

Robinson

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 38.

OCTOBER 1965.

REPORT OF HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING.

The meeting was opened at 6.55 p.m. and the Chairman was Pete Mathews. Attendance was extremely poor.

Secretary's Report. (Brian Mee)

Pedro sent his apologies for his absence, due to his annual visit to hospital, and the Secretary's Report was read by Joan.

Total membership of the Club remains much the same as last year; there is still a fairly high proportion of inactive to active members. During the next six-months we should turn our attentions to getting publicity to non-cavers, and suggestions are invited as to how this can be done. A satisfactory scheme has been upon for our surveys to be sold by Brian Ellis and Tim Reynolds. The insurance of the Cottage has been completed, but the nature of the building means that we have had to pay a high premium to secure adequate cover. This sum, the rent, cost of coke and the like, mean that the Cottage is a fairly expensive proposition to run, and must be well used to cover costs.

The Southern Council is now a well established part of the caving scene, and we have been represented at all its meetings. There has been a recent increase in cave vandalism - more the destruction of fixed equipment than formations. This is obviously to be deplored. If members see vandals at work it is surely their duty to (a) personally intervene and (b) advise the landowner.

Treasurer's Report. (Tony Fitzgibbon)

The accounts could not be produced as they have not yet been audited, but as soon as possible they will be circulated. Approximately £31 is at present in the General Fund, and £29 in the Cottage Purchase Fund. Collections on Thursday evenings are rather disappointing, and contributions seem to be made by the same few people each week.

Cottage Warden's Report. (Pat Walsh)

The Cottage is now fully operational although there are a number of interior additions and improvements to be made. As well as the outside porch, we require a septic pit and it is hoped to commence this project next summer. It will cost approximately £20. For the Cottage to prove an economic proposition, an average of at least 12 people per weekend should be paying Cottage Fees.

Recorder's Report. (Simon Knight)

A considerable amount of work is required to organise the library, and when it is moved to Mendip in two or three weeks time the Recorder will have greater opportunity to do this and to establish it in its new quarters.

Tacklemaster's Report. (Pete Goddard)

Pete was co-opted on to the Committee as Tacklemaster, following Pete Munt's resignation from the post. One cwt. of carbide has been ordered and is on its way. It will be split up into 1 lb. tins and sold to members of the Club. Club tackle is in reasonable condition although there has been one recent example of faulty tackle being returned without mention being made of the breakage. This could have serious consequences, and is a bad reflection on the Clubs and safety standards. The Nife Cells which were ordered some months ago have not yet arrived due to our order being lost by S.W.C.C. However they assure us that we will receive the first lamps available from their next consignment.

Editor's Report. (Joan Robinson.)

Since the last General Meeting the monthly newsletter has been sent out to a number of other clubs in return for publications which they send to us. So far, a few members have helped greatly by writing newsletter articles, but there are many more people who could assist in this way. Some copies of the 1962 Journal are still available at the reduced price of 6/-. Numerous enquiries have resulted in arrangements being made for duplicating the next journal, and typing of the stencils is due to begin within the next few weeks. Help will be required with assembling and binding copies.

Meet Secretary's Report. (Tony Knibbs)

The programme for 1966 meets is already provisionally planned. Prior bookings for caving trips is becoming more and more essential, and consequently there is an even greater necessity for members to give notification of their intention to attend meets. Most of the digging during the past six months has been done by small bands of people who are constantly shouting for help, but get very little. Apart from the usual round of Mendip trips, there will be several away meets during 1966: the following suggestions have been made, but further ideas are welcome:-

Derbyshire: Giant's Hole, Oxbow Cavern, Speedwell Mine, P.8.

South Wales: O.F.D., Dan-yr-Ogof, Tunnel Cave, Neath Valley (camping), Llygadd Lwchwr (if there is sufficient interest), possibly Llethryd Swallet, Agen Allwedd.

North Wales: Ogof Dydd Byraf.

Yorkshire: Lost John System. It may be possible to try a normal weekend trip to Yorkshire now that the M.1 and M.6 make the journey shorter. Any requests?

