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WEEKLY CLUB "The Royal Oak", New Road, Brentford, Middx.(Behind Brentford
MEETINGS Football Club Ground, every Thursday night till ejected.

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

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

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FORTHCOMING Blackmoor Flood Swallet April 20th (Easter)
MEETS South Wales - Dan yr Ogof, Pant Mawr. May 12/13th
(Accomodation at SWCC HQ)

Chief Cottage Rotters 1972

The Bed Bookings for 1972 were as follows:-

Members	Bed - Nights		
Pete Mathews	52	Bernard Reeves	16
John MacMillan	43	Roger Wallington	15
John Miriam	39	Bryan Berry	14
Greg Smith	37	Don Searle	14
Bill Jones	34	Roger Bowden	12
Don Vosper	31	David Humphrey	12
Wayne Hiscox	27	Tony Knibbs	12
Phil Ingold	21	Malcolm Cotter	12
Simon Knight	21		

These figures are particularly gratifying being well up on 1971. They are a little distorted by the increasing tendency for people to come down Saturday thus missing a bed night (but not cottage fees!) This is probably due to the M4 in both cases.

If you reckon you should be higher up the list, then you probably owe some cottage fees!

Meet Programme 1973

April 20th (Easter) Mendip - Blackmoor Flood Swallet

May 12/13 S. Wales - Dan yr Ogof Pant Mawr
(accommodation at SWCC HQ)

May 26th (Whitsun) Scotland - Isle of Skye

June 23/24th Yorkshire - Gingleing Hole
(Camping)

July St Guthbert's

July 7/8th Yorkshire - Birks Fell Cave
(Camping at Hubberholme outside "The George")

Sept 1st - 23rd Czechoslovakia

Oct 14th Yorkshire - Pippikin Pot

Nov 10/11 th S. Wales - O.F.D. Little Neath River Cave
(accommodation SWCC HQ)

Although gold is neither the rarest metal, nor even the most expensive, man has held it in great esteem for over 5,000 years. Its resistance to corrosion, ease of working, together with its occurrence in the native state (uncombined) made it ideal for shaping into ornaments, statues and bracelets. Gold rings and ring money have been found all over the British Isles, especially in Wales and Ireland.

That these objects were fashioned from British gold is proved by historical records, and the reasonable proximity of gold mines. One mine, the Ogofau lode near Pumpsaint, Carmarthenshire, is definitely Roman, or even earlier.

Although gold occurrences have been reported from many places, less than a dozen gold mines have ever been opened. Their life-time appears to be rather short, probably due to quick exhaustion of the lodes at the surface, with few trials at deeper depths.

1. England

Gold has been produced in the past from the Goldscope Mine, in the Newlands Valley, near Heswick, Cumberland. It lies to the side of Newlands Beck at about 228186. Although initially worked for copper and lead, over £300,000 of gold was produced in the reign of Henry VIII (Lamdens "Brittania", 1607). The gold occurs finely divided with the copper ore.

Also in Cumberland, gold has been found at the Carrock Mine, in the Coldbeck Fells. It lies at the junction of the River Caldew and the Grainsgill Beck (325328). The ores of tungsten, arsenic and bismuth are also found here. Gold has also been found at the Brandlelow Mine, on the west shores of the Derwentwater, at 251196, in the reddish rocks found in the lead lode.

There are few other places in England outside Cumberland where gold has definitely been found. The Poltimore mines, 2 miles north east of Exeter, near the village of the same name, were Roman mines, and little is known about them. Several Cornish mines are also reported to have produced gold.

