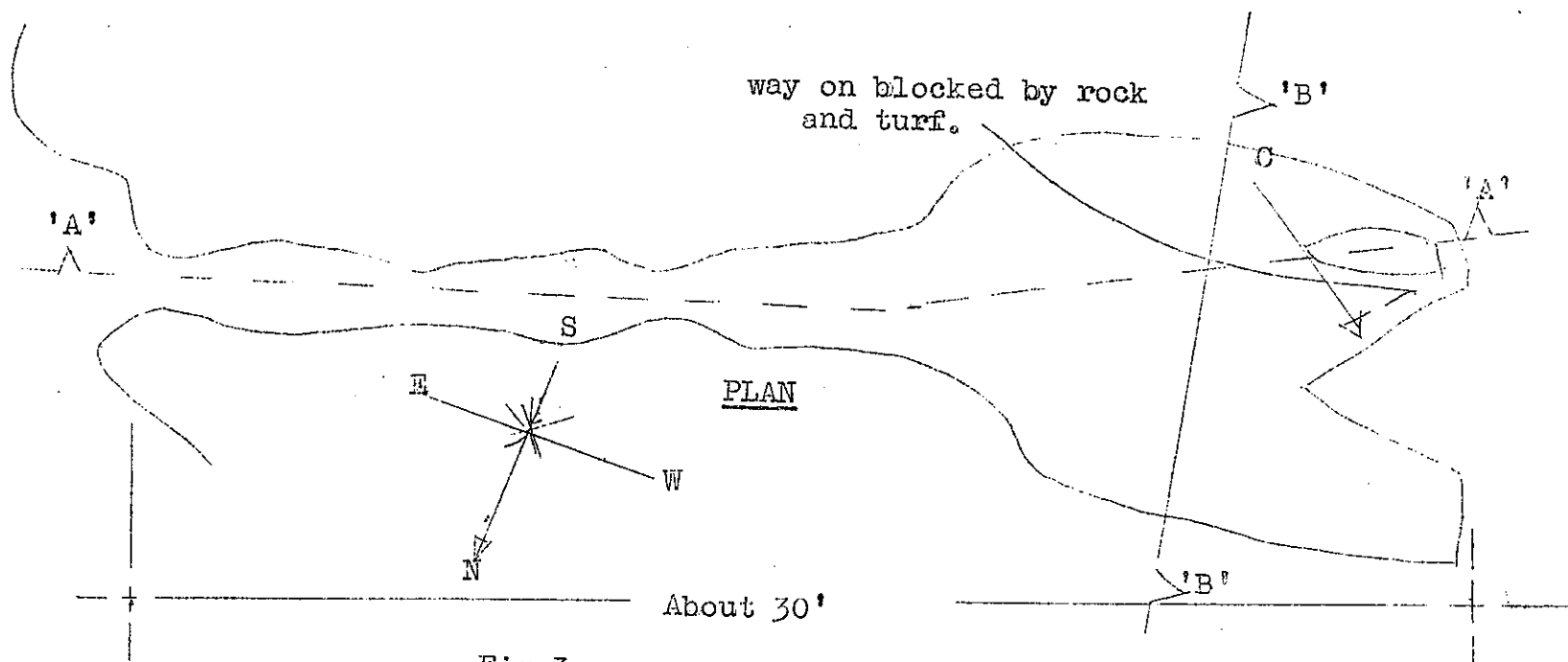
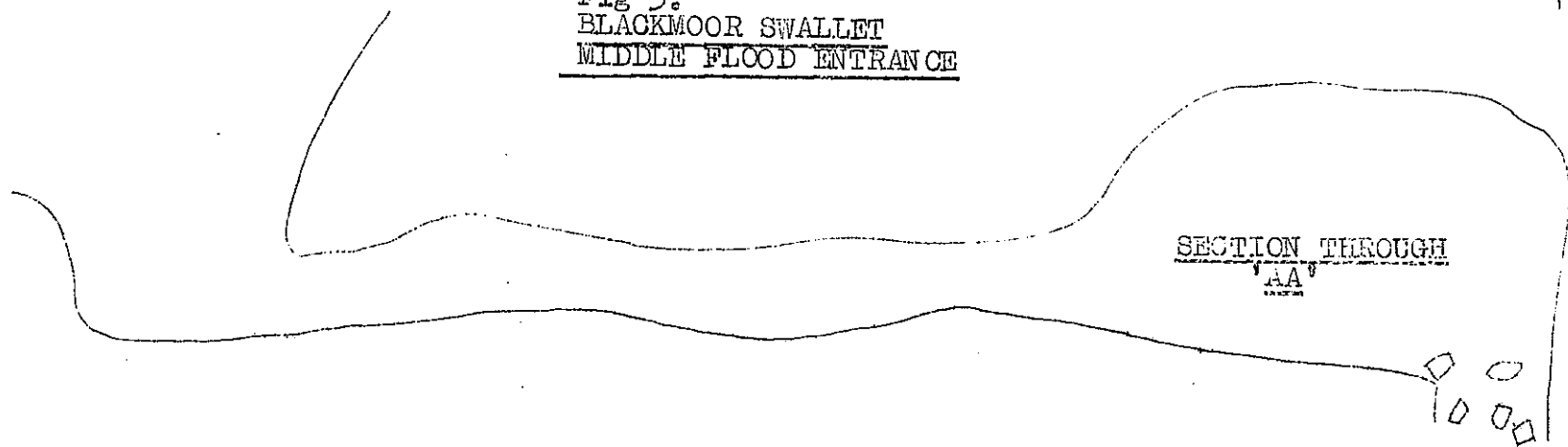