Eire: Boat bookings for our summer meet in Co. Clare must be finalised very shortly. Please give names to Mig. There is a possibility that members of the Swiss caving club may join us again.

Manufacture of wet-suits is soon to begin. Why not make one as a Christmas present to yourself? Orders to Mig, please.

CLUB NEWS.

Welcome to the following people who are applying for membership:-

Derek Allwood - 2, St. Ursula Grove, Pinner, Middx.
Tony Ingold - 328, Carr Road, Northolt, Middx.
Mike Quartermain - 6, Tadcaster Cottages, North Rd., N.7.

B---dy F--l ?? We wish a speedy recovery to Pedro who, yet again, has been taking advantage of the National Health Service (Operating Theatre Division). Does this mean that he has another valid excuse for avoiding caving trips during the next few months? A relevant comment from medical circles was that Pedro is a 'bl---y f--l for going caving with a perforated, gangreous appendix' !

Carbide Spares. New carbide lamps and spare parts can be obtained from the Tacklemaster, Pete Goddard, on Thursday evenings at the Club meeting room at The Royal Oak in Brentford.

Surveys. The following surveys are now obtainable from the Editor:-

Pinetree Plan, Scale - 1" to 10'	Price 2/-
Ubley Hill Pot	2/-
Goatchurch, Scale 1" to 20'	2/6
Longwood/August, Sheet Two, Scale - 1" to 10'	5/6
Cooper's Hole (March 1963), Scale - 1" to 10'	2/6
Swildon's (1960)	3/-

Cottage Warming Party. This was very successful in spite of poor Club turnout. Mr. and Mrs. Fry came, as did a number of people from other clubs, even though Wessex Cave Club was holding its annual dinner on the same evening. An extremely amusing cabaret was performed by Pete Mathews, Dave Berry and Zot! although it is doubtful if they are able to remember much of it themselves. The climax of the evening was provided by Pat when, instead of launching himself up at the cottage rafters for a quick traverse along the beam, he managed to descend through the seat of the chair on which he was standing, and sat smiling rather sheepishly amongst the wreckage! His acrobatics were, however, brought to a sudden halt when he landed head first on the floor after an unsuccessful attempt to hang by his toes from a ladder.

Lamb Leer. An interesting trip, by six people, took place on Sunday, 24th. October. It should be noted that I unselfishly agreed to forego the journey down the ladder pitch, in order to man the winch at the top To stay there, alone except for the company provided by a stray bluebottle, was surely a feat to be remembered by all. (Did I hear someone say 'Chicken!') The remainder of the party continued as far as the Chamber of Falling Waters.

J.C.R.

MENDIP CAVE REGISTRY.

A meeting is to be held in November, and our Group has been invited to send a representative.

SWILDON'S CALLOUT.

On Saturday, 23rd. October, for the third time since the pipe was removed from the Forty Foot in Swildon's, a caver was in difficulties and had to be assisted up the pitch.

DEBAUCHERY: ANYONE ?

Ellerkeld Cave, Chapel-le-Dale should offer unique opportunities for establishing a new caving cult. "The Speleologist" (Vol.1, No. 4) announces ".... newly discovered cave of debaucher...." which, to those cavers seeking an outlet for vicious sensual desires or record depths of depravity, promises much. The cave is extremely tight and arduous and doubtless abounds in lecherous squeezes, obscene rifts and perverted pools. The printed survey will delight the true connoisseur but, for obvious reasons, can only be obtained under plain wrapper.

But wait ! This may be a hoax. Perhaps they meant DEBOUCHURE !

'THE BRITISH CAVER'--(Vol. 42, October 1965)

The list of contents announces a wide variety of topics to be included in the October issue of this journal. Such diverse places as Australia, Malaya, South Wales, Yorkshire, Mendip and St. Kilda are represented. In addition to the usual cave descriptions can be found articles on Dene Holes, Exposure suits, and Legends of Gower Caves, suggesting that interest-to-all is the prime object of 'The British Caver's' editor. Price of this publication is 9/-, post paid, and it is obtainable from G. Platten, Rotherfield, Fernhill Lane, New Milton, Hants.

M.C.G. RESCUE PRACTICE - September 26th.

