

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 31.

FEBRUARY, 1965.

Appeal No. 1.

This newsletter goes out to 54 people, members or associates of the Group. If each member sent in a short article once a year you'd have to get a new Editor. Try it and see!

Appeal No. 2.

When all subs (due on Jan. 1st.) have been paid, the Group will be worth less than £1 for each of those 54 persons. In case you haven't heard, a collection is made each Thursday evening, and the average donation is less than the price of a pint of beer! Is this all the Group is worth to you?

Jumble Sale.

The Jumble Sale at Ealing Town Hall raised £18.10.0. Thanks are due to the willing few who turned up to help their Group, and especially to Robbie and Pam Charnock, who made the arrangements and had their house full of junk for some weeks.

Work On The Cottage

A big concerted effort is needed to complete the drains for inspection and to finish the interior work. March 6th. is planned as a major working weekend.

Group Funds.

The Cottage Purchase Fund holds £15.8.7, and the General Fund £31.10.0.

Both amounts will barely cover anticipated costs during the forthcoming year.

National Interest in Caving.

Leading articles in the "Guardian" and "Punch" on February 17th both gave publicity to the sport of caving and its organisation. The "Guardian"'s article concludes, "A sport can be over-organised, and cavers tend to be highly individual individuals. But there does seem to be a case for drawing the various bodies into some kind of coherent grouping for mutual advantage!"

"Punch", suggesting organisations which could be subsidised by the Ministry of Sport, says, "I don't know much about potholing, but I imagine potholers would be grateful for easy access, good accomodation near-by, first-class rescue facilities and possibly a subsidised school for beginners down some suitable hole!..... How kind of them?"

**
"The Spelaeologist" - review.

The first issue of "The Spelaeologist", published last month, is good value for money, but it will have difficulty in maintaining this standard.

The 35 pages of editorial matter cover activities in most of the major caving areas. Photographers, in particular, are well catered for, but three pages on the "Dead Sea Scrolls" will probably interest a minority of readers.

NEW MEMBER

Peter Matthews, 343, Uxbridge Rd., W.3. has been elected a probationary member of the Group.

WELCOME

to Trevor Parker and his lady-friend, of Weston-Super-Mare, who have started caving with us.

REMINDER

Subscriptions became payable on 1st January. If you have not yet paid, please do so to the Treasurer, 35, West Towers, Pinner, Middx.

M. NORBERT CASTERET.

M. Casteret, who should need no introduction to anyone with an interest in caving, visited Swansea recently. He gave the following rather interesting details.

He neither smokes nor drinks alcohol, or even such stimulants as tea or coffee. (Perhaps the lack of ability and enthusiasm for caving to M.C.G. members is due to an excess of these commodities!)

Amongst members of his own family, M. Casteret has probably as many cavers as are in our Group. The Junior members are introduced to Spéléologie at the tender age of four.

Twenty-three books, translated into forty different languages (plus Braille and Esperanto) have been written by M. Casteret, seven of which are obtainable in English.

The Braille translation was made for a French girl who had been blind since birth, but who is a mountaineer,

Skier, and a caver. In fact, an incident occurred some time after she started caving which serves to show how expert she became. When M. Casteret's lamp failed, as a test of her ability, he asked her to lead him back to the entrance which was some hundreds of feet away. This she did, simply by feeling the shape of the walls and by a "sixth sense", which enabled her to estimate the height of the passages. This is surely a remarkable feat, when there are some of us who lose the way even in Upper Swildon's. Joan Robinson.

Editor's Note - How on earth did M. Casteret hear of Pat?

MEET PROGRAMME

March 13/14th. Sat. St Guthbert's Swallet, Friddy. (unconfirmed)(P)
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet. Digging. (P)

March 27/28th. Sat. Annual General Meeting at the Cottage.
and Cottage work only.
Sun. Eastwater Swallet, Friddy; to the bottom
via the two verticals.
Blackmoor Swallet. Digging. (P)

April 16/19th Easter on Mendip.
Fri. Cottage work only.
Sat. August Hole Caving and digging (P)
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet. Digging (P)
Mon. Cottage work.

Members wishing to arrange caving-only trips for Easter please contact the Meet Sec. as soon as possible.

Sat. Evening. Gouffre Berger evening at Wells Museum. (Tickets required.)

Note: (P) means that you must have a permit to visit these caves. Ask the Secretary in good time.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group will be held in the Cottage, Northrash-on-Mendip on Saturday, March 27th. 1965 starting at 4 p.m. Any Proposals to alter the Constitution and Rules of the Group, and any nominations for election to the Committee of the Group must be sent to me at 12, Cranbourne Drive, Pinner, Middx. to arrive not later than Friday, March 12th. Members requiring a postal vote should send their requests by the same date.

Brian Mee. Secretary.

Tear off

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 1965/1966 COMMITTEE.

