

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 37.

SEPTEMBER 1965.

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING.

The Half Yearly General Meeting of the M.C.G. will be held at the Cottage, Nordrach-on-Mendip on Saturday, October 23rd. at 4 p.m. Among the items to be considered will be a complete revision of the Constitution and Rules. Copies of the proposals will be available shortly.

DUPLICATOR WANTED URGENTLY.

An efficient, but easy-to-use, duplicator is required by the Editor. If anyone knows of one which can be borrowed or cheaply bought, could they please let either myself or another Committee member have details.

JCR

MENDIP NEWS.

Wanted - Tigers to put in Swildon's Hole. Vandals, alleged to come from north of Rickmansworth (as far north as Yorkshire, in fact) have removed the pipe which diverted the water away from the 40 foot ladder pitch in Swildon's. This means that at all times, except when there has been a long drought, the full weight of water descends on cavers climbing the ladder.

Already one unfortunate has met with difficulty and unless something is done, the M.R.O. had better establish an office near the entrance. There is a school of thought on Mendip which says that "the removal of the pipe has gone some way to restoring the cave to its natural state - leave it as it is." This view is backed-up by those who say, "The 40 ft. is now as difficult a pot as anything that Yorkshire has to offer". What do you think?

The same vandals responsible for the Swildon's pipe incident are alleged to be guilty of removing the white guide lines which mark the route avoiding the dangerous area in Eastwater. The M.R.O. is replacing the markers, but in the meantime - Beware.

How to get in the Mendip Caves. The C.S.C.C. has arranged for a booklet to be prepared explaining the proper procedure for obtaining access to caves in the south. Ian Standing, of U.B.S.S., has been asked to compile it. This will be an equivalent publication for our area, of one already available for the north.

Swildon's Control. As a result of the recent spate of rescues, Mr. Maine is refusing permission to descend Swildon's Hole when he considers that weather and water-level conditions make the cave unsafe.

11th./12th. September. An invasion of seventeen of the Osterly Sea Scouts, led by Mike Rennie, Pat Walsh and Ron

Hogston, spent the weekend at the Cottage. In spite of sporadic heavy rain, caving trips were arranged to Goatchurch, Rod's Pot, Upper Swildon's, Longwood/August and Eastwater (The latter by Arthur Spain, three guests, and Simon).

BETTER PUBLICITY FOR CAVING.

In a move to make it easier for prospective cavers to find out names and addresses of clubs, the Southern Council is going to suggest to other regional councils that a list of clubs be sent to the Central Council of Physical Recreation. They, in turn, would be asked to pass on information to Education Authorities and others interested.

SOUTHERN COUNCIL MEETING.

It is planned to hold a General Meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs in the University at Bristol on Jan. 8th., 1966 at 2.15 p.m.

NATIONALISATION PLAN SCOTCHED.

A scheme to which no one so far has raised objections for the regional caving councils to act together, without there being a national body, has been put forward by the C.S.C.C. The regional councils will normally act independently, but if a national statement on anything is necessary, it could be issued in the name of "The Regional Council for Caving in Great Britain" after suitable discussions had taken place. The Southern Council will not agree to this procedure being used on questions of access, which it has always thought to be best solved at a local level. In addition to the Northern and Southern Councils and the Derbyshire Caving Association, some fourteen Welsh clubs have now formed the Cambrian Caving Conference with the object of meeting informally from time-to-time to discuss regional problems. They held their first meeting in July.

LITERARY SECTION.

Mendip Bibliography. Simon had a note last week saying that members of member-clubs (us) could buy copies at 25/- each. Produce the money - and it's yours!

How to take better Cave Pictures. Dr. John Woolley writing on "Photographic Aspects of Caves and Caving" offers some useful hints to novice and experienced cave cameramen. Unfortunately the colour reproductions which accompany the text are so much "larger than life" as to be very suspect. Among his suggestions he proposes the carrying of silica gel for use, after being heated with a primus, in drying-out equipment; also a white umbrella (old, we suppose), to serve both as cover against water drips and as a reflecting surface. An interesting idea is to use a number of candles as the sole source of illumination for colour pictures. To

give the impression of 'height' or 'depth' on ladder pitches he suggests getting the climber to carry a flash gun connected to the camera by a long lead. There are other ideas worth thinking-about, too.

Ogofwr Ddu.

Thirty-three Days under the Earth. Michel Siffre's own account of his thirty-three consecutive days spent in a cave in the Alpes Maritimes has now been published in English. "Beyond Time", translated and edited by Herma Brissault, is published by Chatto and Windus, price 30/-. Reviewed briefly in the Sunday Times, September 5th., the book is described as being "well worth reading". A report of his lecture on the subject appeared in M.C.G. Newsletter No. 20, June 1962.

