

MENDIP CAVEING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 4JUNE 1954The Whitsun Meet

...by Malcolm Cotter

A slightly larger party than at Easter spent a very wet weekend at Whitsun, and it continued wet for four of us who remained the rest of the week. It was lucky that we had no overcrowding in our five tents. We were however able to make some interesting trips and put some more work in at the dig. We were awoken at various times by a blast from Mike, which became more and more explosive, and could in no way be attributed to a musical instrument.

Those present were; Tony Crawford, Anthony Taylor (Ant), Dennis Hemmings, Mike Burbridge, Tony Knibbs, George Pape and Malcolm Cotter.

Long Wood Swallet 5:6:54

As George had just arrived he decided not to come down with us. The path up Long Wood was dry after a drought which was to be broken before the night was out. Tony Knibbs and I decided to go ahead and see if the entrance shaft required a rope. We found the shaft easy enough to negotiate but at the bottom was a very contorted bedding which looked so tight that I wondered if I had taken the wrong direction. I had seen no alternative route so far so I decided to continue on my stomach to an "S" bend. By this time we were all strung out along the cave. After another squeeze this time through a pipe we came to a short pitch of ten feet which had a fixed rope ladder. At the bottom was a chamber and a choice of direction.

From one way we could hear the sound of sushing water so we went through a heavy drip to investigate. A small waterfall came out of a narrow tunnel and splashed on down a very wet locking rift. We presumed this to be August hole entrance and to make sure Tony Knibbs went forward to investigate, while I took the large dry way with Ant. (Tony had a waterproof suit, until he went on). We soon realised that we were in the Long Wood Section when we reached what was obviously the Great Rift. We returned a little way and were joined by the others. At the end of the Great Rift a stagmite covered slope with a heavy drip falling on it led down to a narrow choked rift which we scrambled down, squeezing between boulders until we came to a high wide passage with a stream flowing over bare rock. The passage continued large until it suddenly ended in a vertical drop with blackness in front, at the edge of the Great Chamber. With more lights we could look down on a huge boulder-strewn chamber. I belayed a rope and started to descend on the right. Immediately I found myself on a ledge and was able to make more headway, by dispensing with the rope. The traverse led to an easy descent at one side of the Chamber. Tony Crawford absailed down beneath the water and got soaked through!

/At the base.....

At the base of the chamber was a boulder choke with no way on. We then heard a shout from Ant who had climbed up a steep mass of rubble reached a wide hole some ten feet deep, climbed down and found a passage. We placed a waist loop round a rock and joined him.

The passage became a crawl until it widened just before a small pot hole, which was shortly followed by another. The water then bounded into a narrow fissure above which was a dry passage. At the end of the dry passage I could hear water before having to return with lighting trouble. Ant found the wet way closed down too much so we retreated to the great chamber. Some of us climbed a steep slope to a grotto in the side of the great chamber which contained some good stalactites. The return was slow owing to some difficulties near the entrance. We had spent about four and a half hours underground.

### Burrington Coombe

On Monday the weather cleared a little so we decided to go to Burrington, as Tony Crawford and Ant. had to start back home that evening they set out ahead of our second party made up of Tony Knibbs, George and I.

The route to Burrington led past G.B. and over Blackdown. The west twin brook was running a good volume of water and was the wettest that Tony had seen it.

We changed at the entrance to Goatchurch Cavern and then entered. Inside we met Tony Crawford and Ant. who were on their way out and going to Sidcot Swallet. Tony Knibbs led George and I to the deepest point and we examined each passage on the way out. We had an interesting half hour in the maze before exhausting it and came out via the Badger hold entrance.

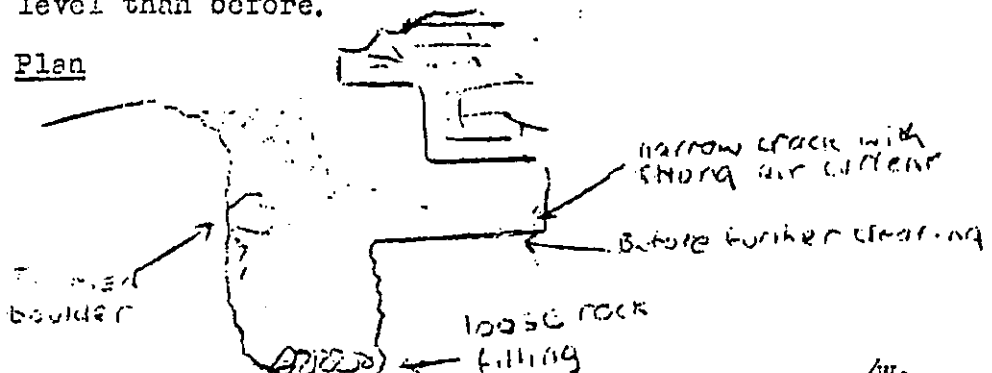
After having tea in Burrington the three of us got drenched in a storm over Blackdown, for a change it was wetter outside than in!

