



Turkish Delight A visit to Eastern Mendip - 4/7/01

The cottage was empty apart from Tim and I so we decided to do something a bit different and bag some new caves. We loaded up the car and headed off for Great Elm in East Mendip. The objective was Elm Cave. We had previously reccied the site before the Foot and Mouth outbreak and this time knew exactly where to go. The village was infested with walkers' cars but we managed to park the car close to the river. We decided, well at least I did, that we should carry our kit and change outside the cave. It was only a short walk. We followed the path upstream until we encountered the railway track from the nearby quarry. Great Elm appears to be an idyllic village until you take into account the huge active quarry nearby. We followed the track for about 100 yards and then found the cave about 30 feet above on the right. We duly got changed and entered the cave. Since it is recorded as only having a length of 30m I was surprised at the size of the passageway we encountered once the gated but not locked entrance was negotiated. We had entered a large rift passage about 15ft high by about 10 wide heading down at about 30 degrees. There were a few flowstone formations and a few nodules on the rock. The timbers put in by the MCG in the 60's were in good shape. The rift soon closed down and we descended through a boulder choke that became increasingly muddy as we finally regained the rift. A few more boulders and we came to a large sump. This is obviously a flooded continuation of the rift. There was a dive line in the sump and it is reported that it is linked to the nearby stream and the level is dependent on the river level. We exited the cave and then went to Downhead to have a look into Downhead Slocker.

This is supposedly the largest sink in East Mendip and when we had previously looked the entrance was taking a stream. Today, though, the water was sinking further upstream. There are several entrances and these were duly explored. The furthest from the sink yield the most passage. It consisted of a series of interconnected tight rifts and there was a lot of flood debris. In the deeper recesses even Tim was defeated by the narrowness. We're going to need some bang here if we're going to find anything else. There is supposedly a gravel-choked sump but since we didn't even encounter the stream we never found it. If anyone has a survey or any knowledge about this cave we would greatly appreciate it. We called at the MNRC who made one in the 50's but they were unable to locate it. Next we headed off up valley to have a look at Dairy House Slocker. Heading up the track by Dairy House Farm we soon encountered a sizeable stream sinking through boulders. Apparently a large boulder collapsed at the entrance nearly missing a caver. There are 120ft of known passage here and it seems a shame that it hasn't been reopened. To finish off the day we went to Asham Wood to find Tom Tivey's Hole. After a bit of malarkey (we walked right past it) we found this rock shelter and concluded a very promising day.

Despite the approaching holiday season and the cottage beginning to resemble the Marie Celeste, Wednesday nights have still been fairly active. Two round trips have been completed. Lionel's Hole was completed as described. The second duck was completely dry so Steve (I remember when all this was fields) Duckworth and I squeezed through. It is described as a tight duck and they weren't joking. I don't think I would even think about it if there was a stream running. I had to move through a rib at a time. Simon Stevens and Steve Wyatt opted for the fainthearted route through Bishops Bypass. We met up on the other side and completed the round trip only duplicating a tiny bit at the beginning. I will probably always feel lost in this cave no matter how many times I visit it.

The second round trip completed was in Longwood with Steve Duckworth and Simon Stevens. As a Wednesday night trip this is about as much as is possible given the constraints of time and the fact that it takes 20 minutes to walk from the Cheddar road. Christmas Crawl and the Wet Chimney weren't as wet as last time but were still very refreshing.