SEEN IN YORKSHIRE.

..the bulging eyes of our hosts (Northern Pennine Club) as a f-e-m-a-l-e walked into their cottage. Apparently this is banned, prohibited, the very end. Rumour has it in the north that women are a discouragement to caving. If they are discouraged that easily they deserve to have them banned . . . or they could give up caving !

DONE IN YORKSHIRE.

.. consumed lots of pints in a pub much nearer midnight than closing time.

MEET PROGRAMME.

October 9th./10th.	Sat. St. Cuthbert's Swallet (subject to confirmation).
	Sun. Digging projects.
23rd./24th.	Sat. Half Yearly General Meeting, preceded by work on the Cottage.
	Sun. Lamb Leer.
November 13th./14th.	Sat. Cow Hole and/or Cuckoo Cleaves Cave.
	Sun. Digging.

* Note: People wishing to dig at Blackmoor Swallet should be in possession of a Permit.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Pete Mathews has moved to 155 Radcliffe Way, Yeading Green, Greenford, Middlesex.

LONGWOOD/AUGUST SURVEY.

On rechecking the original survey of this cave system, Mike Rennie has found a discrepancy in the direction of the arrow indicating true north. The arrow on the map is in fact at a bearing of 323 degrees: that is, 37 degrees in error. However this does not affect the survey itself, or the relationship with the ground above. The copy of the survey

held by Hall Harding will be recalled for a few days for the correction to be made. Apologies are offered to anyone who may have been inconvenienced or misled by this error.

SUMMER HOLIDAY: LAKELAND AND YORKSHIRE.

Pauline, Simon and I joined Pete and Penny on Saturday August 21st. at Neaum Crag camp site at Skelwith Bridge in the Lake District. It is a good centre for general touring, and the next day we did a motor tour around Thirlmere to Keswick and then to Borrowdale, crossing the Honister Pass (1176 ft.), and on down to Buttermere. Here we stopped to take a preliminary stroll up to Scarth Gap overlooking Ennerdale with good views of Great Gable and Scarfell.

On Monday a long walk was made from Skelwith Bridge, out to Elterwater, and then up the Wrynose Pass (1281 ft.) via Little Langdale. From the pass we turned across the fells to Red Tarn (1700 ft.) and a stop for lunch. Walking northwards we made an easy descent beside Brown Gill into Oxendale and so back to Langdale from where we took a bus to Skelwith Bridge; about 10 miles in all. Tuesday was exceedingly wet and, with the exception of that intrepid oarsman Simon, the only activities were vague wanderings around Grasmere and Ambleside, window shopping and writing damp postcards.

The following day's objective was an ascent of Gable (2949 ft.). The approach involved crossing both the Wrynose and Hard Knott passes, the latter a fierce one rising to 1291 ft., then driving along Westwater to Wasdale Head. Boots on, maps out, and up to Blacksail Pass. A scramble up to Kirk Fell (2630 ft.) was followed by a fine walk up Great Gable with superb views from its summit - you could see for miles. Shrugging off oxygen-lack and snow-blindness we made quick descent by Aaron Slack to Styhead Tarn and thence back to Wasdale Head.

Thursday morning found us boating on Grasmere and, later, driving up to Keswick and then to Ullswater and Patterdale where a quick detour brought us the benefit of evening sunshine in Grisdale. Over the Kirkstone Pass (1489 ft.) and some rapid GT descent brought us back to Ambleside.

Friday dawned fine and clear; ideal for our last day in Lakeland. Driving to Dungeon Ghyll we set out in the moonday sun up to Stickle Tarn and the ascent of Pavey Arc (2288 ft.). Gaining more altitude we arrived at the summit of Harrison Stickle (2403 ft.) and then to Pike of Stickle (2323 ft.). At this stage Pete disappeared elsewhere whilst Simon and I followed a soggy mess of a track over to Angle Tarn. Rejoined by Pete we ascended Hanging Knotts in a fine scramble and arrived, a few feet below cloud level, at the summit cairn of Bow Fell (2960 ft.). This, our last peak, was followed by a rapid descent and ritual footwashing!

Saturday. Off to Ingleton and the limestone of Yorkshire. At the camp site opposite the 'Marion Arms' we found one, deserted, M.C.G. tent; Mick Brace and Bryan Pitman were in Pikedaw Cavern with Northern Pennine Club members. Pedro arrived with opening time. Hurried greetings and then off to the 'Flying Horseshoes' at Clapham. Having established friendship with the N.P.C., whose continued assistance was much appreciated, we split our efforts on Sunday between the 'Allotment Area' (Disappointment Pot) and Chapel-le-Dale area (Sunset Hole, Great Douk and Middle Washford cave). Pete Mathews had arrived when the Chapel-le-Dale party squelched back to the parked cars.

