

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.

NEWSLETTER NO. 41.

JANUARY 1966

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION.

The newsletter is normally distributed on the last Thursday of the month at our club meeting room at the Royal Oak, Brentford. It would help finances (and help me too) if people could make the effort to be there then. Newsletters having to be sent to London-based members by post are likely to be considerably delayed.

J.C.R. (Editor)

1966 NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN BRISTOL.

The 1966 Speleological Conference (organised by the B.S.A.) is to be held in Bristol from September 9th. to 12th. Papers will be presented on various aspects of caving and there will be film shows, exhibitions etc.

This is the nearest to Mendip that the National Conference has been held since 1937 and it could be YOUR opportunity to present a paper, or stage an exhibition on behalf of the Group.

This is a preliminary notice and further details will be available later in the year. Information for anyone wishing to present papers is available from Pedro.

~~MAN~~BECOME A DUSTBIN FOR A DAY !

How many times have you explored a cave system and noticed the unsightly evidence of other less considerate visitors? A fine stream passage with piles of spent carbide on dry ledges; beautifully decorated chambers littered with soggy flashbulb packets and used bulbs; sand-floored galleries strewn with remains of many an impromptu picnic. All this despite the high conservation ideals of our many responsible clubs. Perhaps you have wondered what you, as an individual, can do about this sorry state.

In at least one major Mendip cave system, Swildon's Hole, an annual visit is organised for the express purpose of removing the accumulated rubbish. It has already been reported (M.C.G. newsletter no. 39, Nov. 1965) that the M.C.G. is to organise a similar cleaning-up operation in the Longwood/August system. This is to take place on Feb. 12th./13th. A large party of a dozen or more people will be needed, the party being split up into groups of three with certain areas of the system allocated to them.

I would suggest that each group should carry a large sack, a stiff scrubbing brush to remove spent carbide and sundry written comments, and a softer brush to tackle areas of very grimy formation.

If we are to do the job properly we must be prepared to spend something like ten hours in the system. This will

It is advisable to organise a brew-up rendezvous somewhere central in the system. We might add a competitive flavour in the form of free beer for the group collecting the most rubbish. One might find a cigarette or two in one of those discarded packets or maybe enough shreds of boiler suits to make up one good one. The possibilities are endless. One thing is certain, the operation will be of great benefit to speleology on Mendip. As you struggle up the entrance chimney with a heavy sack of rubbish, cursing all litter-louts and resolving never to join their ranks, you'll understand the necessity to - BECOME A DUSTMAN FOR A DAY !

Tony Knibbs.

SURVEYS.

The following surveys are available from Joan Robinson at the stated prices:-

Caves of the Cheddar Gorge	4/3
Eastwater, Sheet 1	} 8/3
Sheet 2	
Goatchurch	2/6
Holwell Cave	2/6
Lamb Leer	3/9
Longwood, Sheet 1	5/6
Sheet 2	4/-
Sheet 3	3/6
Pinetree Pot	2/6
St. Cuthbert's, Plan	3/3
Section	2/6
Addendum	1/-
Stoke Lane	4/3
Swildon's	4/3

BLACKMOOR.

A new digging bucket has been constructed by Pete Goddard in conjunction with Pete Munt, which considerably eases the burden of those poor souls working on the surface at Blackmoor. Instead of having to upend the bucket to empty it, one now has only to remove a pin which enables the bottom of the bucket to swing open and deposit its load with a minimum of effort.

Paul Dye and Dave Mitchell brought blasting equipment to Blackmoor on 15th. Jan. and a large stubborn boulder put up little opposition. Vast quantities of boulders and muddy debris were removed during the weekend, and the shaft is becoming noticeably wider, probably due to the fact that we are approaching the roof of the main chamber.

OGOFWR DDU REVIEWS.....

Was it Equus przewalskii I saw pulling our milk cart ?

The answer, briefly, is "no" because Equus przewalskii is a horse living in the Mongolian Steppes, who is thought

to be the ancestor of all present-day European heppos. Drawings of him (or very similar) appear in cave paintings in Lascaux and elsewhere.

* How did I know? By consulting page 1 of the "1963 Speleological Abstracts". This latest edition, just published, is an invaluable reference work arranged much better than its predecessor which covered 1962. The publications of 1963 have been classified by the district to which they refer rather than the area where they were published. This is, of course, much more useful. The abstractors have done a good job searching a wide variety of sources in addition to the publications of caving clubs.

* "Speleological Abstracts" Vol 1 No.2, Editor: Ian Standing (of UBSS) published by British Speleological Association, price 6/6 including postage - in the library.

Which Wet Suit?

Too late, perhaps, for some of our members, but useful for reference is a comparison of wet suits noted by J.M. Clarke in Bradford Pothole Club's 1965 winter "Bulletin". He compares different thicknesses and materials with some specimen costs.