Richard Carey

2001 MCG CAVING AND SOCIAL CALENDAR

DATE	AREA	EVENT	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Sept 1/2nd	Mendip	Bone Hole work weekend	Tim Francis	0208 392 2572
Oct 12-14th	Derbys	Hidden earth	Tim Francis	0208 392 2572
Spring 2002	Mendip	Archaeology walk	Yvonne Rowe	01524 762664
TBA (n/l 292)	Somerset	Castle Cary tunnels		
Every Weds	Mendip	Mid-week caving	Richard Carey	0117 986 0945

ACCOMMODATION:	Nordrach Cottage, Charterhouse-on-Mendip, Blagdon, Bristol BS40 7XW Tel: 01761 462797 Grid Ref ST51475606 OS 1:50,000 sheet 182
WEEKLY MEETINGS:	At The Beehive, Egham, Surrey, on Thursdays from 9.00 p.m. At The Hunters Lodge, Somerset, on Tuesdays about 10.00 pm or at the cottage on Wednesdays at 7.00 pm for caving trips.
COTTAGE FEES per night:	MCG members, members children, SWCC, NPC £1.50 Guest clubs and member's guests £2.50
PREPAYMENT STICKERS:	(Available to members only) 25 nights accommodation £30.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:	Full and Probationary Members: £30.00 Associate Members: £15.00
RECIPROCAL RIGHTS:	MCG (members only) have reciprocal booking rights with SWCC and NPC NPC bookings via Nic Blundell, tel: 01203 713849 (hm) or 01203 838940 (wk) SWCC bookings via Ian Middleton, tel: 01703 736997 or email ian_m@tcp.co.uk

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MCG News

MOVING ON:- *This summer* Steve Jones can be reached at 14 Benville Avenue, Bristol, BS9 2RX
☎ 0117 9684528

From 23/9/01 he'll be at 109 Lydgate Lane, Crookes, Sheffield, S10 5FN
☎ 0114 2679912

Ben Cooper's new phone no. is 01344 776 306
Work (unchanged) 01344 850 539
Mobile (unchanged) 07808 82 4319

...and a new phone no. for Doug Harris
☎ 01454 261557

Please note that Letti Tooke no longer has an e-mail address.

THE COTTAGE WORK WEEKEND was a great success and the following jobs were undertaken:

- Skirtings and door frames painted in toilets
- Kitchen cleaned
- Window frames in lounge undercoated
- Porch plastered
- Drains unblocked
- Gutters cleaned
- A birthday barrel was consumed and a brilliant barbecue and party was had by all - *thanks to Linda Milne and friends.*

An invitation from the Social Secretary to *YOU* for the:
MCG CHRISTMAS DINNER
DECEMBER 8TH 2001

Due to the foot and mouth the annual dinner this year has been changed to a Christmas dinner. The venue is still the Cox's Mill, Cheddar, and accommodation is available at a reduced price of £15 per person per night. Please contact Cox's Mill direct on 01934 742346 for your accommodation bookings.

All the cheques that were received for the March dinner have been destroyed because they were out of date. Please re-order your meal and send a new cheque payable to: **Mendip Caving Group**. The menus and cheques must be returned to me no later than **8th November 2001**. Transport will be arranged at a later date.

A separate menu is enclosed with this newsletter. Please highlight your choice(s) and return it with a cheque to Lynn Furneaux at the address at the bottom of the menu.

MCG's 50th ANNIVERSARY

February 2004 will be MCG's 50th Anniversary. It is only 2½ years away which isn't long if we want to plan and organise some really memorable events. I would like members old and new to come up with ideas for things we can do to celebrate our 50 years as a Group. On the last members weekend some really good ideas were suggested and these included:

- A very special '50th Anniversary' dinner in February 2004.
A Group trip abroad - somewhere where members (and their families) can go caving, walking, touring etc. France or Slovenia has been suggested so far.
- A week at the cottage in Spring with various meets and events taking place for members to come to for as little or as long as they like.
- A day or weekend for the 'Old Gits' (Tony's words, not mine!) to come and re-kindle old friendships, swap caving stories, wallow in nostalgia, sing the old caving songs, visit the old cottage in the minorities etc.
- An MCG Tea Party with sandwiches, scones and cream, fairy cakes, and tea - invite other clubs and maybe have a game of cricket or rounders. (*We do have a reputation to keep up!*)
- A photo wall with contributions from members old and new.
- A function involving the Velvet Bottom Band.

