

M E N D I P C A V I N G G R O U PNews-sheet No.6

December 1961

SLIDE SHOW. This is to be held at Stirrup Cup Cafe on Saturday December 9th at 7.30. pm. It is hoped that as many members as possible will be present. Other caving clubs and local residents have been invited. A meeting of members who have colour transparencies of Mendip, above and below, has taken place and the better slides selected.

JUMBLE SALE The annual Jumble Sale was held at Ealing Town Hall on Saturday December 2nd. Despite some anxious moments as to the amount of Jumble available before the date we had more than last year. The profits amounted to just over £ 15.0.0.

St CUTHBERTS TRIP. A trip down St Cuthberts on Nov. 26th was arranged and supported by Simon Knight, Len Arnold and Robert Hill.

HILLERS CAVE Contact has been made with those in control and a trip is to take place on Sunday December 10th.

CAVE LEADERS. Will any members who are prepared to lead novices down specific caves please contact the Meet Secretary.

COOPERS HOLE There has been good progress on the digging of this cave. The passage is being widened ready for the rails from Brownes Hole.

RESCUE EQUIPMENT. If a fully equipped cave rescue outfit is to be kept at the cottage, it is estimated that the cost will be in the region of £20. It has been decided that the expense is fully justified.

TAKE IT - AS YOU WISH"There is not much use in going caving, just for the sake of going caving". quote - Hon. Sec.

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS. The following names will be coming forward for Membership in the near future. Ron Baker, James Gibb and Alan Cowley.

FULL MEMBERS. The following are now full members of the M.C.G. Simon Knight, Ted Gabb, Robert Templeman and Ian Leake.

WITHYBROOK SLOCKER. A party consisting of Mike Rennie, Alan Cowley and Geoff Davies surveyed this cave to C.R.G. Grade 5. Depth 70ft. Length 130 Feet.

NEW DISCOVERY. Dave Mitchell and Alan Cowley have discovered a well decorated grotto near Brownes Hole. Malcolm Cotter and James Gibb have surveyed it with Dave and a number of photographs have been taken Length is about 100 ft. Alan and Dave have also extended one of the passages in Brownes.

OVERHEARD "I'm prepared to dig Coopers every week-end." Simon.

HUNTING LODGE This dig needs diggers. A hole about 12ft in diam. and nearly 40ft deep on Eastern Mendip. Winch already fitted. Contact Dave Mitchell.

DIGGING HANDLES. Dave has made a large number, if one brakes. please do not on any account burn it out.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING This meeting was held at the Cottage on Saturday 4th November at 6.15 pm. Peter Goddard was in the chair. The minutes of the previous E.G.M. were read and passed as true record.

Secretary's Report. Rob Charnock reported that Membership Cards had been issued to all members. No report had as yet been received from the British Museum re-Ubley Skull, except that they had accepted it for exhibition. Pinetree Pot. The keys had been offered to other clubs of which two had accepted. A barrier had been placed in Moonlight Grotto to protect the formations. Party As so few guests had attended it was advised that a different form be followed in future years. Whistle Signals. 22 clubs had been written to on this matter. 17 used only 3, 1 used two, 1 used rope signals, 1 always shouted.

Most clubs think four unwise and advise shouting when possible. C.R.G. A.G.M. To be held at Bristol on 11th November. M.C.G. to propose member for Committee. Postal vote after meeting.

Charterhouse Caving Committee nothing had happened. G.B. Cave No special dates now, keys on application for any week-end, unless already booked up. Discount A.J. Millbank had now gone out of business but an alternative was possible. Photographs of Pinetree. On a suggestion from the Meet Secretary the Secretary was to arrange that such photographs be sent to Mr Brown, the owner of the land.

Treasurers' Report. John Barker reported that the total funds now stood at £ 130. 2. 3. £122. 1.10. of which was in the Cottage Purchase Fund. Although the General Fund seemed rather low, there was no need to worry as it was merely seasonal. Yearly subscriptions would soon raise it to its normal level.

Recent expenses included Tackle (much of the material for the new equipment had been paid for), Building Materials, Cottage Expenses and Administration i.e. Printing, Postage etc. An average of 12/- per week had been collected at Thursday Meetings.

Editors Report. Mike Rennie reported that five monthly news-sheets had been produced. A report of the clubs activities now appeared weekly in the Middlesex County Times. The surveys of Goatchurch were now becoming popular. Most of the articles for the Journal were now in and it was expected to have it ready for binding in January. The survey of Longwood/August was expected to be on the market in January. Expenses on this last survey had risen to some £70 over the two years, although the Editor wished to bear this cost in full a proposal by Malcolm Cotter that the club give the Editor £5 was seconded by Tony Knibbs and passed. Richard Woollacott congratulated the Editor on the content & publication of the news-sheet.

Meet Secretary's Report Access to St Cuthberts had now been gained and it was hoped to make it a regular contact. Tony Knibbs also reported that two trips had been made down Lamb Leer. As yet attempts to enter Hillers and Fairy Caves were unsuccessful. Tankard Pot was to be locked and it was suggested that B.E.C. be approached re-access. There had been a demand for trips to other areas. At Easter a Devon Meet was to be

organised. Other meets were to be organised to tackle Eastgill/Lancaster, Gaping Gill, Giants and Eldons and O.F.D. The latter to take place on 22/24th Feb. On Mendip a Swildons' LV trip was to be organised.