Fig 3.  
BLACKMOOR SWALLET  
MIDDLE FLOOD ENTRANCE



water enters from beneath small gours.

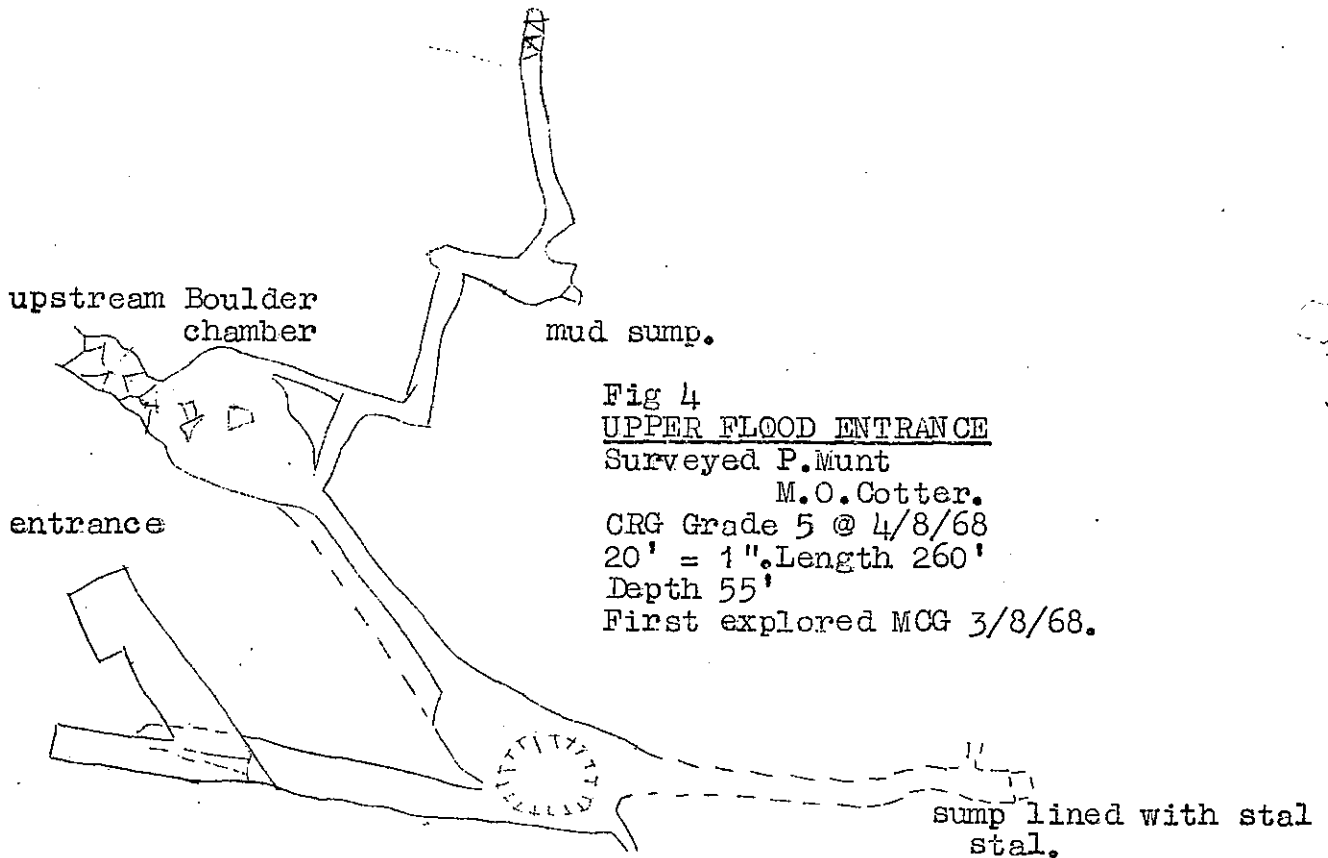


Fig 4  
UPPER FLOOD ENTRANCE

Surveyed P.Munt

M.O.Cotter.

