

THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 29.

DECEMBER 1964

GROUP'S FINANCES

At the end of November, the two Funds stood as follows.

Cottage Purchase	£18.10.4
General	£16. 5.9.-

COTTAGE FEES

In view of the increased use and cost of fuel, the Committee has decided that the Cottage fees must go up. The increase will be 6d. per day for all classes of user.

The following rates will apply from 1st. December.

Member	2/-	per day
Guest	3/-	
Under 18	2/-	

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dave Mitchell has moved to -

3, Stonewall Terrace,
Frome, Somerset.

MENDIPETYMOLOGY

Mendip. Originally mynydd eppunt, wild mountains.
(Welsh)

Later, Mened-yp and Menedup.

Priddy. Originally pridd-tig, mud dwellings (Celt)

(to be continued)

The Council of Southern Caving Clubs.

Some twenty-four of those clubs approached have come out in favour of the formation of this body. The first representative meeting will be held at Bristol University on 9th January, 1965.

THE NEWSLETTER

This will be published on the second Thursday of each month.

Copy for publication must be in the hands of the Editor by the PREVIOUS WEEK-END.

CARBIDE LAMPS

Our Tacklemaster has a supply of these for sale to members at the very reasonable price of 17/6.

SOME NOTES ON COOPER'S HOLE

The question is often posed, "Is this Cheddar Hole or not?" Cheddar Hole, of course, was the name given by our ancestors before the Norman Conquest to that place or cave which Henry of Huntingdon (1125-1130) named as one of the "Four Wonders Of England". The Romans seem to have known it as "carcer aeoli" or Prison of the Wind.

It may well be that there are other major openings are hidden by debris or road-making, but at least we know that that flood-water flowed down the Gorge into the cave and was apparently free to escape to lower levels, (hence the stratification of the mud, charcoal and road-dust which reaches to the roof as far as we have excavated).

This fact, taken together with the known dimensions of the entrance certainly seems to indicate a vast cave having been accessible in the not-too-distant past.

It is odd to think that the writers, such as Henry of Huntingdon and John Hooker (in Holinshed's Description of Britaine)(1568), should have referred to Cheddar Hole rather than Cheddar Gorge. A clue may be in the last paragraph of Hooker's description.

"This Cheddar Hole or Cheddar Rocks is in Summerset-shire and thence the waters run till they meet with second Rz that riseth in Owkle Hole."

Could this possibly mean that a part of the Gorge was still roofed-over? This would perhaps explain the "pretie riverets and streams which they often crossed as they went from place to place". They certainly do not sound like the great underground river which has defied all attempts at plumbing with its current as it rushes beneath Gough's Cave.

Also, taking into consideration the fear and awe with which caves were regarded even in the two last centuries, is it likely that a cavern such as Gough's or Fox's or any other caveknown today would then be described as "ample, large and NOTHING NOISOME" by those who "entered and there traversed great spaces of land and rovers" though "they could never yet

... to any end"?

Either Cooper's Hole is really vast and extensive and with only small streams or we should start looking elsewhere for Cheddar Hole.

Another factor against Cooper's Hole being the great cave of the past, is that J. F. Parry's dig in the entrance shewed that only 9ft 6in. from the roof, he had passed through all the strata containing animal and artefact remains and was gave up at a further depth of nearly 6ft without finding any trace of variance from the red marl.

This would seem to indicate that for the last millenium the entrance had been no more than between 5ft and 9ft in height. Not a very imposing or promising entrance to the wonderland describe above.

This evidence, such as it is, is very easily overcome, by a number of explanations. However, it would explain the feasibility of the construction of the man-made steps discovered to the left of the entrance.

If this had been a lofty entrance, the steps would have ended on the wall of the cave; unless, of course, they do indeed continue downwards under the infilling.

It is worth noting that Parry did not mention having reached any stalagmite floor!

To be continued.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

February ~~10th~~, M.C.G. Jumble Sale. Ealing Town Hall.
Please start collecting NOW and pass on your collection to Robbie Charnock.

March 27th. A.G.M. at Nordrach.

July 10th to 17th. Visit of La Societe des Cavernes et Montagnes Neuchatelloise. They will be our guests and we hope that some members will make themselves available to act as hosts.

Half-Yearly General Meeting, and Dinner will be held on 23rd October, 1965. Please reserve this date.