In the same issue are a number of reports of caving trips in the north, in the Gower Peninsula and elsewhere. Is it that our members don't go on interesting caving trips or can't they write?

Ways of Improving Rescues.

A plea for uniform instructions to be issued to chief constables by the Home Office was made by Mike Hollingworth, chairman of C.R.O. He was speaking at the fourth biennial conference of cave rescue organisations. Apparently, to induce the chief constable of Denbigh that the C.R.O. should be called in on one occasion, he had to pose as a Home Office 'expert'.

Those at the conference also saw equipment made by Industrial Pumps empty Carlswark Sump (where the boy soldier was rescued last year) in 1½ hours. The pump which is electrically driven from a dynamo mounted on a Landrover can raise water 80 feet (or 120 feet if boosted).

(The M.R.O. report on the conference by Oliver Lloyd 1.11.65. - in the library.)

Town Drain Described More Accurately.

Previous descriptions of Town Drain, Nedd Fechan Gorge, Ystradfellte, are claimed to be inaccurate by J.H. Tucker writing in Axbridge Newsletter (December 1965). He outlines a description of the cave and offers a Grade 2 survey.

Pengelly Lectures.

As this newsletter goes to print, three of this series of lectures have already been given, and each one has been attended by some of our members. The first, on "Cave Palaeontology", proved to be very interesting although the Speaker's command of English pronunciation was such that one had to concentrate very hard especially at the beginning. A broad picture was given of the use of fossil remains, especially vertebrates, in determining climatic changes of the past. I think some of the audience were a little disappointed that actual methods of identification of bones were not discussed, but this would have needed far longer than one hour to explain.

The lecture by Dr. G. Warwick on "The Origin of Caves" was well illustrated with a selection of colour transparencies of caves and landforms. In his effort to cover such a wide topic, Dr. Warwick seemed only to graze the surface, and I feel that some aspects would have benefited from more detailed examination. One or two interesting points were raised, notably the theory that closed caverns may have been formed by geothermal gradients within the rocks which set up convectional water movements, and hence caused solution of the limestone.

A report of the lecture given by Dr. Harold Lord on "Cave Communications" will appear in a later newsletter.

J.C.R.

Photographing Caves

The next Pengelly lecture, which is the last one in this series, deals with "Photographing Caves" and will begin at 7.30 p.m. on February 9th, at Imperial College, Dept. of Physics, Prince Consort Rd., London S.W.7.

MEET PROGRAMME.

- Jan. 29/30th. SOUTH WALES - There might still be time to arrange to join this meet, when it is hoped to down O.F.D. and Dan-yr-Ogof.
- Feb. 12/13th. LONGWOOD/AUGUST SYSTEM - "Operation Spring-clean" (See page 1 of this newsletter).
- Feb. 26/27th. EASTWATER SWALLET - Just in case you happen to have Pat as your leader ("I know that cave like the back of my hand, you know"), why not invest in a survey at the bargain price of 8/3 for two sheets.

MALAYA - SCALING IN TEMPURONG RIVER CAVE.

Our last weekend visit to this great cave proved to be one of the most awe-inspiring and exciting we had ever made, giving us a fine finale to our explorations in Malaya. We knew that we would have to do some scaling, so took hammer and saws along with us and recovered some scaffolding poles and nails from a recently deserted mining Kelong. (A Kelong is a tin-ore separating structure made from a scaffolding of poles which support a series of shallow wooden troughs. Water, ore and waste tumbles from one to another and the heavy tin-ore sinks to the bottom.)

Norma and I then struggled with our equipment to the cave entrance. Inside we had to raise the poles and gear item by item up a vertical rock climb, then down a huge boulder pile slippery with guano. The next obstacle was a series of stalagmite terraces which led us upwards to a broad platform. At the top we had a rest and quenched our thirst. This was our usual halting point which gave us a chance to view our surroundings. The roof some 40 feet above was pocketed with domes and arched furrows. A little in front of us was a vertical drop of 20 feet over which, when the weather was wet, tumbled a noisy waterfall. Beyond the drop we could see the terraces and beyond the enormous boulder pile we had descended earlier, the chamber below was at least 150 feet high. Further away we saw the green of the entrance at a distance of about 1,000 feet away. This spectacular visage gave the greatest volume of cave I have ever seen from one point.

After our rest we continued over easier ground for the ledge was fairly level and floored with sand, thus enabling us to drag our poles. At the back and to the right we entered a roomy tunnel with similar floor which led to the chamber where we wanted to do the scaling.

