

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 39.

NOVEMBER 1965.

CLUB NEWS.

Cottage. Mr. Fred Young, of Lower Farm, has kindly given us a three-piece suite and a fine Victoriana armchair for the cottage. A few weeks earlier, six kitchen chairs were donated by Tony Knibbs and Pete Mathews. A few mattresses have so far been brought to the cottage but many more are needed - size 2' 3" (to 2' 6") by 6' 3". If anyone knows of any unwanted mattresses they (the mattresses I mean) will be assured of a good home down at Nordrach! The Cottage Warden points out that if furniture in the cottage is to last, repairs must be carried out as soon as the faults are noticed; this already applies to one of the new chairs, which requires a castor.

Membership. The following people were accepted as probationary members at the last Committee meeting:-

Derek Allwood

Tony Ingold

Mike Quartermain

Roy Townshend, 20 Beaumont Court, Chiswick, W. 4.

Welcome to Malcom and Norma Cotter, who have recently returned to this country after three years in Singapore.

Pinetree Survey. A new master copy of Mike Rennie's survey has been prepared by Tony Knibbs and is to be lodged with Hall Harding, in Bath.

Ireland. Ten Club members have arranged to visit Co. Clare for two weeks next summer.

Litter Purge. It has been a principle of all good cavers that only footprints should remain when they leave the cave - no litter, waste carbide etc. Unfortunately this principle has not been put into practice by everyone, and some of the more frequently visited Mendip caves are becoming extremely dirty. As the M.C.G. has had close connections with the Longwood/August System for a number of years, the Committee has decided that it would be a good idea if the Club undertakes periodic cleaning-up sessions in the cave. Details of the weekend when the first of these purges will be arranged (probably shortly after Christmas) will be announced soon. This project is one which deserves the support of all members.

Library Addition. Bradford pothole Club Bulletin (Vol. 4, No. 6.) is a recent addition to our library, and contains some interesting articles. For those wishing to gain a rapid picture of British Upper Paleozoic Palaeontology, there is a short account with a page of clear illustrations.

The article is a bit sketchy, especially in relation to the Carboniferous Mountain Limestone which is so important to cavers. It is to be hoped that the author intends to deal more fully with this subject in a later article.

Two short accounts dealing with East African and Australian caves respectively make interesting reading: in the Suswa district lava caves are to be found, one system being a mile long. As a result of increasing interest in caving, the Cave Exploration Group of East Africa has been formed.

Quote. "We'll be able to produce a whole Journal next year, filled with articles on Blackmoor Cave." - Mig!

#### WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME.

The Association of the Pengelly Cave Research Centre has once again arranged a series of lectures in conjunction with the Imperial College Caving Club. They are to be held at Imperial College, Dept of Physics, Prince Consort Road, London S.W.7. (nearest Tube stations - Gloucester Road and South Kensington) at 7.30.p.m. Admission free.

Nov. 24th.	'Cave Palaeontology'	Dr. K. Kowalski
Dec. 8th.	'Cave Communications'	Dr. Harold Lord
Jan. 12th.	'The Origin of Caves'	Dr. G. Warwick
Jan. 26th.	'Bats in Caves'	Mr. Andrew Watson
Feb. 9th.	'Photographing Caves'	Speaker to be announced.

#### LIVING IN DARKNESS.

On Saturday 26th. February, a symposium entitled 'Living in Darkness' is to be held at the British Museum (Natural History), S.W.7. It will consist of a number of 20 min. lectures with opportunities for questions and discussion. Booking forms for the symposium will be available from Pedro. The provisional programme is as follows:-

- 'The Cave Environment'
- 'Plants under reduced light'
- 'Cave Invertebrates'
- 'Blind Cave Fish'
- 'How Bats Live'
- 'Man in Caves'(1) - 'Archeological aspect'

'Cave Palaeontology'  
'Man in Caves'(2) - 'The Speleologist and  
Conservation.'

AN OFFERING TO THE RESIDENTS OF CHISWICK, W.4.

That those who come from darkest Wales  
Should try to lose our English mails  
Is something we expect.

But when our Cottage Warden, Pat,  
Finds not one letter on his mat  
He knows just who to blame.

Joan: Chiswick's not in Middlesex.  
Postmen will have to crane their necks  
With this quite wrong address.

For W.4. it's a tale of woe.  
But Pat - he doesn't feel so low.  
No-one would write to him anyway.

(Pat's address in the last two newsletters should  
have read: Chiswick, London W.4.) - O.D.  
oo?oo

The Editor  
Is sorry for  
The great mistake  
That she did make.

- Joan.

M.C.G. RESCUE PRACTICE.

"The following comment has been received:-

Glad as I was to hear how carefully the patient was treated may I add a thought about food and drink. The patient was suffering from exposure and exhaustion and a hot drink would have been useful in relieving these conditions. In fact, providing there was no internal bleeding, it is an important part of the treatment of patients who have suffered from "crushing" (no, not that sort of crush, dear.) that they should be given four pints of liquid through the mouth.

The rescuers, too, reported as "panting and blowing" might well have benefited from refreshment. I realise that this was only a practice (and one which I chickened out of), but I think equipment to prepare refreshments - self-heating soup, perhaps - should be taken on rescues."

