

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER No.24.

MAY 1964.

Minutes of the A.G.M. held at the Cottage on Saturday, 21st. March 1964.

The meeting commenced soon after 4p.m. James Gibb was Chairman. The minutes of the previous E.G.M. were read by Barrie Ottewill and passed as a true record of that meeting.

Secretary's Report.

There were 42 members, compared with 46 the previous year. During the previous year there were 4 new probationary members, 10 new full members and 4 new associate members. 6 members had resigned and six memberships had been terminated. There were 4 outstanding applications.

The C.C.C. had met 15 times and the permit system was in operation. The Longwood gate house was being built, and £13 was this year's levy on the M.C.G.

Three weeks before the Secretary had spoken with Mr. Clarke and briefly his attitude was that we vacate the cottage by the end of March or pay £3 per week rent. The club was now buying an ex W.D. wooden sectional hut for £100, but planning permission was awaited. Due to the amount of work involved, a separate sub-committee had been formed of Brian, Tony and Pat to look after Cottage affairs.

On the weekend of May 2nd./3rd. the M.C.G. were acting as host club to the C.R.G. General meeting at Wells. There would be a dinner, caving trips and an exhibition.

A charge of 1/- per caver would be made on cavers entering Pine Tree Pot except members of the recognised Mendip Clubs.

The library was now ready for use.

Treasurer's Report.

The annual statement had been circulated. Over the year the club had spent £15 more than its receipts and there was an obvious need to raise more money, through a Jumble Sale or some other means.

Secretary's Report.

Arrangements were being made for visits to Balch and Hilliers Caves. The Whitsun meet was not yet fixed but it was hoped to go to Yorkshire. The club was now an associate member of the C.N.C.C. which controlled access to caves in the Castleton and Leck Fells area. No specific club trip was being arranged abroad this year, but for 1965 Czechoslovakia or Switzerland would possibly be visited. Cow Hole was again open and the W.C.C. held keys. A trip was being arranged.

The Meet Secretary had noticed a reduction in caving within the club, but this could be a reflection of the smaller membership. Suggestions for meets and party leaders would be gratefully received.

The First Aid boxes had been inspected by the M.R.O. and they were satisfied apparently. One box contained medical supplies, another contained survival rations. Smaller kits were available for normal caving use.

Editor's Report.

Four newsletters had been produced during the year. Some trouble was still being had with the printing machine. The forthcoming journal was being worked on. Some articles had not yet been received. Further contributions would be gratefully taken. A copy of the 1962 Journal had been sent to the B.S.A. for their abstractions service.

Tackle Master's Report.

The club has 675 ft. ladder, 300 ft. nylon rope, 600 ft. Ulstron rope, 39 tethers, 6 helmets and 1½ carbide lights. The club dinghy was perished. £29 - 14 - 8 had been spent out on tackle during the year and £2 - 17 - 0 had been collected in tackle fees. Until the new cottage was erected, tackle could be obtained from Peter, and he proposed to collect tackle fees at this stage.

The amendment to the constitution proposed by Malcolm Cotter was discussed. He proposed: Overseas members are members from any class who have been overseas for a period exceeding six months. They will be treated as associate members, but will revert to their original class on return to the U.K.

After discussion the amended resolution proposed by Barrie Ottewill and seconded by Tony Knibbs was passed by the meeting, 12 votes for, with 1 vot against.

"Full and Probationary Members going overseas for a period exceeding six months will be classified as associate members until they return to the U.K."

Any Other Business.

Pat Walsh asked where the First Aid kits were. It was decided that the M.R.O. kits should be left with Jim Fry.

Pat also queried the committee's decision not to accept a recent application for membership. After discussion about the case, Brian read an extract

from a letter he had sent to the person in question, explaining the club's attitude which emphasised the aspect that the prospective members must satisfy the committee that they would make "good club members!"

