

J. Robinson

MENDIP CAVING GROUP

Newsletter No. 47

July, 1966.

CLUB NEWS

Finances At the beginning of the month of July the General Fund stood at £12, and the L.P.F. contained £36.

Cottage. The front porch is now complete and ready for use. For this we are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Ottewill who gave us a generous donation earlier in the year, and to the small number of members who built it. A shelf for helmets and a row of pegs for boilersuits are provided, and from now on no dirty, wet caving gear, boots or boilersuits should be brought inside the cottage.

Congratulations and good wishes to Pat Walsh and June Seath, who announced their engagement at the end of June.

Malcolm Cotter's telephone number is now 01-574-2166.

Log Book. The log book provides an invaluable permanent record of the Group's activities. At present, people do not seem to be writing up reports of caving trips, cottage work etc. In future years 1966 will remain a a blank period in the Club's history unless YOU make it YOUR business to write up the log.

Unclaimed Property. There is a large amount of apparently abandoned property lying around the cottage, including caving gear, helmets, boots, carbide lamps, clothing, bedding, tins of food etc. On the weekend of the Half Yearly General Meeting (October 15th./16th.) any unclaimed property will be disposed of at the discretion of the Committee.

A USEFUL PRODUCT.

A product that is useful for treating ferrous surfaces to repel water and prevent rust can be obtained from motor accessory shops; it is called 'Rocket WD40'. A quick spray in an electric headlamp will remove all the water and prevent more coming into contact with the metal. The treatment will not last indefinitely, but a spray once a month at most should suffice.

M. O. C.

SWILDON'S PIPE

A pipe has been in place on the Forty Foot Pitch for some weeks now; the new pipe is somewhat smaller in diameter than the previous one. It is to be hoped that in future the perverted practical jokers in the caving world will

let reason intrude far enough into their minds for them to leave fixed safety devices in place.

AUGUST HOLE.

Wessex members have been blasting the main stream termination at frequent intervals recently, and the position looks promising with a small open rift continuing onwards. The M.C.G. is continuing its dig at the end of Sand Passage which appears to be leading in the direction of the small boulder blocked chamber which lies east of it. Why not combine your next caving trip with an hour or so of digging?

J.C.R.

Don's Chamber Rift.

The report of the rift leading from Don's Chamber should not be misunderstood in so far as its presence has been known for some four years. The recent advance was when Mig entered it and noticed that it continued beyond the point visible from the chamber, thus enhancing the indications of an extension in this direction.

Malcolm Cotter

SATURDAY, JULY 9TH. - RAMSPIT.

After reading a report in the 'Speleologist' claiming that Ramspit was the deepest pitch on Mendip, at 200', Malcolm Cotter, Dave Mitchell and I decided to investigate.

Next Saturday morning found us armed with 200' of ladder and over 200' of lifeline, at Deer's Leap (near Ebbor Gorge), where we followed an obvious valley in search of the entrance.

The three of us decided to comb the area by splitting up, which soon resulted in me becoming completely lost. I was eventually guided back by the intermittent whistle blasts of the other two, who announced that they thought they had found the hole. After following a stream for a little way we came to a shakehole about 10' deep, with an inviting cave entrance at the bottom. We had a look inside before preparing the ladders, and were out much quicker than we had envisaged, for a steeply descending dug-out cave passage rapidly ended after about 20' in depth.

Three perturbed cavers made their way back to the cottage that afternoon wisely deciding not to believe everything they read in caving magazines in future.

Greg Smith.

RECENT ARTIFACTS FROM BLACKMOOR.

When one considers the depth to which the excavation has reached, I think it safe to assume that any objects now found in the shaft were left there prior to

the hole being filled in. The objects could even give a clue as to when the cave was being actively mined. The most plentiful material is rotten wood, probably from pitprops. One good portion of a prop was found some years ago and still rests in the cave. Earlier this year Dave found a sickle blade which has been accepted by Frome museum. At Whitsun an iron kettle was found, while later still a few iron nails and a climbing iron (stemple) were discovered. On removing the surface mud from a nail and the stemple, a broken layer of calcite was revealed.

Malcolm Cotter

Dan-yr-Ogof Extension.

The June, 1966 issue of the newsletter of the Cave Research Group of Great Britain contains a number of short articles about the recently discovered extension to Dan-yr-Ogof in South Wales. Apart from the articles explaining cave conservation from a biological aspect, there is a report by Alan Coase which briefly explains the layout of the extension. A sketch survey (plan and vertical section) accompanies the article.

The 'Observer' supplement (July 17th. 1966) contains a seven page report on the caves, including some superb photographs, again supplied by Alan Coase.

