

COMMITTEE-----

SECRETARY Peter Mathews; 155 Radcliffe Way, Northolt, Middx.
 Phone 01-841-8769

TREASURER Ron Saunders; Rylstone, 21 Rushmoor Ave., Hazlemere, Bucks.
 Phone Penn 3487

MEET SECRETARY John MacMillan; 53 Clarendon Gardens, Ilford, Essex.
 Phone(works)01-594-9321

TACKLEMASTER John Miriam; next address not known

COTTAGE WARDEN Wayne Hiscox; 80 Raleigh Road, Southall, Middx.
 Phone 01-574-1836

RECORDER Greg Smith; 131 Hagden Lane, Watford, Herts.
 Phone Watford 29606

EDITOR Roger Wallington; 113 Upton Court Road, Slough, Bucks.
 Phone Slough 28699

-----0000000000000000-----

WEEKLY CLUB "The Royal Oak", New Road, Brentford, Middx.(behind Brentford
 MEETINGS Football Club ground); every Thursday night till closing time.

-----0000000000000000-----

COTTAGE Stirrup Cup, Nordrach-on-Mendip, Nr. Wells, Somerset.
 Accommodation for over 30 - all essential services - guests
 charged at 20p per night.
 Guest party bed bookings through the Cottage Warden.

-----0000000000000000-----

RESCUE Bill Jones; 91 St.Saviours Road, Croydon, Surrey.
 WARDEN

-----0000000000000000-----

FORTHCOMING
MEETS.....

- August 18/19.....Lancaster/Easegill with Chelsea S.S. - no
 accommodation booked.
- Sept. 16/17.....South Wales, Agen Allwed - staying at Whitewalls
 names to meet sec. by 16th August.
- Oct. 7/8.....Yorkshire, Lancaster/Easegill - accommodation
 at Bull Pot Farm.
- Oct. 21/22.....Half Yearly meeting and Rescue Practice

CLUB NEWS

HE'S ARRIVED - born to June and Pat Walsh, a young trog name of David.

CONGRATULATIONS - to John Evans who was secretly married on July 29th and is rumoured to be retreating into the bowels of W(h)ales;

- also to Graham Gregory who married Karen Holland on August 4th and was seen off with due ceremony by his mates, and will henceforth be living near Munchen Gladbach.

THEY'VE MOVED - John Miriam has moved, I know not where!

- Arthur Cox has changed his address for the third time in a year without actually moving - it's 3 Sheridan Court, 6 Milton Road, Hanwell, W.7.

HORSE PLAY - Anne Duffell, who tried getting off a horse while it was in top gear, is now riding a cats cradle in Ashford General Hospital with broken leg.

CRIME REPORT STOP PRESS - the cottage was broken into last weekend 5/6 August and the contents of the meter taken. The police were informed and during the course of the weekend the fuzz were seen collecting fingerprints, taking photos of the scene of the crime, making measurements, dragging committee members from the Hunters, and finally reached the conclusion that we'd been robbed!

RAVE UP - the half-yearly meeting OCTOBER 21st is to be planned to include some sort of festivities, and a strong possibility of much booze and vittles. There will also be a Rescue Practice the same weekend - before or after the beer remains to be seen!

AROUND AND ABOUT

NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION - the N.C.A. recently had discussions with the Sports Council, and following recognition as a properly constituted body representing caving nationally, was awarded a grant covering administration costs during its formative years.

B.S.A. CONFERENCE - to be held in Sheffield 9/10 September. Lectures on Geology, Geomorphology, Hydrology, Aquatic subterranean animals, Cave accidents, "Caves and Caving" film, Cave Conservation, and the Marble Arch Cave System. Cost is 50p or £1.15 with proceedings. Booking forms, maps & entry form for photo salon available from Pete Mathews.

HELL FIRE CAVES - a competition is under way for the best photos of these artificial grottoes at West Wycombe - first prize £200. All entrants receive free colour film; closing date is 30th Sept.

+++++oooo000000000000oooo++++

QUOTE FROM GREG SMITH "When I was a small boy....."

Held at the "Royal Oak", Brentford at 7.30pm. under the chairmanship of Mike Lovell - members present 17.