Also, I plan (and have already started) to produce a Special Publication to celebrate the Group's 50 years which will start with a potted history of the Group - how it got started, tackle, huts, digs, expeditions, anecdotes, photos etc. I hope to include much more but **need your help**. If any member has anything of interest they would like included in this publication please contact me (see p.2) - *the sooner the better.*

Yvonne Rowe, Editor



from The Sun newspaper

SMALLCLEUGH LEAD MINE, NENTHEAD NORTHERN PENNINES - 21.7.01

Team: Ten Grampian Speleological Group members, plus...
MCG members Julie Hesketh, Tim Francis, Martin and Yvonne Rowe.

As there were so many of us we decided it would be best if we split into two groups and do the planned round trip in opposite directions to each other, meeting up and crossing in the Ballroom Flats. Our trip (MCG plus 4 GSG) was to take us to Ballroom Flats via some of the 22,430 feet long Horse Level, on to Wheel Flats, then out along a different level that I can't remember the name of.

The entrance to Smallcleugh Mine is a beautifully worked stone arched tunnel in the side of the hill. Next to this entrance once stood a building that housed the offices and drying rooms. Throughout the mine, many of the tunnels are supported with arches of small, narrow, neat slabs of dressed stone. The overall effect looks very skillful and artistic. Apparently the lower level of the mine was used by trainees to learn and practice this skill with, oddly, stone brought in from elsewhere. The tunnels that are un-lined are rough-hewn, fairly well shaped and arched, squared, or, as in one near the entrance, coffin-shaped! In one section of the mine (not visited by us that day) the ground was so broken up and unstable that it could only be held by very narrow span arching and careful backing. In some tunnels we went along there was solid rock at one side of the tunnel with stone arching supporting the other side and the roof. This is due to the tunnel being driven along the footwall of the vein.

There are three main levels to the mine (I think) and at frequent intervals along the way are very long, narrow shafts going either up or down. 'As most of the veins were nearly vertical, they were worked out upwards by a process known as stoping. As the stoping increases in height, a strong floor of big timber is put across it, above which the stope can be continued. A chute is built at one side, down which the ore is dropped into wagons in the drawing level' (*Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner*). These well preserved timber ore chutes appear at very frequent intervals (every 10 metres or so), particularly along the Horse Level. The ore would go off to nearby Rampgill Mill for dressing (crushing and picking) before going on to Nenthead Smelt Mill. Some of the rails and sleepers are still present along the levels, and at Wheel Flats there is the remains of one of the small wagons used to transport the ore.

Ballroom Flats looks like its name suggests - a very high, long and wide 'cavern'. We assumed it was where miners went for lunch and imagined tables and benches etc. but it was simply where there had been a concentration of horizontal veins of lead ore, the 'flats' being the area left after all the ore was taken out. Wheel Flats is similar but not on such a grand scale.

Although we had planned a round trip, we found the level we were to return via was a bit too wet. Some of the tunnels had water that was wellie-deep here and there, but in this one the water got deeper and deeper - almost up to armpits, so we opted to return via the Horse Level. This also explained why we had to wait so long to meet up with the other team in Ballroom Flats as they had to abandon their plan almost at the start. They started their trip via this wet level but had to return to the entrance and continue via the Horse Level, so ended up doing a similar trip to us.

The mines have unlimited access and you can plan trips that bring you out at different adits. There is much of interest in the mines and you can spend hours exploring the different levels, shafts, tunnels, graffiti, industrial archaeology etc. There is a show mine and museum, and

there are professionally led tourist trips into one of the mines (helmets and overalls provided). There is also a shop and a cafe. There is a wealth of mining-related industrial archaeology to be seen above ground and this is all being either restored or tidied and made safe.

Anyone interested in mines and/or industrial archaeology will enjoy a weekend exploring above and below ground here. There are bunkhouses on site and in Nenthead village, and a campsite only a few miles away. There are also two pubs (with some interesting mining photographs around the walls), and a resthouse for the over 60s!! Martin and I will be happy to arrange a trip down the mines if anyone is interested, but give us plenty of notice so we have time to organise surveys, accommodation etc.