### The Dig

Work on the dig over the August was restricted very much owing to the weather conditions. Over the Bank Holiday Mike and Tony Crawford made some attempts at blasting.

Later on in the week the four of us who remained set about excavating the entrance and were able to reach a lower level than before.

### Plan



We now have a shaft of about 20 feet deep which is developing in much the same way as Eastwater and Long Wood, on a **Cross Joint**.

We spoke to the farmer's son from Charterhouse Warren Farm and he told us that the hold had been cleared twice before. This time we must leave no rock un-blasted!

#### The Hon. Treasurer

Owing to the fact that work has taken Geoff. Wingrove away from home he has been unable to check his list of members' addresses. The next newsletter should also show an account of finances which are in the region of 25.

#### Tackle Situation

The tackle situation has much improved. We have over 500 feet of various types of rope, other climbing gear and excavating tackle. Geoff. Wingrove has 550 feet of **Natural lay** aero cable for ladders. Tony Crawford is ordering alloy for rungs and has prepared gigs etc. so before long we should have 250 feet of the best tackle.

#### August Meet

The August Camp will be held on piney Sleight and will probably commence two weeks before and finish two weeks after the Bank Holiday. Please inform me of your intentions, so that arrangements may be made. The August Meet will also be the best time for a general meeting which will be held when all those going have arrived.

#### Introduction of New Members

The group membership has now reached such that all members cannot possibly meet at the same time. A small meeting held a few weeks earlier temporarily decided that any interested person should apply to the Hon. Secretary for membership, and in reply receive an application for membership form. The form should have two signatures of members. Enclosed also should be the subscriptions due. This has been proposed to safeguard the group from undesirable characters and to keep a record of members' addresses etc. The question will be further discussed at August.,

#### Caveing Expeditions

In order to keep more active it has been proposed to announce when various members intend to go caveing in following newsletters. This is so that individuals unaware of others going can join a party. All times and dates should be sent to the Hon. Sec.

SOME KNOTS.....by Tony Crawford

APPENDIX TO  
NEWSLETTER 4  
DATED JUNE 54

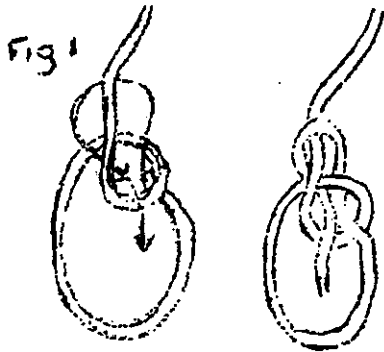


Fig.1 Ordinary Bowline

Used for leaders (1)  
endmen (2)  
safety lines (3)

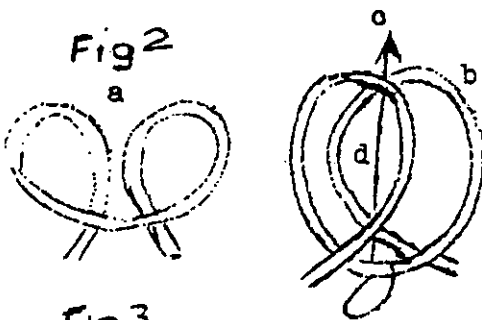


Fig.2 Manhamess.

Pull c through middle loop d, the loop pulled through being the waist loop for a middle man. The two slip knots formed this way, must be one above the other or the knot will slip. This knot's use is only warranted if the rope is not long enough for a Bowline in the bight.

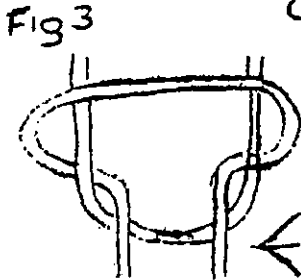


Fig.3

This knot is used for joining two wet or dry ropes of EQUAL thicknesses.

Fig 4

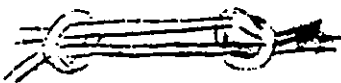


Fig.4 Fisherman's Knot

This is used for joining two ropes of unequal thickness.

Fig 5



Fig.5

When a is finally taken to point b on a Safety line it is wise to use the remainder of b1 to take a single hitch round point near a. This is a safeguard on a wet rope. This way of doing a double bowline is old and really out of date, but is useful all the same.