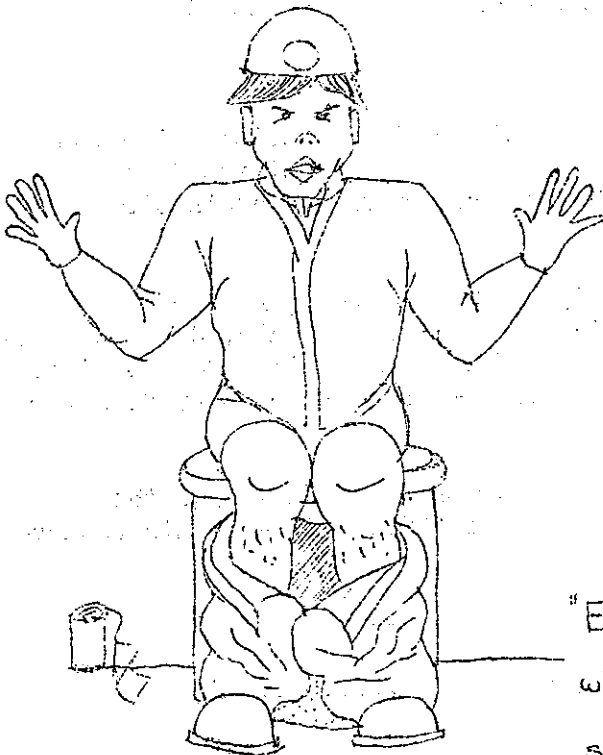
The meeting started with a cine film by Malcolm Cotter of the work done by the group in the Blackmoor area over a period of 12 years or more. The Hon. Sec. Pete Mathews followed with a report outlining the history of Blackmoor Flood Swallet(Upper Flood), and the circumstances which had led to the digging being assisted by non group-members, namely Willie Stanton and his Reservoir Hole Team (for want of a better term).

The report prompted much discussion and it was evident that the committee, at the time of W.Stanton's request to help in the dig, had been mis-informed on a number of points, and had subsequently made certain decisions without knowing these salient facts.

The meeting highlighted the basic differences in opinion between the two factions digging, i.e; the Reservoir Team want to explore the cave as it is found, in separate teams, and in sections of say 500ft. length, each team being responsible for the conservation surveying, & documentation of their particular section. ; in contrast, the meeting, with convincing solidarity, agreed to adopt the policy formed by the committee, which was that initial exploration trips should be contemplated as joint efforts and should continue carefully until stopped by an insuperable physical barrier.

The idea of exploring by set distances by different teams, using different surveying techniques, and then trying to co-ordinate these seems completely impractical.

Tony Knibbs proposed that a 3 man sub-committee be appointed to 'look after' the dig, responsible to the committee. The voting was as follows - 9 for, 2 against, 6 abstentions; so the motion was carried by a majority and the members of the sub-committee elected - M. Cotter, P. Mathews, G. Smith.



"Ella! Ella! caught in the act without informing your social amenities sub-committee eh!"

J.B. MacMillan
R. Norris)
B. Terry) - bearded poofers.

We decided on Saturday night to attempt the trip despite local opinion as to the height of the water in the streamway. A very murky Sunday morning greeted us as we went to change. The trip started rather ominously; having discovered that a short-sighted sheep had mistaken my wet-suit bottoms for a commode, both John and Richard kept well up-wind during the trudge to the entrance, and a particularly sick-looking sheep gave me a knowing look. Half an hour of aimless wandering and the entrance presented itself.

With J. Mac. leading we left Gnome Passage behind and soon arrived at the Arête, the crux to this part of the system. A sharp left-hand climb down to the head of Salubrious, along which we splashed happily, until the passage rose at the top of the 35ft. climb down to the streamway. After descending, we negotiated the twisting Maypole Inlet to the 15ft. maypole and the newly installed fixed ladder down to the main stream. The stream was obviously swollen with rainwater from the past week and was a boiling mass of thundering white foam which needed a great deal of concentration to keep ones' footing. After a few hundred feet we decided to keep together using a waist loop. Even so, this didn't prevent John from being spectacularly swept away (a habit he's FALLEN into - Ed.), and lodged underwater in a pothole, which gave us a nasty shock as he was carrying our food - luckily he surfaced.

Proceeding with extreme caution we still missed the turn-off for the Great Oxbow, and were confronted by the first of the sumps. The foam encrusted passage at this point bore testament to the high water conditions, and the force of water and precarious footing persuaded us to retrace our route upstream.