CRG Grade 5 @ 4/8/68

20' = 1".Length 260'

Depth 55'

First explored MCG 3/8/68.

PROJECTED ELEVATION

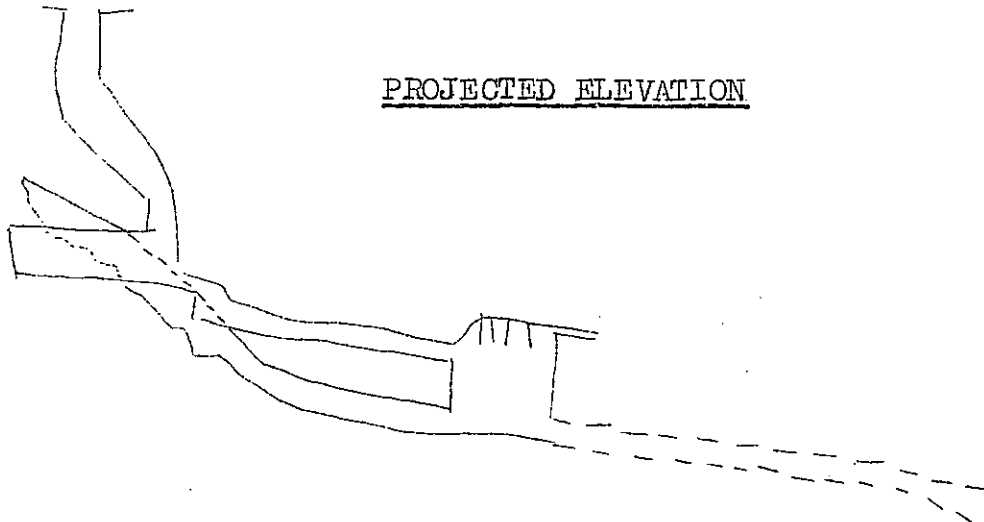


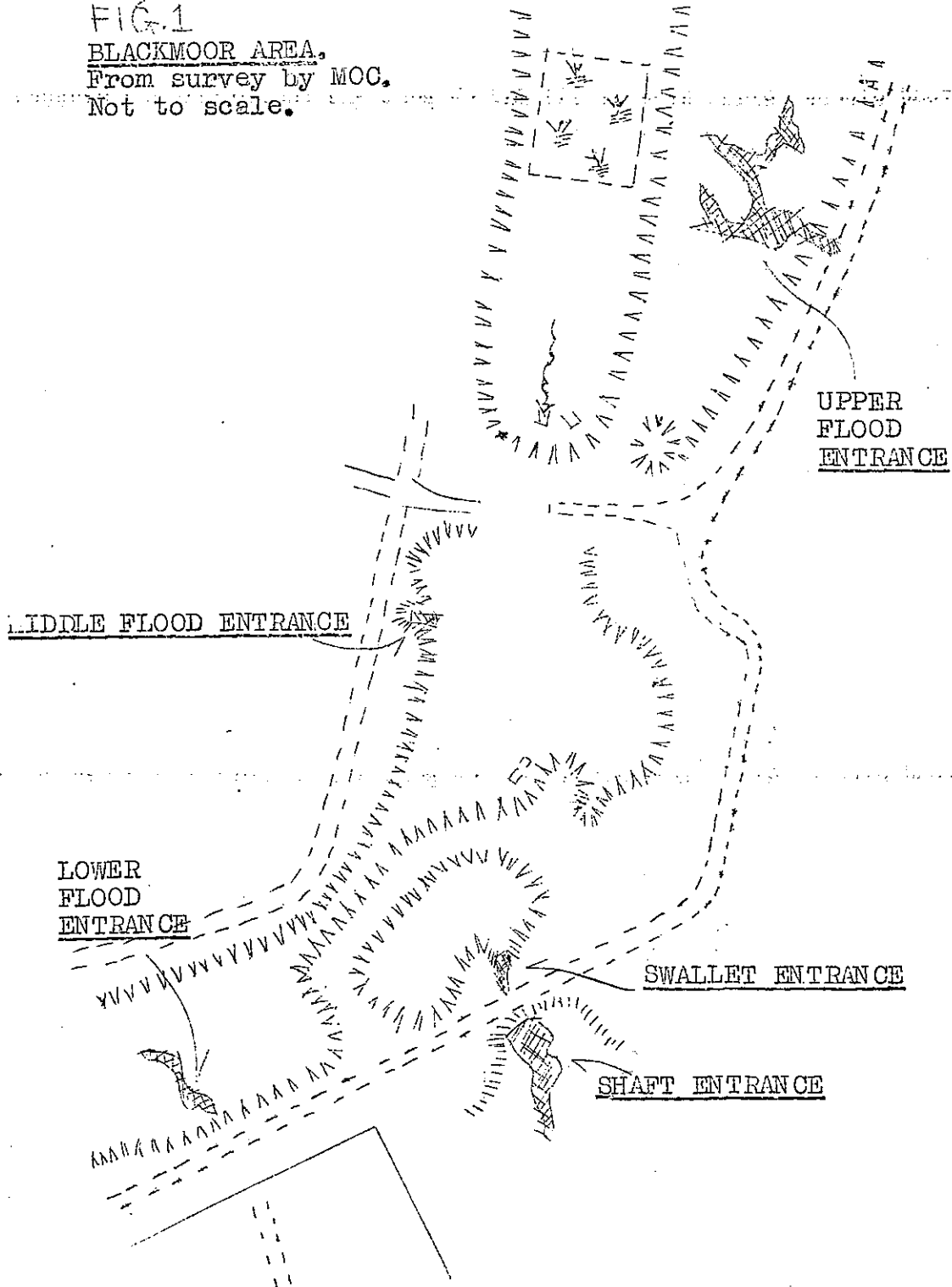


FIG. 1

BLACKMOOR AREA.

From survey by MOC.

Not to scale.



appeared to be a deep lake across the trackway. After an hour's sleep, I found, that I had stopped at the edge of a new cutting across the path. There appeared to be buildings of some sort below the soil, and I descended to take a closer look.

Although the cutting was dry, up-valley there was the sound of a small stream sinking noisily a few yards away. Heavy rain had been falling during the night, and this stream from the lake was the result.

The water-level had reached the valley sides to within four feet of the track level, and the dam must have collapsed quite suddenly, causing the scouring of the valley sides and floor, where it passed through the new cutting.

Down-valley slightly to the left of centre, there was a resurgence which sank again almost immediately into a fair-sized swallet, obscuring the entrance with its splashing.

To the right-hand side another hole was gargling loudly, but no water was visible.

At the lower dam, carrying the road, it appeared that the water had been flowing over the roadway for some time before the undercutting on the down-valley side caused the collapse of the road. This must have been at approximately 0100 hours on Thursday morning, for that is the time given by local inhabitants at Cheddar for the great "wall of water" which rushed down the Gorge.

I went to Cheddar via Tynings Fm., and the road from Lower Farm to Tynings Farm was awash with surface drainage from Blackdown flowing into the valley on the South side of the road.