OFFICE

NOMINEE

SECRETARY - - - - -

TREASURER - - - - -

RECORDER - - - - -

EDITOR - - - - -

COTTAGE WARDEN - - - - -

TACKLEMASTER - - - - -

MEET SECRETARY - - - - -

SIGNED.....

Note - Nominee's consent should be obtained in advance.

MENDIP GAVING GROUP

MEET PROGRAMME

1965.

INTRODUCTORY.

By way of an experiment, this year's programme is scheduled on a twelve-month basis rather than three four-month periods. It is hoped that this will satisfy those who wish to plan their personal engagements well in advance and attend Group Meets as well.

Apart from this screed, dealing entirely with the Meet Programme for 1965, each newsletter will contain details of meets for the two months following publication. With the exception aimed primarily at the interests of the novice, the whole programme has been compiled in the absence of any specific suggestions from members. Without any directive to follow, the whole list has been devised to contain a little of everything.

Most weekends arranged for the novice occur quite early in the year. This may provide an opportunity for the experienced members to benefit from a limbering-up period. Those of limited caving ability at present associating with the Group and members wishing to introduce novices should take advantage of these weekends. Older members please bear in mind that a weekend of desultory digging and an overdoes of the local beverage is not a good introduction for the novice - any novice.

We require trained cavers who may later become valuable speleologists. Privately-arranged trips for members' guests should be attended by someone able to instruct and complete training trip forms. Don't forget that the aim of all training for the caver is to teach him to move carefully and safely underground and to engender an intelligent and observant attitude to caving as a whole. Remember that your guest will require some equipment and this is not an excuse to make use of other people's gear.

Much activity will take place which, as yet, does not appear on the programme. An undercurrent of cottage-work will no doubt persist throughout the year as will a large number of caving activities of a more or less specialised nature; digging, surveying and scientific work of a very basic standard.

The weekend of October 23/24th is devoted to the Annual Dinner, Half-early General Meeting and Cottage maintenance work under the direction of the Cottage Warden. As with all buildings there are many points in the Group's cottage which will require attention and this type of Cottage-work-weekend will be necessary each year.

P R O G R A M M E

JANUARY

- 9/10th Inaugural Meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs at the University of Bristol.
Interior work at cottage.
- 16/17th Sat. G.B.Cave, Charterhouse (P)
Sun. Lamb Leer Cavern, Harptree.
Both of these caves are suitable for the novice or cavers of limited experience.

FEBRUARY

- 6/7th. Sat. The Goatchurch, Burrington.
Roll's Pot, Burrington.
Sun. Pinetree Pot, Nordrach.
Another weekend suited to the novice or semi-novice.
- 20th Group Jumble Sale. Ealing Town Hall. Please help from 11 a.m. onwards. Jumble to Robbie Charnock, at 128, Cavendish Ave., W.13.
- 27/28th Sat. Swildon's Hole, Upper Series (and below if crowds permit).

MARCH

- 13/14th Sat. St. Cuthbert's Swallet, Priddy (unconfirmed)
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)
These two items may have to be exchanged one for the other if St. C's is booked for the Saturday.
- 27/28th Sat. Annual General Meeting and cottage work only.
Sun. Eastwater Swallet, Priddy; to the bottom via the two verticals.
Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)

APRIL

- 16 to 19th EASTER ON MENDIP.
Fri. Cottage work only.
Sat. August Hole (caving and digging) (P)
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)
Mon. Cottage work.
Members wishing to arrange caving-only trips for Easter please contact the Meet Secretary as soon as possible.
SAT. EVENING. Gouffre Berger evening at Wells Museum.
(tickets required).

NOTE - (P) means that you MUST HAVE A PERMIT TO VISIT THESE CAVES.
ask the Secretary in good time.

A grand selection of five digs will be worked during this year, of which the two most promising are Blackmoor and Knaphill Swallets. The underground dig in August Hole is a pressing third.

The word is going around Mendip that it is time that the M.C.G. had another new discovery. With five such promising digs it will be disappointing if we haven't got at least one success to our credit by the middle of this year. Always bear in mind that a good day's work with pick and shovel is worth a whole year of idle conjecture. The opportunities are there and it is up to M.C.G. members to reach out and grasp them in 1965.

Following the excellent C.R.G. weekend course in Spelaeology at Keele University last November, there have been murmurings of some prospective geological examination of our Mendip caves; particularly of the Longwood/August system. There are many gaps in our knowledge of Karst morphology and it would be of tremendous value to Spelaeology as a whole to produce some worthwhile work in this field.

Those who consider that cave sciences are beyond them would do well to indulge in some careful reading of articles and books in the Group Library, paying special attention to "British Caving". A survey of Browne's Hole has been started and we look to those with a yen for this type of work to ensure the success of the project.