Grub-break in the Oxbow; then after rejoining the stream we encountered the first of the small potholes and wished we'd brought a rope. To negotiate the pots John and Richard used the waist-loop to keep together, and once on the other side they waited for me to get swept towards them and then fished me out. Following these hazards we passed beneath the fantastic sight of the Marble Shower series; a solid wall of white water that threatened to push you into the floor when you entered it. From here to the first river chamber was relatively easy and so on to the Confluence.

With some regret we left the stream at Flood By-pass and proceeded to Collapse Chamber via Piccadilly and the Divers Route. From here we used a new muddy route to Dip Sump, and thence to Hush Sump, emerging from here into Boulder Chamber where we thought to try the stream again. When we reached the main stream it was obviously suicidal to push our luck any further - we retraced our steps to the chain, ascended, and took the Escape Route out. The rest of the trip, apart from a lamp failure, proved uneventful and seemed quiet and boring after the streamway.

Taken all round, it was a good trip, which owing to the water conditions took us six hours.

 Swallet digging is our recreation,
 And for this we've got a reputation,
 Through shifting tons of hoggin,
 Cave passage miles we're loggin',
 Soon we'll have our best creation!

WE'RE DIGGING HERE, WE'RE DIGGING THERE!

A summary of the major digs on Mendip in which the M.C.G. at present retains an active interest;

- August Hole : Fountain Passage has been visited at some time by vandals since discovery by club in 1968.
- : Oxbows - Sand Passage blasted earlier this year and work continues intermittently.
- Inferior Holestream now back to normal level following period where duck was a sump - work now proceeding.
- Blackmoor : Shaft - nothing done recently - work to be done in future on capping it and re-attacking stream rift.
- : Middle Flood Swallet - original dig in terminal chamber temporarily abandoned due to bouncing boulders and better prospects in Upper Flood.
- : Upper Flood Swallet - following its discovery by the club in 1968 it has been dug fairly consistently in upper and lower parts of the cave, being excavated in various ways by bagging, pumping, etc.. Increased activity 1971/72 has resulted so far in doubling length of known passage, and immediate prospects look good for us.
- Bone Hole : Small amount of work done this year following intensive excavation in 1970/71.
- Coopers Hole : Nothing done on main dig for some time - but we haven't forgotten you!
- Knapp Hill : Swallet continually infilling previous efforts - further progress requires explosive assistance.
- Timber Hole : Excavated to previously dug level - now needs bang.
- Ubley Hill Pot : Entrance consolidated very recently prior to digging in stream.

.....-+++ooo0000ooo+++----.....

A DIRTY STORY Two tramps were down on their luck and starving. Says one, "I know how to get some food", and so saying he picked up a horse dropping from the road and walked up to the front door of a little old cottage, and knocked. The door opened and a por little old lady stood there. The tramp, dropping in upturned hand, said, "please lady can I have some salt to go on this". The old lady was aghast, told him to put it down, and took him in for a meal. The other tramp was amazed and thought he'd have a go, but one better, and try the mansion down the road, He did as his friend, and when the huge oak mansion door opened revealing a distinguished lady in fine clothes he proffered his outstretched hand displaying the dropping and said, "Could you spare a little salt to go on this, lady?" The lady replied, "Oh! how disgusting, you poor man, put it down and go round to the stables and get yourself a warm one".

THE CAVERS SHOP

Available now from your friendly storeman Grocer Miriam at give-away prices the following;

Carbide : 15p in a marvel tin or £1.00 in 12lb bumper bargain tins.

Electrolyte : best quality available at 20p per bottle
- sufficient for 6 cells.

-----+++ooo00000000ooo+++-----

COTTAGE FEES

Cottage dues have been going astray lately and so a new set-up will be tried using a carbon copy book. The person collecting the fees should sign against the total for the weekend, and then remove the carbon copy sheet from the book and present it to the Treasurer on Thursday meetings or by post.

" DON'T LOSE THE CARBON PAPER "

-----+++ooo00000000ooo+++-----

GROUP SLIDE COLLECTION

Pete Mathews is hoping to prepare a set of slides illustrating all aspects of caving, numbering about 150-200 and including drawings and photographs. It is intended for loan to those members giving talks.

So far the collection is about one third complete, and more slides and photos are required illustrating particularly technical subjects, fauna & flora, surface topography, etc. Everyone with a camera has something of interest to the collection, so don't expect it to assemble itself - submit YOUR offerings to the HON. SEC. who will copy them and return them straight away.