A few historical facts for those who are interested:

- ◇ Bouse - anything containing ore. If the bouse was lumpy it would be taken to the 'knockstone' where boys and women used a spalling hammer to break off obvious pieces of stone, or a bucker to break it down to a gravel size suitable for either stamps or roller crushers. When the bouse had been reduced to a small uniform size through crushing rollers it was then subjected to several processes of washing to get rid of spars and stone leaving clean smitham (or smiddam). Power to drive the rollers was provided by a water wheel. The smitham would then go through a series of other processes like a succession of trommels (large sieves with different sized perforations) and more crushing as necessary. At nearly every stage of the washing some of the finest ore was carried off in the wash water so settling tanks (trunks) were used which required constant stirring - a job done by boys. The sludge (slimes) from the trunks was treated in buddles where the ore sunk and the lighter spars, stone and clay were washed away. The dressed ore was taken to the smelt mill where the metallic lead was extracted and refined into a merchantable form. It went from here to markets or to depots from where it was collected by or dispatched to customers. Smelting was originally done in open, wind-blown fires on hillsides (bail hills or boles) and were followed by small blast furnaces, then ore hearths which were used in the Northern mining field up to the present century (*Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner*).
- ◇ The sudden fall in the price of lead over the years 1880-82 caused a recession from which the lead miners never recovered : many mines closed permanently. Comparison between the census returns for 1871 and 1891 reveals a decline of 40-50% in the population of the Northern Pennines (*Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner*).
- ◇ There is some evidence for Roman mining in the area and documentation for mining in the thirteenth century, and later.
- ◇ Calcium carbide was first discovered in 1862 and came into general use for lighting after a cheap, American method of production in the 1890s. Carbide lamps gave about 10 times more light than candles. Carbide lamps were gradually replaced by electric lamps in the 1940s (*Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner*).

by Yvonne Rowe

COTTAGE BOOKINGS

Sat 22nd - Fri 28th September	BTCV	(16)
Fri 12th - Sun 14th October	First Bookham Scouts	(12)

SHUTE SHELVE CAVERN

Sunday 5th August 2001

Doug Harris, Mick Norton MCG/ACG, Alan Gray ACG, Geoff Beale MCG.

I am not sure whether or not this was an ACG trip with me as guest or a MCG trip with Alan Gray as guest.

We all met in a lay-by above AXBRIDGE with fine views across the Somerset levels to the Quontock Hills. The walk to SHUTE SHELVE CAVERN is up a vague footpath through woods on the hillside to a line of shake hole depressions about 50 metres from the top of the hill.

The first depression met is fenced off and contains a steel tripod over a 13 metre deep shaft. This is currently being dug by DH, MN and the ACG. This is called CARCASE CAVE from the bovine remains found within the depression.

10 metres to the left is another shake hole also being dug by this team.

The entrance to SHUTE SHELVE CAVERN is about 30 metres away from these digs and on the same hill contour. It was found and first entered by miners in the 1920's when they were searing for ochre.

The entrance is a 2 metre depression which immediately trends inwards towards the hill. A rather dead black sheep guards the entrance depression on the left. A locked steel gate is then reached. Access is controlled by the ACG.

Straight on after the gate led to a tight squeeze (for me!) that was subsequently modified by lowering the hard packed sand/mud floor by 100mm to enable me to pass. A further squeeze 2 metres later was another rib tickler!

A scramble through a low bouldery crawl led to a section of passage where vertical caving techniques (I could stand upright) took over.

A small vertical hole here on the right hand side gave good views of stained crystals.

Downwards led to REYNARD CHAMBER where some good stained formations were seen the other side of access tapes. REYNARD CHAMBER was named after fox bones were found there.

Pit Prop Passage led off from the top of REYNARD CHAMBER and was thought to be the original miners' entrance, now lost on the hillside.