On Bank Holiday Monday came the classic Lancaster Hole/Easgill System. From N.P.C. came John Laycock, Colin Hall and Trevor Randall. From M.C.G. came Simon, Pedro, Pete Mathews and I - a splendid crew! The 110 foot entrance shaft of Lancaster Hole and then to the graveyard section and round to the colonnades. From Bridge Hall down to the immense chamber at Fall Pot with its fixed iron ladder. A very large passage now, a rope climb at Stake Pot, then a lunch break. Off again through a 'crawl', then into a well-decorated section before Minaret Passages, Cornes Cavern, Snail Hall, and the junction with Easgill at the 40 ft. ladder at Stop Pot. From Eureka junction a visit was made to the beautiful gypsum cavern before pressing on towards the County Pot exit which was laddered by another N.P.C. party. Climbing a 20 ft. ladder brought us to the crawl Poetic Justice (obscure poet and doubtless obscene poem), down an amusing chimney, and into Spout Passage. Three energetic sportsmen made a detour around Razor Passage to rejoin the party at Oxford Circus. Some final thrutching soon brought us out to daylight in Easgill Beck after a memorable seven hours caving - Sorry - Potholing. A gem of a trip, this!

Tuesday was a day of rest - almost. Pauline, Simon and I drove north to High Force waterfall in Teesdale, on to Hadrian's wall near Hexham in Northumberland, then back via Penrith and Shap Fell. Not many of us left now; Mick and Bryan had gone home and Pete Munt had retired to the fleshpots of Birmingham with Penny.

Ireby Fell cavern on Wednesday. 'Ding, Dong, Bell', the first three pitches of 25, 35, and 40 feet respectively, sufficed to wet us thoroughly. 'Bell' was worst. Beyond here the going was easy through the 'Ducks' to the next ladder at 'Well' pitch - we had free climbed 'Pussy' pitch. Acrobatics at, and around, 'Rope' pitch then more easy going to 'Duke Street', a long roomy passage ending in a sump. A quick brew-up was organised before the return trip. All the cavern needs is a clothesline rigged up on the moor at its entrance, to make it the ideal soapless laundry. Very sporting and quite a damp trip.

On Thursday Simon, Pedro and Pete Mathews made a trip via Long ~~Churn~~ ~~Cave~~ into Alum Pot. The bottom section proved almost too much for the party when the stench of rotting sheep carcasses met their nostrils. The following day, now minus Pedro and Pete, a sedate visit to Ingleborough cave proved very interesting. The guide was a member of Bradford Pothole Club and showed us around more than the usual tourist route.

A scheduled N.P.C. meet at Meregill Hole on Saturday was unfortunately canceled because of high water level. We did Bar Pot route into Gaping Ghyll instead. Only two pitches here; a 'tight' (they said) 40 ft. and an airy 100 footer into South East Passage of the Gaping Ghyll System. With a time limit of only 5 hours we set off for Main Chamber and Sand Caverns. Fell Beck tumbles 365 feet from moor level to make a fine spectacle in Main Chamber and, in contrast, the Sand Caverns are quiet in their grandeur. The old Yorkshire "Heave Ho!" on the 100 footer, a quick 'struggle' in the 'tight' pitch, and out onto the moor again. Simon and I tramped back down to Clapham; potholing done, holiday almost over. Like to challenge us to a few quick ladder pitches?

Tony Knibbs.

IRELAND: 1966.

Will people wishing to make up a party going to Ireland sometime next summer, please get in touch with our Meet Secretary, Tony Knibbs, at the earliest opportunity. He would welcome suggestions for suitable dates.

Blackmoor Hoist in use.

The hoist was erected earlier this month and has considerably eased the burden of spoil removal. Even the lazier members of the club should now be able to assist in this digging project!

COMMITTEE.

Secretary - Brian Mee, 12 Cranbourne Drive, Pinner, Middx.
Treasurer - Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Road, Ruislip, Mdx.
Meet Secretary - Tony Knibbs, 2 Rectory Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.
Cottage Warden - Pat Walsh, 18 Oxford Rd. North, Chiswick. Mdx.
Tacklemaster - Pete Munt, The Cedars, Upper Butts, Brentford, Mdx.
Recorder - Simon Knight, 40 Garrard Rd., Banstead. Surrey.