-----+++ooo00000000ooo+++-----

Harken lazy speleos,

as I relate to you my woes,

It isn't much to ask you for,

a paragraph or two, or more,

A lengthy article expounding,

trips above or underground, in

Words profound and ready wit,

which I will carefully edit.

-----+++ooo00000000ooo+++-----

A very late review from the cob-webbed archives of the Hon. Librarian.

Browsing through forgotten files the other month I came across a letter that was originally addressed to Mr. & Mrs. Young of Lower Farm. Written by the Stride Bros. in 1945, it describes the initial exploration of Longwood Swallet by them. Since this is more comprehensive than the account in Balch's book, part of the letter is transcribed below. But first for a look at Johnson's treatment of the exploration of this cave in his "History of Mendip Caving". This is best summed up by the closing paragraph;

'The Sidcot boys wrote an account of the cave which appeared in one of Balch's books, The British Caver, and elsewhere, but saw fit to omit any mention of the fact that there had been a six months' break in its exploration and that most of it was explored by the U.B.S.S. and not the S.S.S.S.'

Returning to the Stride Bros. letter, the account of the exploration (written in the third person) from where they reached the first 10ft. drop, without tackle, reads;

'Retuning laden with equipment, but through force of circumstances, with only a small supporting party, they descended the drop, and after removing many perilously poised boulders, managed to force their way within a few feet of the of the 40ft. drop & Main Chamber. Here they halted.

Later, seeking advice from higher authorities, they were advised, lest they might involve the Sidcot lads in the dangers of the new cave.

It was a month later, in April '45, that the Bristol University Spelæo Soc. informed us of their desire to descend the cave, They meanwhile did so, & with the aid of a strong party and adequate equipment continued from the 40ft. drop to the end of the system. About half of the cave as we know it today.'

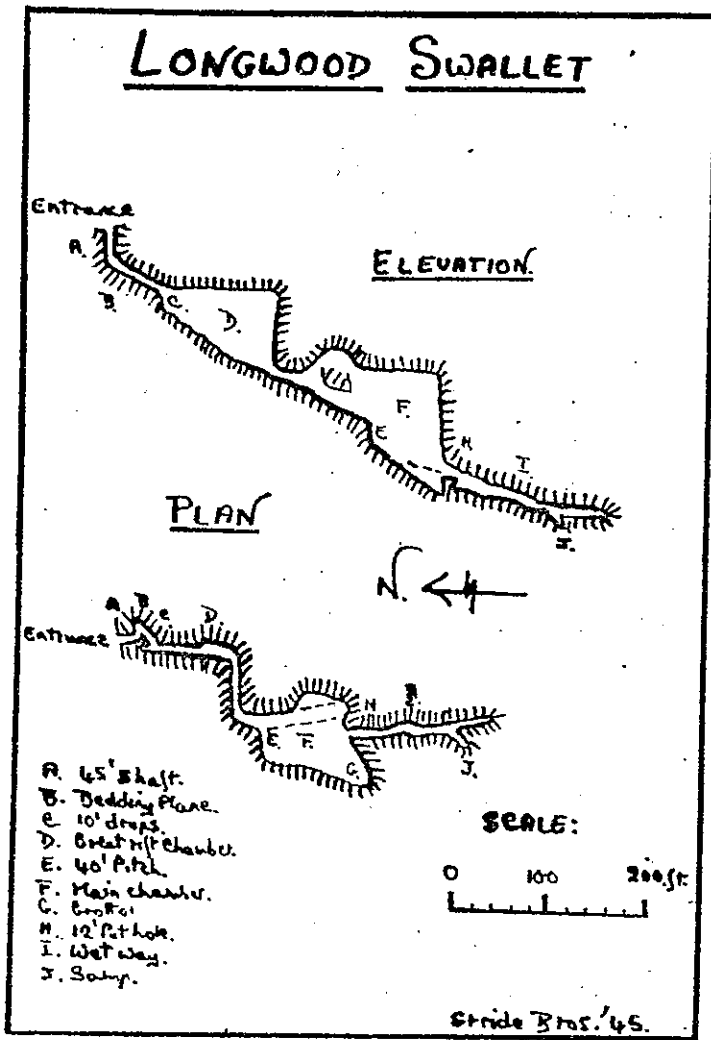
Most of the last paragraph does not appear in Balch's book, thus the Sidcot boys very honourably omitted to mention that U.B.S.S. had in fact poached Stride Bros. discovery!