Ogofwr Ddu.

## NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE CONFERENCE.

One of the rescue techniques demonstrated at the National Cave Rescue Conference at Buxton last month (October, that is) was the 'counter balance system' which was used by miners two hundred years ago. Using the system the injured caver is attached at the bottom of vertical shafts to a line which is passed through a pulley block at the top of the shaft and a fit caver is tied to the other end of the line. He uses his weight to pull up the victim.

The rescuer must, of course, be heavier than the victim and he can use an electron ladder to either haul himself down or to grip as a brake. The system, which means a smooth ride for the injured caver, was used last year by a British team in the Gouffre Berger.

## KENTISH CAVERS' FINANCIAL HOPES DASHED.

The following was extracted from a national newspaper recently:-

"The management of Chislehurst Caves, in Kent, which a local legend says are haunted, wish to make it clear that they are not offering £100 to anyone who will spend twelve hours alone there, as stated in a recent report"

.....

The next article, recently 'discovered' amongst the wealth of junk pertaining to the post of Editor, was written before the Council of Southern Caving Clubs and the Council of Northern Caving Clubs were initiated. Richard's insight into the future is remarkable, is it not ?

## WE MUST UNITE.

For many years, cavers and potholers have prided themselves on their individuality. This time has now passed. We must now realise that we must give up this foolish independence and weld ourselves into a single homogenised mass. You will realise that I could give you thousands of watertight reasons why this is so, but I will not insult your intelligence by stating what must be obvious, even to the most moronic of you.

I am therefore forming a NATIONAL ORGANISATION to administer all aspects of caving and potholing. I am arranging for the erection of block houses on the thousand largest caves in the British Isles, and access to these will be available only to members of the Independent Woollacott Association and Spelaeological Hotchpotch of

Great Britain, as the NATIONAL BODY will be known. This title is somewhat long, but can be abbreviated to the shorter title of I. WASH.

Naturally, some small element of control must be kept over access to the caves, but the system of "Club Days" should meet this need. Due to the large number of clubs involved and the consequential administrative difficulties, some small limitation of club activities must result. The larger clubs should be able to have caving trips at six monthly intervals, and even this reasonable time may possibly be cut once the funds of I. WASH permit the installation of a computer.

Clubs will, of course, have to amend their normal caving practices and run trips for parties of fifty or more, in order to accommodate all their members. Even this has advantages. All members will get to know each other really well and a fine spirit of friendship and comradeship will result from the closeness and togetherness of their caving excursions. You will agree, I am sure, that the satisfaction that will result from knowing that you are caving as part of a NATIONAL BODY will more than compensate for the slight inconvenience to which you will be put.

What about cost? I am anxious that cost to clubs should be kept to a minimum. If the organisation is carried out by a committee, composed of representatives from member clubs, administration will be expensive, to say nothing of the time that would be wasted in senseless discussion and debate. I shall therefore run the whole organisation, and I am sure that all member clubs will have the most complete trust in my wisdom and integrity, and my decisions will therefore be final and binding. By this means, the cost to clubs can be kept down, and the fees required will only be a modest £5 per member, per annum.

You may well wonder why I am willing to shoulder the worry and responsibility that I am taking on. In short, I am dedicated to the well being of the caving fraternity in this country, and I realise that I am the only person who has the ability to weld together such a collection of individuals into a NATIONAL BODY of a uniform nature. There is no wish on my part for self-glorification, since I am by nature shy and retiring with a loathing for pushing myself forward, but I must make this sacrifice for the benefit of others.

We now pass therefore into a new era of caving. No longer will you have to feign friendship for farmers and other land owners in order to pass over their property. Now, one imperious letter of the stereotype-form variety will shake farmers into submission when they realise that it comes from a NATIONAL BODY.

Obviously, so that I.WASH can claim to be fully representative of all cavers in Great Britain, all Clubs must join so access to caves will be totally restricted to member Clubs. Club treasurers should send their subscriptions to me, c/o The Council for Caving and Potholing Ruination, to whom all cheques should be made payable.

RICHARD WOOLLACOTT.

TACKLE STORAGE.

The Club has purchased a large cupboard to be converted for use as a tackle and carbide store. For the time being it is housed in the cottage, but its final destination is to be the front porch.

CALOR GAS.

A third cylinder of Calor Gas is to be purchased to supplement the two existing cylinders.

MEET PROGRAMME.

November 27th./28th. Coral Cave and Loxton Cave.  
Digging at Blackmoor.  
December 11th./12th. Club Meet.

COMMITTEE.

Secretary - Brian Mee, 12 Cranbourne Drive, Pinner, Middx.  
Treasurer - Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Rd, Ruislip, Mdx.  
Meet Secretary - Tony Knibbs, 2 Rectory Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.  
Cottage Warden - Pat Walsh, 18 Oxford Rd. North, Chiswick, W.4.  
Tacklemaster - Peter Goddard, 11 Lebanon Park, Twickenham, Mdx.  
Recorder - Simon Knight, 40 Garrard Rd. Bansted, Surrey.  
Editor - Joan Robinson,