In order to co-ordinate and publicise these extra-caving activities as soon as possible, members wishing to organise or take part in the foregoing activities should contact the Meet Secretary at the earliest opportunity. Before plunging into the list of meets, the Meet Secretary again asks for all members and guests to give notice of their intention to attend any of the meets as arranged. This plaintive request is usually disregarded and this disregard has often led to much last-minute activity and re-arrangement.

Many caving trips entail obtaining permission to allow a certain number into a cave, finding one or more leaders and sorting out the necessary transport. Please make an effort this year to give at least two weeks' notice of meet attendances.

MAY

8/9th Sat. Stoke Lane Slocker, Stoke St. Michael.
 Sun. Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)
 Cooper's Hole (digging)

22/23rd. SOUTH WALES. Penwlit.
 Weekend staying at the excellent H.Q. of the S. Wales
 Caving Club. No finer arrangements for caving trips
 have yet been made. Choice lies between Ogof Ffynnon
 Ddu, Pwlll Pant Mawr, Dan yr Ogof, Pwll Ddu, Cwm Dwr
 and Tunnel Cave.
 Novice and experienced cavers catered for. Any one
 wishing to include Friday in the weekend please let
 Meet Secretary know immediately.

JUNE

26/27th. Sat. Longwood Swallet/August Hole. (P) }
 Sun. G.B. Cave. (P) }
 Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P) }
 Cooper's Hole (digging) }

JULY

10/18th MENDIP WEEK. Speleo-Club des Montagnes Neuchatelloises
 our hosts in Switzerland for the last two years are
 coming to Mendip for a week for Caving and general
 touring. Several experienced members are needed
 to assist in caving trips and generally acting as hosts
 above ground. Visits to show caves will be included.
 The Programme to be suggested to our guests will be as
 follows -

11th 12th Arrival of Swiss party at Dover and travel to Mendip via
 Salisbury.
 12th G.B. Cave and/or Swildon's Hole.
 13th Touring.
 14th Longwood Swallet/ August Hole
 15th Touring
 16th St Cuthbert's Hole. (if possible). Nosh-and booze-up
 17th Departure of Swiss party. (in evening.)

Anyone who thinks he or she can stand up to the pace
 of what may be a memorable week should notify the Meet
 Secretary at once.

NOTE - (P) means that you MUST have a permit to visit this cave.
 ask the Secretary in good time.

JULY - contd.

31st/Aug. 1st. SOUTH WALES. Visits to Ogof Agen Allwedd, Brynmawr.
Probably staying at the new Chelsea Speleo Club
H.Q.; otherwise camping.
NOTE Special permits are required for this cave
and participants must give at least ONE MONTH'S NOTICE
Trips will be arranged to the Cliffs of Dover and
Summertime Series.

AUGUST

21st to SEPT 5th. YORKSHIRE. Following the Keele University
Weekend course, suggestions have been received
for a protracted visit to Yorkshire. The choice of
caves and potholes is immense, but but efforts
will be made to visit:-

Lancaster Hole/Gaping Ghyll (Bar Pot or
Disappointment route)
Lost John's system
Simpson's Pot
Nott's Pot.

A pleasant diversion may be a short visit to the
nearby Lake District.

Beginners will be specially catered for with easy trips
to start with.

Some careful arrangements are called for and members
wishing to attend should submit their names to the
Meet Secretary as soon as possible.

SEPTEMBER

25/26th London Cave Rescue Organisation rescue practice
weekend. Venue undecided so far. C.B.

OCTOBER

9/10th Sat. St Cuthbert's Swallet (subject to confirmation)
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)
Cooper's Hole ()

23/24th Sat. Cottage work and Annual Dinner preceded by Half-
Yearly General Meeting.
Sun. Cottage work only.

NOVEMBER

13/14th Sat. Cow Hole and/or Cuckoo Cleaves Cave.
Sun. Blackmoor Swallet (digging) (P)
Cooper's Hole ()

27/28th Sat. Coral Cave and Loxton Cave (subject to confirmation)
Sun. Cooper's Hole (digging)

DECEMBER

11/12th Sat. Caving trip as yet undecided,
Sun. Cooper's Hole (digging)

Any offers to lead or take part in one or more of the foregoing meets will be much appreciated; immediately please.

The amount of digging meets may seem to lie thinly on the ground, but in practice digging sessions will be far more numerous

The Meet Secretary would like to hear from anyone wishing to take on the direction of any dig (namely - Cooper's Hole, Knaphill Swallet or Hunting Lodge Swallet) or who wishes to conduct any form of speleological work (photography, surveying or geological work).

1965 has barely begun. All members and guests of the Mendip Caving Group are invited to take an active part in the Meet programme and in the numerous, so far unscheduled, activities to make this year one of great success.

Anthony J. Knibbs,
Hon. Meet Secretary.
2, Rectory Lane,
BYFLEET, Surrey.