It was proposed that any application for membership should be balloted within the club, but the proposed was not seconded. It was also pointed out that such a proposal would be unconstitutional.

Robbie Charnock thought that secondary forms of lighting should be provided for novices as were helmets and carbide lamps. The meeting thought generally that it was not the club's duty to provide readily available equipment for the novices such as torches etc. and the provision of secondary lighting as a fixture on the helmet was not generally thought advisable.

Barrie Ottewil queried several items on the accounts statements which were satisfactorily explained by the Treasurer, except for one item, Duplicating paper £1 - 3 - 6.

Brian asked for the club's attitude towards a national caving organisation, following a letter from another club wishing to act as a clearing-house for ideas on the subject. Opinions varied widely, but no general support for such an organisation was apparent, though it was thought regional groups would have some support.

Barrie suggested the club advertise in the "Climber" magazine as several other clubs were doing. The meeting agreed, after discussion, to this suggestion.

Voting took place for the positions of :-

Treasurer. (Ian re-elected)

Recorder. Simon elected after re-voting due to a draw.

Auditors elected were, Mike Rennie and James Gibb.

The meeting finished at 6.40.p.m. and the club adjourned to celebrate the club's tenth anniversary, and drink a toast to the club and to absent friends, especially Norma and Malcolm in Malaya who so generously provided funds for some drinks for the occasion.

GREEN SHIELD STAMPS.

Pauline Knibbs has suggested that everyone save Green Shield stamps in order to acquire some saucepans etc. for the new cottage. Please do not all save separate books unless already started, but bring them to the club and give to either Pauline or Penny.

TACKLE LEFT AT THE COTTAGE.

There were a number of articles left at the cowshed when it was vacated, which are now in the possession of the Tackle - Master. These include two sleeping bags and a number of boots. Unless they are claimed soon they will be disposed of at the discretion of the committee.

M.C.G. ASSOCIATE OF NORTHERN GROUP.

The M.C.G. has been elected to associate membership of Northern Caving Clubs. This will give us some rights of access to the Easegill/Lancaster system and other caves in the area.

PERMITS NEEDED FOR LONGWOOD/AUGUST AND G.B. CAVES.

Charterhouse Caving Committee Permits are required by everyone visiting Longwood/august and G.B. caves. Members may obtain permits free from the secretary; guests under M.C.G. leadership will be issued temporary permits at 2/6 per head. 14 days notice is required for a permit to G.B.

NEW BLOCKHOUSE AT LONGWOOD.

The member clubs of the Charterhouse Caving Committee are building a blockhouse over the Longwood/august entrance. Pat Walsh is constructing a steel door.

SPELEOLOGICAL DIARIES.

Amendments to the list of names and addresses of clubs and officials in the back of the diaries are available from Pedro.

PINETREE POT.

New locks have been installed at Pinetree and other clubs no longer hold keys. A set will be available from us at Nordrach and future visitors should be advised to write to Tony Knibbs. Recognised Mendip clubs to be admitted free; others to be charged 1/- per head, maintenance fee.

MEMBERSHIP.

An application for membership has been received from Mrs. Penny Hunt. Any comments should be sent to the secretary.

Christine Pizzard and Joan Robinson have been elected as probationary members of the M.C.G.

About a quarter of the voting members returned slips in the referendum held to find the members' views on changes in the rules. All but two members favoured the new arrangement and the committee will put it into effect until the half-yearly general meeting when it will be reviewed.

MENDIP RESCUES.

The M.R.O. was called out seven times during the year ending January 31, 1964. Three incidents were in Swildons, two in Longwood, and one each at Wookey and Baker's Pit, Devon. Those worthy of note are;

In October, a novice caver from Southampton University C.C. who had breakfasted at 8.30.a.m. and subsequently eaten only 2 packets of crisps began a descent of Swildons at 4.30.p.m. He fell into the double-pots, got very cold and was unable to climb the "20". He managed to get out with assistance and a dose of dexedrine.