The road down Longbottom was only slightly damaged, as the main drainage had gone down the valley fields.

At Cheddar, the householders were out at this early hour, (0700 hours) clearing mud, carpets and furniture out of their houses.

I parked my car near Gough's Garage, and walked through the wreckage to the Risings. These were now gushing with orange-coloured water, and the roadway nearby was torn up by further risings.

At Gough's Caves, the telephone box had been fragmented and strewn down the road. Inside the cave one could hear the noise of a waterfall, and the lighting conduits, floodlights, and switch-boxes were piled up against the grill together with much timber, and boulders.

Immediately beyond, there was a great pile of rock barring the Gorge, and in the midst was the remains of a car. One lump of galena was observed but was too heavy to carry away.

From this point onward, the road surface had been torn up in many places and at the sides there were trenches as much as 20ft deep and 15 ft. wide, cut down against the cliffs. The water main from the reservoir ~~XXXX~~ was left hanging in mid-air for considerable distances, although apparently not broken.

At three points on the way up the gorge, the road had been ruptured by springs forcing up the tarmac into volcanic "necks". and one, near the cliff of Bone Hole was spewing-out a column of spray to a height of some five feet.

At Black Rock Gate, there was a veritable "delta" of rock, which had been carried through the narrow pass between the small cliffs inside the gate, and been thrown across the road, even over the wall opposite. The wall itself was coated thickly with mud.

All the roads towards Wookey were blocked, and I waded to the top at one place to see the vast expanse of water covering the moors below.