The obvious way up was to use a wide crack which had been ascended before in the past by guano-diggers; their now rotten poles were still in place. Bit by bit I was able to cut new lengths and fit them crosswise, gradually gaining altitude until no more were needed. A steep slope led upwards to a breach in a 4 foot high step, and once past this I found myself on one side of a wide but fairly low chamber. There were no signs of digging and a hard crust had formed over the guano. The fill must have shrunk for the hard surface sloped downwards from the walls, and in places had broken away leaving a scar to show the original point of contact. In the centre of the chamber was a thick column of bedrock close to which was a deep pit. The chamber ended at a steep slope leading to a drop into Lake Passage which we had previously explored. At the top of the slope

was a slab of stalagmite floor raised vertically and looking like a tombstone; to my surprise it was inscribed in English "Here passed by the bodies of -----", and below were listed three people from R.A.F. Tengali (I have the names in my log but cannot now recall them). Continuing the exploration of the chamber brought us to a short side passage which was blocked at the end by a stal flow. Having satisfied myself that there was nothing leading off, I returned.

We were still quite early so decided to take our longest pole to a hole which was frequently a rising, forming the waterfall inlet. This water came up a narrow hole some 20 feet deep, one wall of which was rock and the other mud. Since the hole was now dry it gave a good opportunity for exploration. The descent was made but unfortunately it became too tight to progress. I think a dig at this point could prove rewarding.

Back at the waterfall landing we again sat down thinking at first that we had exhausted exploration in Tempurong. Then we noticed that a slope which appeared to end at a nearby wall had a path. We followed this upwards and the wall rounded a bend to reveal a ladder! As usual we found the wood rather rotten and dangerous. I made several attempts to climb but without success.

Next time - The climb and Beyond.

Malcom Cotter.

COMMITTEE.

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CONGRATULATIONS.

Congratulations and best wishes to James Gibb and Ann, on their recent engagement.

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Twickenham, Middlesex.

MENDIP CAVING GROUP.
MEET PROGRAMME 1966.

- ✓ Jan. 8th./9th. MENDIP - G.B.Cave (Sunday). *No attendance*
- ✓ Jan. 29th./30th. SOUTH WALES, PENWYLLT - Ogof Ffynnon Ddu,
Dan-yr-Ogof. *good attendance*
- ✓ Feb. 12th./13th. MENDIP - Longwood/August System: "Operation
Springclean". *excellent attendance*
- Feb. 26th./27th. MENDIP - Eastwater Swallet. *poor attendance.*
- Mar. 12th./13th. MENDIP - St. Cuthbert's Swallet.
- Mar. 26th./27th. MENDIP - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER.
Cottage maintenance. *Good attendance*
- EASTER.
- April 8th./11th. SOUTH WALES, YSTRADFELLTE - Camping.
Visits to the caves in the Hepste and Mellte valleys. *excellent attendance.*
- April 30th./May 1st. MENDIP - Swildon's Hole: Vicarage
Passage. *good attendance*
- May 14th./15th. MENDIP - G.B.Cave (Saturday).
- WHITSUN.
- May 28th./30th. DERBYSHIRE - Camping. Visits to Giant's *very poor*
Hole, Oxlow Cavern, P.8. (Jackpot). *attendance.*
- June 11th./12th. MENDIP - Longwood/August System; Rescue *insufficient*
Practice. *people.*
- June 25th./26th. MENDIP - Stoke Lane Slocker. *poor attendance*
Lamb Leer (Sunday). *attendance.*

SUMMER MEET.

- July 23rd./Aug. 7th. EIRE - Camping. The centre will be at
Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare. Visits to
many of the extensive cave systems of
the "Burren" (Slieve Elva). *9 people.*

BANK HOLIDAY.

- Aug. 27th./29th. YORKSHIRE - Camping. The main event is a
visit to Lost John's System (Sunday). *excellent*
→ 25 people

- Sept. 10th./11th. MENDIP - Cow Hole. Cuckoo Cleeves Hole (if open).
- Sept. 24th./25th. SOUTH WALES, LLANGATTOCK - Ogof Agen Allwedd, Ogof-y-Darren Cilau. *Mod.*
- Oct. 15th./16th. MENDIP - HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING. *Good*
- Nov. 5th./6th. MENDIP - G.B. Cave (Sunday): Rescue Practice. *8 people*
- Nov. 26th./27th. SOUTH WALES, PENNYLLT - Tunnel Cave, ~~Pwll~~ Pant Mawr. *excellent - 20 people*
- Dec. 10th./11th. MENDIP - Lamb Leer (Sunday).
- CHRISTMAS.
- Dec. 24th./26th. MENDIP - Festive Occasion. Visit to Gough's Cave.

NOTES. All persons visiting caves in the Charterhouse area (this includes Blackmoor Swallet) must be in possession of a Charterhouse Caving Committee permit. These may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

Prior notice would be appreciated from persons wishing to attend meets in areas other than Mendip, and rescue practices on Mendip.

15th. December 1965

Tony Knibbs,
 Hon. Meet Secretary,
 2 Rectory Lane,
BYFLEET. Surrey.