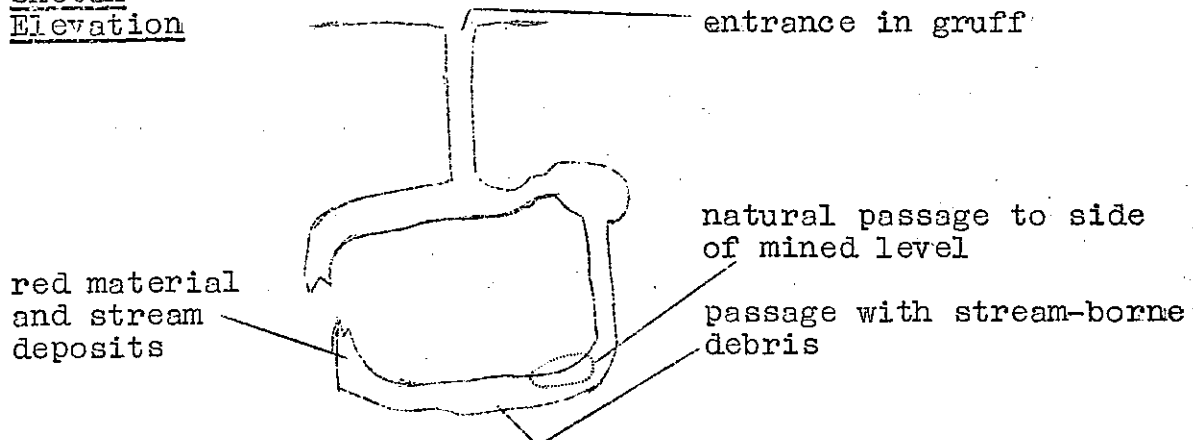
J.C.R.

AN INTERESTING MINE SHAFT.

On Saturday 9th. July Dave Mitchell, Greg Smith and I decided to investigate a mine shaft to the left of the 'Castle of Comfort' to 'Stirrup Cup' road (N.G.R. 521555). The entrance is in a shallow grassy gruff with a spruce plantation almost opposite. The tether point was directly at the top of the shaft and consisted of an old harrow.

We found that the first pitch was about 34'. At the bottom the passage led two ways, one steeply downward to the top of a climb, and the other to an easy squeeze.

Sketch
Elevation



The climb of 10' was manageable without tackle and the floor had a jumble of loose rocks which appeared to block a downward continuation in the other direction. Beyond the squeeze was a deep pitch which we found to be about 30'. The best way of rigging the ladder was to continue it through from the entrance pitch. At the bottom of the drop was a geologically interesting passage some 20' long. At the end a chimney went up a few feet and the walls consisted of red material which I considered was Triassic. A natural cavity to one side contained some good calcite crystals. The wall of the tunnel also showed in cross-section a completely blocked cave passage containing bedded clay and small black rounded pebbles. A number of these pebbles must have consisted of clay for they crumbled easily between the fingers. The mined passage had not reached the bottom of the natural passage so that its original size could not be ascertained. The curve of the roof suggested a width of about three - four feet. The roof itself was gently arched and deeply corroded. I had the impression that the cave had been filled or nearly filled with Triassic material, then had become active again only to get filled in once more, leaving the present stream-borne deposits.

Malcolm Cotter.

MENDIP BIBLIOGRAPHY, PART II.

Volunteers are required to examine various libraries in all parts of the country to record details of publications (books, diaries etc.: Periodicals were searched for Part I) which contain references to Mendip Caves. More details appear in 'Mendip Caver' Vol. 2 No. 9, July 1966.

Opening Hours - ALL DAY ON SATURDAYS.

Sorry, this statement refers to Bristol Central Reference Library, not Mendip hostelrys. The stock of publications and books collected by the Mendip Cave Registry can be consulted from 9.30 a.m. - 6.00 p.m. (Saturdays) and 9.30 a.m. - 9.00 p.m. (weekdays). A list of available periodicals occurs in 'Mendip Caver', July 1966.

RADIO DIRECTION FINDING IN CAVES

R. Zimic, in SSS's "Communications, Occasional paper no. 1." applies radio direction finding, as practised by mariners and airmen, to caves. His equipment (for which circuit diagrams are offered) is claimed to have worked successfully for more than two years. But it is only for the technically minded, i.e. those who can multiply

$\frac{u}{2}$ by the square root of E^2 plus $\frac{4\phi^2}{f^2}$ minus E

and find some point in knowing that this equals K squared, (whatever that is).

For those who can, it sounds a useful aid to surveying. Its uses are said to include finding the relation of points in the cave to points on the surface, measuring distances between adjacent but unconnected caves, and possibly superseding conventional traverses.

"Communications" is a well produced publication, whose example many British journals could do well to follow.
Ogofwr Ddu.

FOUND

An ignition key (No. FS 926) has been found in the Cottage. Will the owner please contact Joan Robinson.

MEET PROGRAMME.

July 23rd./Aug. 7th. IRELAND - The nine people concerned have been in training (Guinnesswise) and are all set for a good caving holiday.

Aug 27th./29th. YORKSHIRE - Camping. We hope to (Bank Holiday) arrange a visit to Lost John's System (Sunday).

Sept. 10th./11th. MENDIP - Cow Hole, Cuckoo Cleeves Hole (if open).

COMMITTEE.

Secretary - Brian Mee, 88 Seaton Gardens, Ruislip Manor, Middx.
Treasurer - Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Rd, Ruislip, Middx.
Meet Secretary - Tony Knibbs, 2 Rectory Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.
Cottage Warden - Pat Walsh, 18 Oxford Road North, Chiswick, W4.
Tacklemaster - Pete Goddard, 11 Lebanon Park, Twickenham, Mdx.
Recorder - Simon Knight, 40 Garrard Rd, Banstead, Surrey.
Editor - Joan Robinson.

RUMOUR has it that there have been visits by members to the following caves during the last 3 weeks: G.B., Stoke Lane, Swildons, August Hole, Eastwater, Pinetree?. However, I have received no reports of these trips. One of the main functions of the newsletter is to report activities such as these. Get to work, M.C.G. reporters!

J.C.R.