A great deal of digging needed to be done, Jack Green was to lead the work on Coopers. It was hoped to start the dig on Hill Farm in the new year. Any member who had suggestions for other trips was to contact the Club Secretary. Last summer three foreign trips were organised, in Austria, the French Alps and the Pyrennes, and another to Eire. This year Yugoslavia, Ireland, France and Austria had already been suggested. It was thought one large expedition be preferable to a number of small ones. Tony spoke at some length on Cave Rescue and mentioned a meeting he had attended on behalf of the club in Bristol and suggested methods. The London Cave Rescue Organisation had been formed to deal with outside large rescues. He stressed the need for the instruction of members in rescue methods, and the setting up of an adequate set of rescue equipment at the Cottage.

Tackle Master's Report. Jack Green reported that 250 ft of ladder was to be made in the near future. The question of spacing was not yet settled and the club was to be asked before construction was begun. A Tackle Box had been placed in the Cottage with enough tackle to cover most Mendip caves. Members were to notify Tackle Master of any defects. The construction of "Nebbly Dogs" was to be discussed.

Cottage Warden's Report. Don Dovaston reported that the distempering of the roof of the cottage was now well underway, The screen for the middle room had been started, Fire Buckets were coming and the possibility of Fire Extinguishers was to be looked into. He asked the club to help keep the cottage tidy, especially the end room and requested that all members keep their gear in the loft between week-ends, with the exception perhaps of sleeping gear. In the future it was hoped to allocate a space in the loft to each member who kept gear at the cottage. Members etc were asked not to smoke in the bedrooms. Food should be kept in steel containers. Wastepaper baskets were to be introduced in the near future.

A.O.D. A proposal by letter by John Rutherford that Prospective Members should have a right of appeal was not seconded.

A proposal that half yearly meetings always be held, made by Richard Woollacott, was passed unan. and the Constitution~~x~~ duly ammended.

A proposal that "All ~~xxxxxxx~~ proposals to changes in the Constitution and Rules be notified to the Hon Secretary at least 14 days before the date of a General Meeting and circulated to members. Any member requiring a Postal Vote to apply to Committee with reasons." was passed unan.

All were in wholehearted agreement that Fred Young of Lower Farm be elected an Honary Member of M.C.G.

THURSDAY TALKS. Thursday 21st December. Mig and Jack on Cave First Aid. Thursday 28th December. Mike on the August/Longwood System.

PRIMROSE POT. Eastwater Swallet. On Sunday 19th November Scruff(John Rutherford) and Geoff Davies attempted the Primrose. Scruff has sent us the following report. The cave was entered about 11.15 am with a party of 4 Scruff, Geoff, Brian Pittman and Jim Nuttal carrying 200 ft of ladder, 300ft rope and 42 ft of teather. As none of the party had first hand knowledge of what was involved it was necessary to err on the side of taking too much gear rather than not quite enough. We went across the Upper Traverse, straight down the Primrose Path, whipping through Hallelujah Hole(Simon please note) and came to the part of the passage which widens enough to enable all of the party to sit, just before the final tight squeeze. There is a rawbolt in the floor with a karabiner on it(which by great restraint was still there when we left). About half the ladder was unrolled and fixed together. A rope was tied round Scruff's waist. He started down the tight passage feet first. He could not get through with his arms above his head, but only with them pinned to his side. An uneasy moment occurred when his head got stuck. Its not very nice to go down an unknown squeeze, perhaps(for all you know) that comes out over a 180ft drop, and if you do get stuck have no arms to use. By pulling backwards with the toes and wriggling the body the fraction that there is room for(about .002 inches it seems) for about 12 to

15 feet you reach the place where it widens out , enough to allow some body movement. You lie over the 180 ft pot with arms and legs on either side. Its about 2 to 3ft wide. The 200 ft of ladder took about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to get through and Scruff set off to land on the first ledge 32 ft down on top of 165ft of tangled ladder. The ledge is about 15 to 20ft wide. Scruff lowered the ladder down whilst the life line was pulled up for Geoff to follow, but he found the squeeze impossible. Scruff re climbed the ladder to collect the lifeline, and then descended a fairly easy climb to the second ledge another 65ft down. He then picked up the tangled mass of ladder and put it over the 3rd pitch, where there is a rawbolt for ladder. Tight passage between 2nd and 3rd pitches. He went down the 88ft pitch and the rope stuck 30ft from bottom. He tied it to the ladder and carried on without it to reach the bottom for a quick look round. Chamber with small passages going off, none 'go'. He started to climb back, it seemed a hell of a way to the life line at 30ft. Morale was raised as he hooked on and fell when those at the top could not hear the whistle signals. He nearly blew his front teeth out but to know avail, so he climbed the 88ft pitch without a line and felt very shaky at the top. He hauled up the ladder and repeating the process he arrived at the top. If it had not have been for the line on the last two pitches he would have fallen off. It took all three to pull him out at the top over a period of some 15 mins. (full report to be found in log at Cottage)