Now with regard to the six month break in exploration mentioned by Johnson, was this from when the 40ft. drop had been discovered? I doubt it for the letter suggests a month. More likely the six months was from when the first rift was entered, conditions during the winter being too severe to make fast progress. The letter states that "In summer the stream is fanally engulfed in its bed 70yds. farther up the valley than the higher swallet. But for over eight months of the year, the stream runs down, & is engulfed in, the lower swallet".

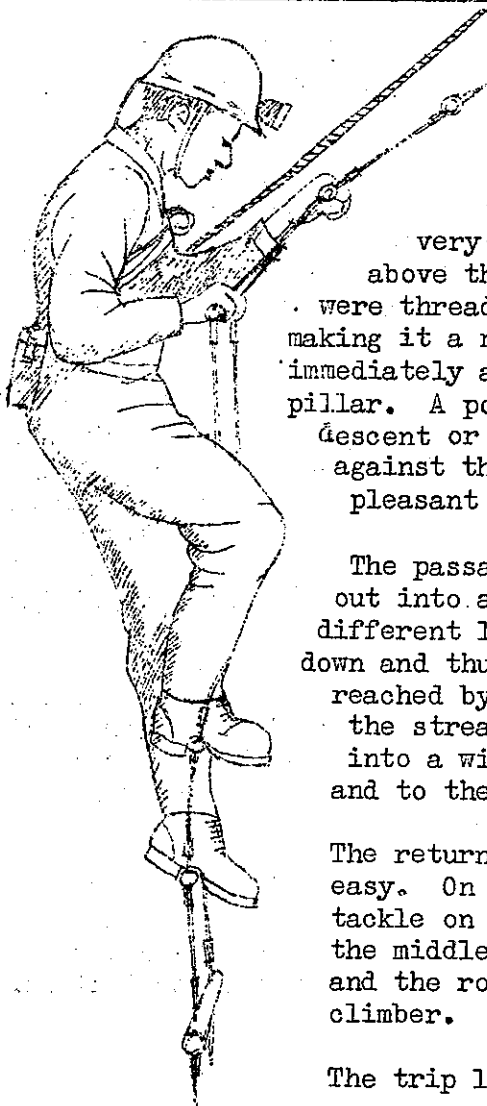
Since a much greater quantity of water than reaches the cave today entered the entrance rift from the lower swallet it is not surprising that progress was hampered. Even U.B.S.S. had a winter lay-off in 1955, when digging for the Back Door entrance to upstream August Hole.

There are many other points indicating that Johnson was not entirely objective when describing the history of Longwood and indeed other caves in his book, and that perhaps too much of his information was gleaned solely from logbooks of the U.B.S.S.

LONGWOOD SWALLET



Survey from Stride Bros' letter - remarkably accurate considering small scale and draft nature of drawing.



On the above date a small party of M.C.G. and 2 stray Cerberus descended Little Hull Pot, which lies west of Hull Pot about 200yds N.W. of the shooting hut on Penyghent.

There was no water in the entrance crawl and very little going down the first pitch. Two flakes above the pitch served as belays and 75feet of ladders were threaded down, the shaft corkscrewing to the right making it a nasty climb. The second pitch of 100feet was immediately after the first and the belay used was a huge pillar. A pool above the pitch can be baled to give a dry descent or alternatively a dry one. Here the ladder hung against the wall in a huge shaft giving a very easy and pleasant descent.

The passage after these pitches was low and wet opening out into a high rift which was traversed at a number of different levels. Some of the party followed the stream down and thus by-passed the last pitch of 50feet which was reached by traversing at a higher level. Beyond this the stream sumped, but a hole at high level was climbed into a wide bedding plane which led back to the stream and to the final sump.

The return up the 100feet pitch was found by all to be easy. On the first pitch it was found better to tie the tackle on the middle of the rope; and also to climb on the middle; this saved time as the tackle didn't snag up and the rope didn't have to be thrown down after each climber.

The trip lasted 5 hours.

