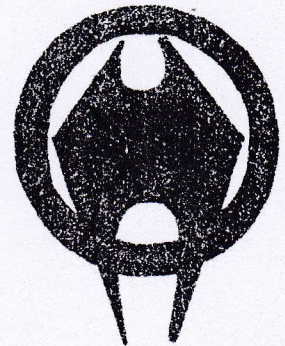


Ian Mitchell
Tatfield

SECRET TUNNELS
IN SURREY

CHELSEA
SPELEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



RECORDS VOL. 3

LOC

551.4

FIG. 1. GEOLOGICAL MAP OF SURREY.

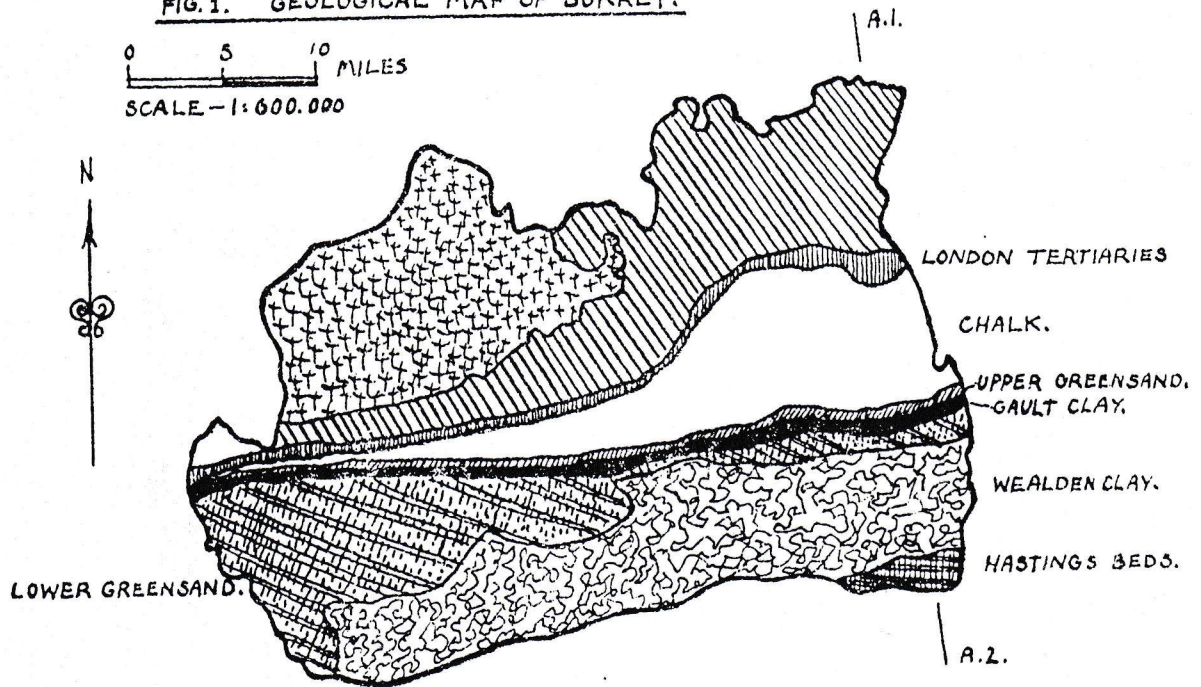
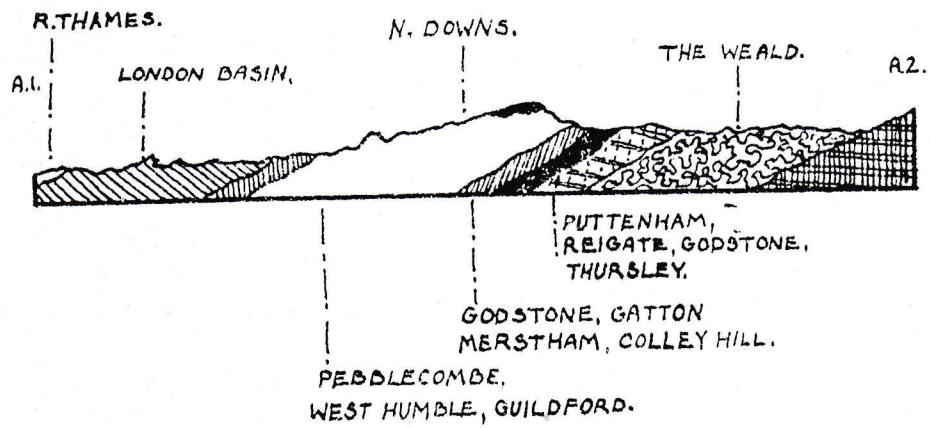


FIG. 2. CROSS SECTION OF FIG. 1.



expected, such as those in Esher High Street, and they get blocked again very quickly. Record the type of rock, features on the walls, such as pick marks, inscriptions and dates. Note the shape of the passage and draw a location map. Make a rough survey by pacing or, better still, using a compass and tape. We shall be pleased to publish details of any fresh finds and can arrange for the identification of bats, insects, pottery, bones and fossils.