At the beginning of this year several Wessex parties used the same tackle in Swildons. The party before last out removed the tackle. The customary arrangement in such cases is for each party using the tackle to tie a piece of string to the ladder on the way in - and remove it on the way out. It is then obvious who is still below and who has left.

Several M.C.G. members helped in the Longwood rescue in March 63 when Heather Muirhead, aged 17, died. Inadequate clothing, immersion in cold water and exposure were the causes of death. Longwood is a cave requiring leaders who know it well. In flood conditions it is not a place for novices. Oliver Lloyd has published a paper on the effects of immersion in cold water, when you read it you will realise how near to death we often are. A copy is available in our library.

The M.R.O. praises a Walton and Weybridge Y.H.A. party trapped in floodwaters in Longwood. They had food and a primus stove!

The Wookey incident concerned a deaf and dumb boy who left a note on his bicycle saying, "Wookey cave, please look after my bicycle!" A search revealed nothing; and it was afterwards found that the boy had been on a "weegee" trip and gone home without his bike - Tell someone before you go and when you return. Use the "trips board" when we have one.

We are glad to say that no incidents last year concerned the M.C.G. (Did I hear someone say that a few people need rescuing from the HunterS?)

SEEN ON MENDIP AT WHITSUN.

Five committee members on one caving trip!! A sign of the times, or just too hot in the sun?

CHELSEAS LECTURES.

The club was represented at two lectures organised by C.S.S. recently. One was on cave fauna and the other on undergrounds feeding.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE.

THE MENDIP CAVER.

A monthly series of newsheets containing information information on digs, caves and publications in the Mendips. Published by Tony Oldham at 2/6 for 6 months or 3d a copy, information is available from Pedro.

NORTHERN CAVERN & MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY.

A new series of Transactions (15/- each) and Memoirs at 4/- each. Details from the recorder, Simon Knight.

NORTHERN CAVER.

A new publication mainly concerned with caves in the north of England. A copy is available for inspection in the library, annual subscription 15/-.

STIRRUP CUP.

When camping at the Stirrup Cup, please dispose of rubbish in the old Quarry

adjacent to the garage.

HAY - WAGGON USERS BEWARE.

Before entering the hay waggon late at night, make sure what is in there. Sheep are alright, but a bull might turn the tables, even on Pat. Whatever happens do not tell the B.E.C. - they have sufficient songs about us already.

COTTAGE.

Most people know; a few might not. The M.C.G. was evicted from its old cottage on the Sanatorium estate in March. A wooden building has been bought and it is planned to erect it behind the Stirrup Cup garage, subject to planning permission being received. In the meantime work is progressing slowly under the direction of Pat Walsh. He will tell you what you can do!

COTTAGE PURCHASE FUND.

Unless more donations are forthcoming, the new cottage will be less luxurious than the surrounding field. Give generously please.

Although planning permission has not yet been granted for the cottage, foundations can still be made. These are concrete blocks and are easily assembled when on Mendip. All the materials and tools are there - only a little labour is required. We shall require 31 for the cottage, and 14 have been made to date. How many have you made?

The following probationary members were made full members at the last committee meeting (26th, May)

Mike Brace.	Bob Hill.
Tony Fitzgibbon.	Paul Dye.

The Editor sincerely thanks Mrs. Penny Munt and Arthur Cox for invaluable assistance with typing and printing this newsletter.
Hon. Editor, B.A.C. Ottewill, 50, Cuckoo Hill Drive, Pinner, Middlesex.

Planning Permission.

The County Council are considering our application at their next Planning Committee on June 22nd., and have informed us that we should hear from them immediately following this meeting.

Information pamphlet No. 1. This has now been rewritten and printed and is now available from the Secretary.

All items for the next Newsletter should be in the hands of the Editor not later than June 20th.

Congratulations to Miss Sonia Carruthers who is getting married on June 20th. Sonia now lives in California and has sent her good wishes to members of the Club.

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