2. Wales

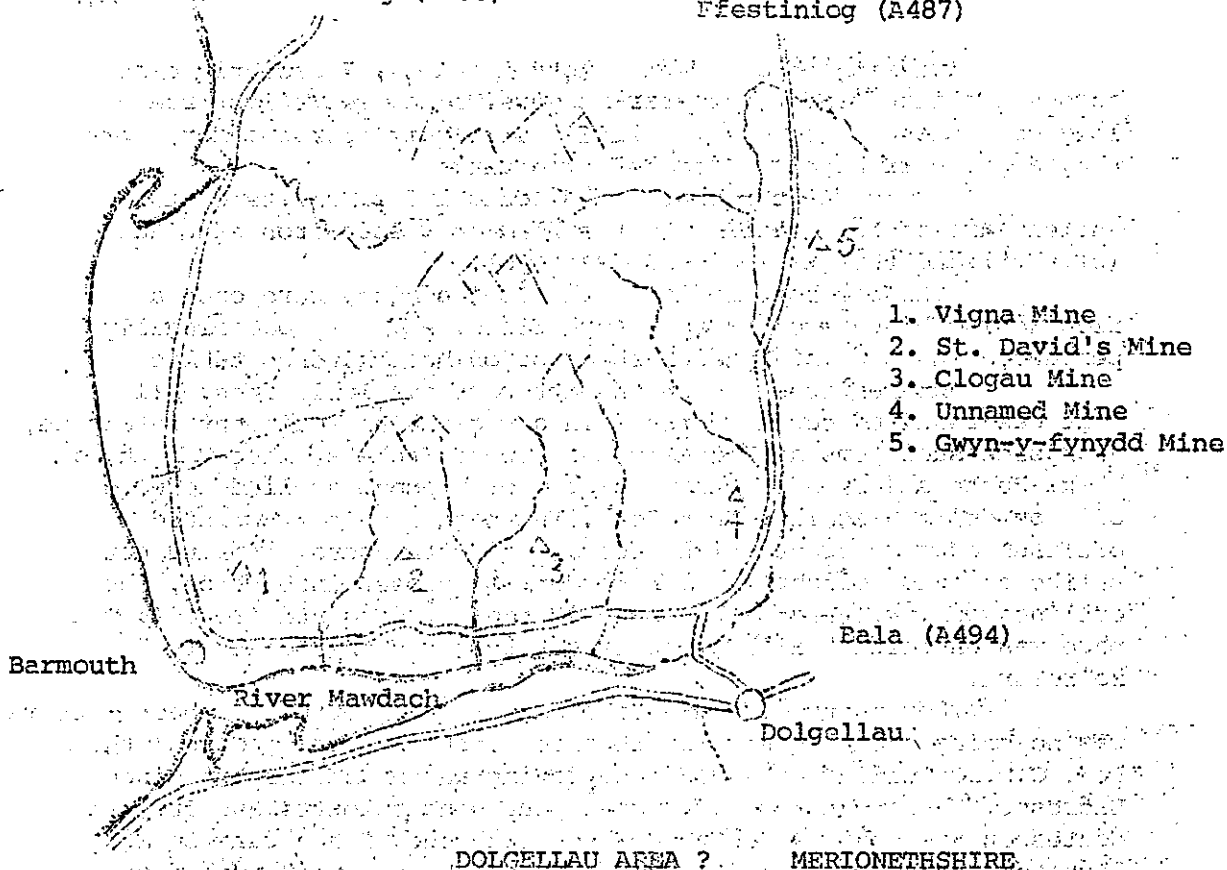
Wales is undoubtedly the richest gold field in the British Isles. Large tonnages of gold ore no doubt exist in the remoter parts of Central and North Wales. Good hand specimens of gold have been found in all the mines mentioned below.

The Ogofau mine, near Pumpsaint village, on the Lampeter - Llandovery road, is situated at about 665404. The workings are probably pre-Roman, and are quite extensive. It was last worked in 1938, so would-be gold prospectors should beware of open shafts and collapsed ground.

Further north, the Dolellau area includes the famous Clogau Mine, which produced a large proportion of the 120,000 oz. - nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons - of pure gold, produced in Merionethshire between 1861 and 1907. The gold in the Clogau lode occurs in rich pockets, separated by long barren stretches. One such pocket contained 130 oz. of solid crystalline gold and quartz, which yielded 116 oz. of pure retorted gold on direct melting.

Ffestiniog (A496)

Ffestiniog (A487)



The dumps from this mine, and also those of Vigna and St. Davids Lodes - continuation of the Clogau lode to the West and East, are situated in the tributary valleys north of the River Mawdach, between Barmouth and Dolgellau, and are clearly visible from the valley floor. Further workings are visible all the way up the Mawdach Valley, towards Ffestiniog. This area is the best for a thorough search since there are several mines close together - you are bound to find something on one of the dumps!

Gold can hardly be mistaken for anything else. It is bright yellow, soft and malleable and always occurs in white quartz. Iron and copper pyrites are brassy yellow, and occur in large flecks in all sort of rock; they are also far more brittle than gold. Remember - if it breaks when you hit it - its not gold.

..ooOoo..

The above is the first of many, we hope, that will come from the pens of our Probationary Membership. Get writing.

KEEP YOUR BOOTS OFF THE BEDS ; SOMEONE HAS TO SLEEP THERE !

Sifting through some dusty trinkets, I recently came across a clinker and three star-muggers. No not souvenirs from a long cold stove on some dimly lit station waiting room. Nor, were they a group of highly rated juvenile thugs.

Let's start again. I had found a few remains of the ancient art of Boot Nailing in the form of a soft-iron edge nail (clinker) and three sole nails (muggers).

Skilled boot nailers, the speleo kind, were once a flourishing breed whose art was practised, and very occasionally perfected, in cobwebbed garden sheds or on back kitchen tables.

Apprenticeships in the art were available free. All that was required could be found in any climbing equipment catalogue, alongside such gems as High-Altitude Tweed Jackets, Knee-Length, Khaki Puttees (ex Indian Army: a sort of bandage applied to ward off wounds) and Italian Hemp Rope. The page required depicted outlines of some twenty right feet, shod with boots, looking not unlike a 'danse macabre' after Verdun. On closer inspection, the outlines bore varying patterns of squiggles, dots and crosses. The page was entitled "Nailing Patterns", this was the point of no return.

Now that you had established a need for nailed boots; there was no going back! In his lighthearted book 'Exploring Caves' the Rev. C.H.D. Cullingford described Caving as the best sport since Lacrosse. Whilst Casteret, N., speleogue sans culottes and Croix de Montespan avec palmes, converted you with one of his far too many limestone tracts. And if this wasn't enough, your later ex-mate assured you that an afternoon in Goatchurch was better than a night with Brigitte Bardot. A sure sign of junior frustration And, Mendip being nearer than Bardot, you believed it all.