The address of the Society is c/o The Chelsea Community Centre, 385 Kings Road, Chelsea, London S.W.10.

GEOLOGY

There are ample publications which give full details of the geology of the County, so no separate description is given here. A geological map is included, however, to show the distribution of the most notable sites. The plan and cross sections show that it is the scarp face of the North Downs that has attracted the tunnellers, as adit mining is so much more easy than mining from the bottom of shafts.

ABBREVIATIONS

- B.C. "British Caver" published and edited by Gerard Platten of Rotherfield, Fernhill Lane, New Milton, Hants.
- Brayley. Edward Wodlake Brayley, "A topographical History of Surrey" 1841.
- C.R.G. Cave Research Group of Great Britain.
- C.S.S. Chelsea Speleological Society.
- L.S.G. London Speleological Group
- M.C.G. Mendip Caving Group
- N.G.R. National Grid Reference.
- P.G.S. Proceedings of the Geological Society.
- S.A.C. "Surrey Archeological Collections" published by the Surrey Archeological Society.
- W.C.C. Wessex Cave Club.

Refs: Gibson's Camden's Brittanica p. 187.

Bray "Surrey" Vol II p. 649.

Defoe "Tour through Great Britain" Vol I pp. 218-9
3rd ed. 1742.

Child "Gentleman's Magazine" May 1763.

Brayley Vol I pp. 171-183.

Ansted "Water and Water Supply."

SHERE

There is said to be a tunnel a quarter of a mile long in Albury Park near Shere at SU 0648. Said to have been dug by the poet John Evelyn.

TATSFIELD

The village of Tatsfield, 2½ miles to the North East of Westerham, lies just within the County boundary, which makes a special loop to encompass the parish. It was here in May 1959 that members of C.S.S. interviewed the Rector about rumours of secret tunnels.

The church stands on top of a hill but the village has slowly migrated downhill away from it, possibly in search of water, so that now it stands alone in the fields. It goes back to at least 1000 A.D. and shows the influence of many periods of architecture.

The church is so interesting that it is worth a digression from the main theme of these records to describe it. The walls are largely composed of flint blocks with lime mortar with other blocks of what seems to be Kentish Ragstone embedded in it. These have probably come from the tunnels on Hosey Common to the South of Westerham. These tunnels are well worth a visit at N.G.R. TQ 454530 and are quite accessible, but being in Kent are not described here.

To return to the church, a tower, a new entrance and additions at either end seem to have been added since it was built. Part of the floor was raised in Victorian times and the altar has been shifted from two-thirds of the way down the aisle to the end of it. Various old doorways are bricked up. One window is definitely Norman, another low down, is thought to have been a confessional for Canterbury pilgrims. An underground passage is alleged to go from the North side of the church, where no one except a previous Rector is buried, to a house called Colegates, which is believed to be as old as the church.

This is to the North of the church and about a third of a mile away. There is supposed to be a bricked-off extension to the cellar of Colegates but the owner is not keen to have it examined.

Allegedly there is a further passage from Monks Cottages. These are more recent but are built on the site of other older cottages.

One last point of interest. The Rector pointed out a clump of trees in a field and said that these are the site of the old rectory. They are right on the line of the alleged passage. Back at the rectory a map was examined and showed that the field with the trees is called Rectory Field.

THURSLEY COMMON

Position: N.G.R. SU 905399. Not easy to find. Proceed along the A3 from Guildford. A few miles beyond Milford, just before the Red Lion Garage a road leads off to the right, signposted Thursley. 150 yards along the road is a sign saying Thursley and 50 paces beyond this a 30 m.p.h. speed limit sign. Midway between the two signs, a track crosses the road. Turn right along the track (Fig 25). The first part of the track is a drive leading to some houses on the left. 168 paces from the road, just beyond the edge of the fence surrounding the houses, another track crosses at an angle. Continue another 90 paces beyond this, still on the same track to a point just beyond a small birch tree on the left. Turn left at right angles and walk across the Common for 37 paces to a small depression. The entrance leads out of this.

The passage is a crawl throughout its length for about 50 ft. with short tight branches. Its origin is a complete mystery; were it not in sandstone one might be tempted to think it was natural. Digging out the other side of the depression might produce an extension for the present entrance seems to have been caused by a collapse. In the original notes by H.J. Bunce in L.S.G. Records Vol. 1 it was stated, "Rumours of bigger things in this area are being followed up and discoveries are expected soon." The result of these enquiries is not known.

WADDON

At about the turn of the century an excavation at Waddon near Croydon in the grounds of Waddon House broke into three underground chambers. They were clearly not natural but were evidently of some antiquity for the floors were about 16 ft. below present ground level.