

INTRODUCTION  
TO CAVING  
AND THE



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MENDIP CAVING GROUP INFORMATION PAMPHLET NO. 1 (rev.1964)

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## ABOUT CAVING

Caving is the science and sport of exploring underground passages and chambers in limestone districts. The caver has a chance to see things that few other people do, and he or she may make important new discoveries.

## THE M.C.G.

To those without experience or skilled guidance caving can be dangerous - nearly all the accidents you see reported in newspapers happen to inexperienced, ill-equipped novices. The MENDIP CAVING GROUP is one of the 100 or so clubs in this country which can offer a safe introduction to caving. It also has rights of access to certain restricted caves.

The MCG was formed in 1953 and holds informal social meetings in London each week. The group operates mainly in the Mendip limestone area of Somerset, but from time to time visits are made to other caving areas in this country and abroad.

The object of the MCG is further all aspects of spelaeology: to explore existing caves, find new ones, and to encourage interest in hydrology (water tracing), biology (study of cave-dwelling flora and fauna), underground photography and surveying, archaeology and geology.

Good equipment, both as used by individuals and as supplied by the group, is essential. The MCG is proud of its high standards and its accident-free record.

## BELOW GROUND

Caves (which tend to be horizontal) and potholes (mostly vertical) can be long or short, large or small. A long cave in this country can extend eight miles or more and a short one only a few feet. Some underground chambers are forty or more feet high, in some places the caver may have to crawl through passages only

eighteen inches in diameter. One of the ways in which caves are formed is by the action of water dissolving away rock. In some caves there is still an active stream running and the caver may well get wet. Streams have "deserted" other caves and they are now completely dry.

The attractions of caving are different for everyone, but the beauty of stalagmite and stalactite formations fascinates most people. Caves are some of the few places left in this country where new discoveries may be made.

### VISITING SOMERSET

There are some 50 members of the MCG and a proportion of these visit the caving areas on most weekends. Regular group "meets" are held and there are few weekends when there are no opportunities to cave with members or help digging possible new caves.

The MCG has a headquarters in Somerset with cooking and sleeping facilities, which if not luxurious are adequate. A small charge (1/6 per day to members, 2/6 for guests) is made.

### EQUIPMENT

Personal equipment consists of a miners helmet<sup>+</sup>, lights<sup>+</sup> boots, waist sling and karabiner<sup>+</sup>, whistle<sup>+</sup>, a boiler suit and very old clothes. (+ these items may be borrowed from the group novices, = not required on first trip). Wire rope ladders, nylon lifelines etc. are owned by the group.

Many club members own cars and arrangements can usually be made to share petrol costs. Our Mendip HQ is about 120 miles from London. Some members leave on Friday evenings, some on Saturday, returning usually on Sunday evening.

"Caving and Potholing" by Donald Robinson and Anthony Greenbank (Constable, 1964, price 30s.) available from most public libraries is a good introductory book. "The Caves of

Mendip" by N. Barrington (Dalesman, about 6s.) is a detailed guidebook. "British Caving", edited by Cullingford is a well-known standard work.

### JOINING THE M.C.G.

Membership is open to all, but your first caving trips will probably be made as a "guest of the club" - to give both you and the members a chance to get to know each other. The committee will consider applications for probationary membership after you have been on a group meet at which committee members are present. Full membership is considered after six months probation and completion of a "training trip" to show that you understand basic safety precautions.

The annual subscription is 21/- a year (6s. to those under eighteen) Both men and women may join. Members are expected to be reasonably active.

### ORGANISATION

The MCG is run by a committee of seven, elected at an annual general meeting. An annual dinner is held in the autumn. Members receive group publications and may use the library.

The group meets socially in a room adjacent to a public house in Ealing on Thursday evenings from about 8.30 p.m. and visitors are welcome. It is best to contact the secretary or a member in advance .

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

Hon Sec--Brian Mee

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