The actual choice of nailing patterns was always a matter of some debate. Plimsoles might do for the first trip or two, but that was all. An outwardly harmless remark, concerning advice on nailing, could be tossed into the circle of resident ragamuffins of Maine's Barn in the certain knowledge that several fights would ensue.

By observing the contestants from a safe distance, some drawing hasty diagrams on the dusty floorboards - others simply shouting louder, you became aware of two schools of thought. Soft nails for hard rock and hard nails for soft rock - or was it vice versa? To add to your growing confusion, no two devotees of either school could ever agree on actual nails and patterns. But, while the gods fought you gained a ten yard start to the New Inn; usually valued at a pint of 'screech'.

Some days later, when the devastation of overmuch screech had worn off, the mystery, still unsolved, would appear before you once more, in the shape of the same catalogue page.

By this time you would have become better equipped to make the fateful decision. Casting temporarily aside the question

of grip on limestone, you based a decision on more obvious factors. Which sort made most graunching and screeching noises? Which sort made the best sparks when running to the pub? Which sort looked most menacing to flesh and hemp? All thwarted by the miserable selection you would be offered by your local supplier.

As an edge nail, the clinker always looked more dangerous than the Tricouni No.6. A long, iron spike should win out over a few steel teeth, any day. And Star Muggers always looked the ideal sole nail for walking on ceilings; more so than did ordinary Muggers, Single or Triple Hots - and Tricouni No 1's resembled kit-form ice skate blades.

So, armed with a pair of plain leather soled boots, duly soaked in water for 12 hours, a bag of assorted nails, a cobbler's last- if you were lucky and the largest hammer available, you were ready. Attempting to hammer in the edge clinkers usually caused the addition of something resembling a bradawl, at about the third hit of the first clinker. And there you'd stay, closeted for many a long hour, as the boots slowly gained weight and your fingers lost blood and nail.

But, every cloud has a silver lining; even the one you had just been labouring under. And, with a final sigh of relief, the application of yet another sticking plaster, you could sit back and survey your first essay in the art of boot nailing. Before your very eyes there stood, surmounting a sea of bent clinkers and muggers, a pair of boots the sight of which struck awe into your honest caving heart. And if you ever gave up this sport of 'things', you would find them handy for deep sea diving; the weight was incredible.

The first steps into Eastwater, wearing these fearsome clogs, was a revelation, and a discomfitting one. Their ponderous mass made walking a distinct effort and their coefficient of grip, on other than level surfaces, was so low as to be terrifying.

But the sound effects and sparks could be readily appreciated. Your first footfall on a 100 foot hemp rope provided the team with several random lengths with which, it was suggested, you be immediately hanged. It was now your turn to become an ex-mate. Such trivia would be allowed to pass, since it was obvious that their chagrin sprung from an insane jealousy over your new stal-crushers.

Of course, they rotted away like these modern rubber-soled abortions do; only quicker. The gleaming nails soon rusted and, if they ever escaped from their captivity, could be relied upon to take a chunk of leather with them. Within a year or two, you'd be back with your catalogue page planning, reluctantly, the next foray into boot-nailing.

So, if you're looking for a way to make your caving a more perilous and dramatic affair, may I recommend you try nailed boots. Try a trip into Swildons, perhaps Black Hole via the Old Approach Passage. You will never forget it!

After Dinner Exercise

Arthur Spain

The Sunday following the Annual Bunfight dawned sunny and clear, the ideal day to stay above ground. Unfortunately, Ron and Rog Saunders, friend Rob and yours truly had rashly decided on a little saunter around Stoke Lane. A precautionary chat with the weatherman (Try getting out of the entrance in a rain storm!) Over to Stoke Bottom Farm for permission and we were off. That is fifteen minutes later, after repairs to a certain person's helmet!

It is quite an exhilarating experience being swept in on the current (quite another matter getting out however,). First snag arose at Tributary Passage, due to following our noses - very smelly mud- we failed to turn right into Corkscrew Chamber but continued up Tributary Passage to the bitter end and back to where a party of six who followed us in, pointed out our mistake.

Next minor obstacle was the Nutmeg Grater where Rob was beginning to think nature was a little too generous, and on to Sump 1, which was successfully negotiated under the expert guidance of Ron.

Beyond the Sump into Main Chamber where a unanimous agreement to forego the pleasures of the rather exposed climb on the Traverse to the Throne Room where where we met the other party again. After a break of ten minutes with Ron flashing his camera at Queen Vic herself, and Rog consuming all the eatables, we worked our way back to Sump 1 and through, with only a lump on the head for me (drat that helmet) and a cut face for Ron. Not bad really, a few grunts at the Nutmeg and silent cursing at the entrance, and so out into glorious, rapidly receding sunshine.

So ended an enjoyable weekend, Thanks Pete for organising an excellent Bunfight, roll on next March and my next trip perhaps!

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