To the left of REYNARD CHAMBER a complicated corkscrew manoeuvre led to CORKSCREW DROP and into the FLAT ROOM. The cave continued steeply down dip at about 45° for over 30 metres passing over large boulders and scrambling climbs. This large passage was known as BOX TUNNEL.

At the bottom was a long term dig to search for the way forward.

Scallop marks on the walls and roof showed that a large underground river had once passed this way. A short passage half way down Box Tunnel led to ELM STREET where another dig was under way.

This trip was a working trip to conduct a smoke test to ascertain if there was a connection between the dig site, ELM STREET or the surface shake hole digs mentioned earlier.

A bag of dry straw was duly set alight in the dig and the smoke given off was watched for signs of air flow.

The party went to see ELM HOLE and to try to detect smoke but none was smelt. Back in the main passage (BOX TUNNEL) we found a dense fog/smog leading upwards and outwards towards the FLAT ROOM and Corkscrew Drop. It was disconcerting trying to find your way out of a strange cave whilst enveloped in thick smoke.

Once through CORKSCREW SQUEEZE the smoke was left behind. Some photos were taken in REYNARD CHAMBER, before tackling the rib tickler squeeze seen earlier, to exit the cave after about 2 hours underground.

I enjoyed by first Mendip Cave this year and it was good to see a new cave (to me anyway). I think I still have withdrawal symptoms for SWILDONS HOLE.

GEOFF BEALE

NEW MCG ROPE

When I took over as tacklemaster I was given 250 metres of new Beal Dynamic rope in 50 metre lengths. I did not know what lengths were finally intended so I decided to simply replace the lengths that have recently been taken out of service (ropes A, D, I, L, P AND Q). Ropes U, V and W are new designations being the 'offcuts' of A, D and I. This means that all lifeline rope is less than 3 years old. The rope has been pre-shrunk and, at the moment, labelled at one end only so it can be logged out and used. The other end will also be labelled but when I have more time.

The new lengths are now in the tacklestore and are as follows:-

Rope A	38 metres
Rope D	40 metres
Rope I	36 metres
Rope L	15 metres
Rope P	32 metres
Rope Q	50 metres
Rope U	10 metres
Rope V	12 metres
Rope W	14 metres

Martin Rowe, Tacklemaster

IN BUCOLIC NORMANDY, THE EARTH IS PLUNGING

Neuville-sur-Authou, France - Sébastien Elerbach was finishing dinner at his sister's renovated Norman farmhouse when a thunderous crash erupted in the backyard. Dashing out the door to investigate, he plunged into oblivion. Mr. Elerbach, who was 24, was buried alive in a 40-foot-deep hole that had not been there a few seconds earlier. One corner of the house was suddenly hanging over a vortex of collapsing earth that became deeper and wider by the minute. Despite frantic excavation for weeks after the collapse on March 31, his body was never recovered.

Like a curse in some summer horror novel, hundreds of craters and fissures have been cracking open all over the bucolic expanses of eastern Normandy - in farm fields, in gardens, in the middle of roads and sometimes right under houses. The reason is what French call "marnières" - abandoned and forgotten underground chalk quarries that have been lying dormant deep below farm land for more than a century. Their entrances plowed over decades ago, their locations rarely documented on any maps, the old caverns and tunnels had receded from almost everybody's awareness. Until this spring.

Because of some of the heaviest rainfall in decades, water began melting the aging chalk pillars and ceilings as if they were soap in a bathtub. In March and April, about 20 craters were opening every day. Government officials were forced to condemn 20 houses and order their residents to evacuate. One person drove his car into a crater that had just opened up in the middle of road. And one person, Mr. Elerbach, was killed. The implosions have abated as drier weather has returned, but problems are just beginning. Government officials estimate that Normandy is riddled with about 140,000 forgotten caverns and tunnels. Many are as small as closets, but others are labyrinths, and a few have chambers as big as ballrooms. And all of them are crumbling. "All of the marnières will collapse at some point, if they are not maintained," said Patrick Lebret, who is in charge of the Normandy region for the national Bureau of Research for Mines and Geology. "It is a question of age, and the rains have accelerated the process."