The following people were present:-

From M.C.G. - Mike Brace, Geoff Davies, Tony Fitzgibbon, Pete Goddard, Tony Ingold, Tony Knibbs, Simon Knight, Pete Mathews, Brian Pittman, Mike Quartermain, Joan Robinson.
From W.S.G. - Dave Cruddas, Cedric Green.

An Account by the patient.

In spite of attempts the previous night to get at least one person drunk enough to volunteer his services, when Sunday morning dawned fourteen cavers were still looking for someone to rescue from G.B. Cavern.

Elizabeth Davies refused to assist in the search.

for a 'patient', by drawing a name from a Malaysian policeman's hat, and it remained for her mother to do the honour. I used to count Ann amongst my friends until she called out MY name!

My 'accident' took place just below the chain and ladder on the 40 foot pitch in the Main Chamber of G.B. I was suffering from internal injuries, a possible dislocation of a vertebra, exposure and exhaustion - a formidable list. The rescue party soon arrived. They laid out the carrying sheet on what at first appeared to be a flat piece of ground, and I was duly deposited therein and strapped down. As it happened the 'flat' piece of ground was slightly convex and after a very short time resulted in uncomfortable backache. A handkerchief was placed over my face, and served its purpose admirably; without it my eyes, nose and mouth would have been full of dirt and water drips - and this in a relatively mud-free cave. The sensation as I lay there, looking up at a mass of bobbing helmet lamps, was most odd, but I soon got used to it. My rescuers were careful not to shine their lamps in my eyes any more than necessary and, indeed, used side-bulbs at times. An important point to remember is that the patient needs to be given confidence. When a rescuer says "I think this knot will hold", it gives an impression that it may well fail.

Thus the party began the trek up the roomy Main Chamber and through the tighter entrance series, to the blockhouse door. I cannot give an account of the way in which various obstacles and difficulties were overcome as my eyes were closed for much of the time. In fact I still don't know how to conduct a cave rescue! The journey along the Main Chamber was comfortable although after about an hour I had begun to slip down into the carrying sheet. As I was dragged up parts of the entrance passages I slid even further down and indeed, was pretty uncomfortable by the end of the journey. Perhaps if this type of carrying sheet is to be used, the patient should be restrapped at approximately hourly intervals. The rope around my ankles also became tight as time went on, and some padding would have been helpful here, or alternatively softer and wider webbing might have been used. This same point was mentioned by George Fletcher in C.S.S. Newsletter, Vol. 7 No. 2, Nov. 1964.

Whilst on the subject of padding it should be mentioned that the blanket which was lining the PVC carrying sheet, surely saved me from bruises which might have resulted from the occasional (very occasional) bumps which I received. I was also grateful for the exposure

suit which I wore for the purpose of the rescue; I didn't suffer at all from cold.

Towards the end of the rescue the breaks in my journey appeared to get longer. Perhaps this was imagined, perhaps it was due to the rescuers tiring a little and / or more difficult conditions in the narrow passages. Rescue conditions obviously were more trying as could be judged from the increased panting and blowing of the party. At this point I gleefully recall Simon's moans and grunts as he lay face down in a pool of murky water whilst I was dragged over him!

At the entrance I was jolly glad to be unlaced from my 'prison'. Even if there had been an offer to complete the rescue by carrying me back to the cars, I should have declined gracefully (gracefully?).

All in all, there were no major faults as far as I could see - or feel - in the way in which the rescue was carried out. My thanks to all for their care; I now feel confident that a cave accident victim rescued by M.C.G. and W.S.G. members would stand a pretty good chance of survival.

Joan Robinson.

MEET PROGRAMME.

November 13th./14th. Sat. Cow Hole And/or Cuckoo Cleeves.
Sum. Blackmoor, Cooper's.
27th./28th. Sat. Coral Cave and Loxton Cave.

COMMITTEE.

Secretary - Brian Mee, 12 Crambourne 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
Tacklenaster - Pete Goddard, 11 Lebanon Park, Twickenham. Mdx
Recorder - Simon Knight, 40 Garrard Road, Banstead, Surrey.

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