Tackle required	Ladder	Lifeline	Belay
1st pitch	75 ft.	150 ft.	2 x 10 ft.
2nd pitch	100 ft.	210 ft.	2 x 20 ft.
3rd pitch	50 ft.	110 ft.	2 x 20 ft.

Y

LONGWOOD

Those taking parties down August Longwood should remember that indemnity chits are required (blank ones in cottage library cupboard), and that there is a charge of 12¹/₂p each to non-members per trip.

STRIKE A LIGHT

The Hon. Sec. wants to order rolls of magnesium ribbon at 50p for a 25 gram roll (about 3" dia. - enough for years); let him know if you want some.

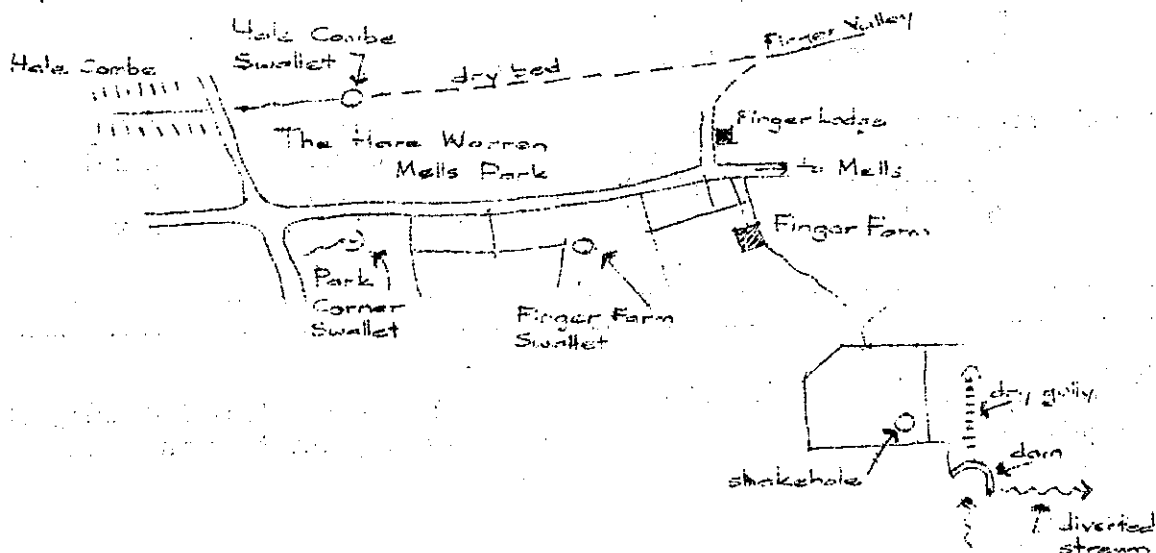
In the course of geological mapping on E. Mendip during 1970/71 a number of swallets and caves were located which it is believed have not previously been referred to.

Infilled caves, New Frome Quarry, Whatley Bottom(NGR 72804830) July 1970
The cave sloped between the floors of the upper and lower quarry tiers, a vertical distance of about 50ft., and was entirely filled with grey sand and clay, some of which had spilled onto the quarry floor. In this latter portion Dave Mitchell found the Ammonite Procentes which gives a relative dating of the infill as Lower Jurassic - Fullers Earth rock.

Finger Farm(NGR 70934736). One small active swallet was located August '71 in the well-marked dry valley between Park Corner & Finger Lodge and takes the water draining from fields to the south. Suggested name - Finger Farm Swallet. Also on Finger Farm a dry gully near a stone building suddenly comes to an end at NGR 71604735. The other end of the gully reaches a pond the outflow of which has been dammed on the gully side so that the stream is diverted away to Railford. This was probably an active swallet in the past. In the adjoining field is a clearly defined shakehole NGR 71444734.

Mells Park(NGR 70374748) August 1971. An active swallet, a hole in the bed of the stream, looked like a recent collapse. It was possible to divert past it the water, climb down dry, and stand on a pile of rock 4ft. below stream bed. The water vanished in a vertical jumble in the north of the hole that was too constricted to follow. Suggested name - Hale Combe Swallet.

Mells(NGR 72474966) August 1971. This swallet, located by the sound of falling water, is remarkable because it does not occur in Carboniferous but in Inferior Oolitic Limestone. This limestone lies on Conglomerate and the main cave probably lies in the latter, Suggested name - Quarr Close Swallet.



More details of caves and swallets in next journal.