Unfortunately, with the entrances covered up, nobody knows exactly where most of the old quarries lie. Government records provide little help, because only a tiny fraction of the quarries were ever registered on maps. Partly to evade taxes, most farmers never disclosed their digging to the local building or mining authorities. And many of the quarries were dug long before 1850, when the government first began ordering farmers to register their sites. What people do know is that most of the marnières are between 100 and 400 years old, dug by farmers who excavated chalk and limestone. The farmers used it to reduce the acidity of Normandy's topsoil. The chalk typically lay 10 to 50 yards below the surface, so farmers usually dug narrow vertical shafts and then carved out caverns and corridors. Most of that ended decades ago.

Normandy's character began to change as well, as new housing developments popped up and as the region became a vacation retreat for growing numbers of Parisians. Though local people knew about the marnières, neither construction companies nor government officials made any attempt to locate them and prohibit building over them. "Naturally, we prohibit anyone from building on top of a marnière," said Florence Declerc, mayor of Neuville-sur-Authou. But, she added, the town learned about the existence of its first marnière only this year, and that was the one that killed Mr. Elerbach.

The first signs of trouble surfaced about six years ago, when a handful of holes opened up in residential areas. In 1997, an entire house disappeared into the ground. But it was only this spring when huge cavities started opening up by the hundreds. "It is a veritable plague," said Didier Philippe, director of the land and environment division of the government's public works agency. "It is a problem that has been growing, and I expect it will continue to increase." So far this year, the government has condemned 20 houses and ordered the residents to evacuate. In general, insurance companies are refusing to pay because standard policies cover only "natural catastrophes," and the problems here are considered man-made.

Michel Vanneste and Brigitte Bouillard, who bought a house in the town of Moyoux 20 years ago, were among the victims. Two months ago, the couple were awakened in the middle of the night by loud cracking sounds followed by what sounded like the boom from a cannon. No hole appeared in the house or the yard, but huge cracks began running through the kitchen and then spreading through the house. The local authorities concluded that the foundations were crumbling over a *marnière* and declared the house too dangerous to live in. "The house is dead," Miss Bouillard said. Since April, she and Mr. Vanneste, a house painter, have been living above the local schoolhouse in a small apartment that has been provided at no cost by the city. But the apartment is too tiny for their furniture or even their appliances, so Miss Bouillard goes to the old house everyday to do her washing. "It would be less expensive for us to buy a new piece of land and build a new house than it would be to have this piece of land filled in and the house repaired," Miss Bouillard said. "We lost our health in this affair, and we are wondering what is going to happen to us."

City officials are ordering them to pay for a full geologic investigation, which would cost about 57,000 francs, or \$7,600. Actually repairing or filling the old cavities could easily cost more than \$100,000, according to S O S *Marnière*, an association of victims. Jasmond Beurferrey, who lives with her husband, Jean, on a tiny farm plot near the town of Bernay, now lives with a 30-foot crater about 20 yards behind the house. "For two days, it was like thunder rumbling in our backyard," Mrs. Beurferrey said. "It started about two and a half months ago, and it just grew and grew and grew." Today, the area and the road adjacent to the pit have been sealed off with barbed wire by the authorities.

André Lecoq, a retired factory worker, is trying to figure out if he has a problem or not. Two months ago, a five-foot crater opened up in his neighbor's front yard. The crater is less than 10 feet from the wall of his own house, but the city has no record of any quarry at all, and it is anybody's guess whether the cavern extends beneath his house. But even those who are lucky enough to find quarry maps for their property have a big challenge. André Denouette, a retired firefighter in the town of Bourghtheroulde and a co-founder of S O S *Marnière*, was surprised by a small crater in his backyard several years ago. In his case, city archives showed that there was a maze of corridors that cut diagonally across his backyard and right next to his 200-year-old farmhouse. Mr. Denouette would like to fill up the old quarry with concrete, but he cannot come close to raising enough money. He would consider moving, but nobody will buy his house, and he cannot afford to pay rent as well as the remainder of his mortgage.

Political leaders from this region are pushing proposals in Parliament that would compensate homeowners if their property is condemned as a result of a *marnière*. Even homeowners who have big reasons to worry are doing little to have their land investigated. "It would cost huge amounts of money, and it would not be conclusive," said André Jejeux, who moved into a sumptuous home here less than a year ago. Next door, a couple of hundred yards away, is the pit that still holds the remains of Mr. Elerbach.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

SOMERSET v HITLER - Secret Operations in the Mendips 1939-1945 by Donald Brown

There is a good defence map of Mendip in 1940 showing airfields, AV(U?) bases, BAC factories, gun batteries and pillboxes, plus information on Mendip Home Guard bases. There is a section on Mendip Sea Watch covering the stretch of coast from Avonmouth to Burnham-on-Sea and Bridgewater Bay. It includes photographs of gun emplacements, forts and other defences, plus photographs of wartime adverts and posters.

There is an interesting chapter about how signposts, place names and milestones all vanished in a plan to baffle the invader. The effect was to baffle our own soldiers looking for camps in remote parts of the county. There is a piece on the turf mounds on Blackdown and the stone cairns on all the large fields to prevent enemy aircraft landing. Also, information on those who built them and how they were mobilised and fed etc. There are some amazing photographs of the various ways they tried to fool the enemy and a section on the Home Guard and their role in the war effort.

There is a chapter on the underground army and their network of secret underground Operational Bases and, as you'd expect, most Mendip units adapted existing caves or mines as hide-sets. This is an interesting chapter with lots of photographs. Another chapter tells of training to defend Mendip and how they practiced throwing hand grenades Ebbor Gorge.

Other chapters include The Secret Army, Wartime Life, Digging for Victory, The Threat From the Air and, the most interesting bit for me, Starfish Ward (Blackdown Starfish City) with photographs of the replica of Bristol that appeared on Blackdown, complete with streets, railway station and lights. Also, lots of other related photographs.

This is a very interesting book with a wealth of fascinating photographs, maps, anecdotes and tales of heroism - and more.

Yvonne Rowe

There are two Irish additions to the library this month; a very useful Map of the Burren and a booklet Classic Landforms of the Burren Karst, by David Drew, published by the Geographical Association, 2001. This booklet is one of a series on Classic landforms (which also includes the White Peak, and Morecambe Bay, both of which contain tracts of limestone). It is illustrated with clear maps and photographs. The early part of the book is about the geological history of the Burren. There were at least two periods of glaciation which have affected the landform and subsequent cave development. The eight-page chapter on the Caves of the Burren include descriptions of the Polldubh system (a young, active cave associated with the limestone/shale boundary) and Ailwee Cave (an ancient complex system with significant breakdown and sediment infill which is currently being removed by later streams which have invaded the passages). As a one-time geologist I found this book extremely interesting - enough to lure me back to County Clare with a pair of good walking boots and a cagoul as well as caving kit.

Newsletter 3 of the Cave Photography Group, June 2001, is the first they have produced in colour. It contains a colourfully illustrated report on the March field meet in the Yorkshire Dales together with a couple articles on stereoscopic cave photographs and methods of viewing them. The text of the newsletter is superimposed on a background of cave formation photos, which I found a little confusing (but then, I am almost an OLD PERSON). However, this publication is to be commended and I await the next issue, due in September, with interest.

Caves and Caving (double Spring/Summer issue) contains a major (15pp) section on Dan-yr-Ogof - well worth reading.

We have a video containing footage on London Underground (Merstham Mines and another mine 'under the downs'), Priddy - a Mendip Tale (including Priddy Fair and a trip into Swildons by BEC and Wessex members.) and a '999' rescue of French cavers.

Joan Goddard