

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 59.JULY-AUGUST 1967.NEWS AND INTEREST

Many Thanks to Brian Pitman for taking over the Editorship of the Newsletter while the Hon. Editor failed his exams, Ed.

New Adress. Arthur Spain and his wife have moved to:-
71. Lambs Farm Road,
Greenfields Farm Estate,
Horsham,
Sussex.

Cheap For Quantity. A 10% discount on single orders worth £30 or more is offered by Pindisports. Branches at acton, Holborn, Croydon, or mail order. The firm has recently expanded its mountaineering business and has five climbers on its staff.

The Hon. Secretary Brian Mee having worn out one telephone number is from the 16th of August getting another, which is Ruislip 73485.

To confuse even more those already confused by all figure numbers, the dialling code for Ruislip from London is 71. In my dialing code book the code is 4 and in the Pinner and District directory it is 784.

Sex Symbol? Male Group members who grow beards will find out something to their advantage.

Mendip Mining. The University of Bristol Extramural Society are to run a course entitled 'Mendip Mining'. It is on the weekend of October the 14/15th; details Hon. Sec.

Want a Cave? Fingal's Cave is up for sale at £10,000, a real bargain. The Island of Staffa comes with it. (thinks: I suppose it has to).

Congratulations To:-

Pat and June Walsh who were married on Saturday July 15th,
Joan Robinson and Peter Goddard,
Julie Thrift and Tony Fitzgibbon,
on their two engagements.

Simon Knight would like his tent back. Will the person who has it return said tent to him as soon as possible.

Newly Pressed. The following people are welcomed to the Group as full members:-

Peter Virgo.
John Virgo.
Mike Lovell.
and Roger (Hol) lington.

Dance Round Pregnant Cow: Were they the Salvation Army of 2,000 years ago?

Those who haven't been down the caves in the Chu-Lli mountains of Kazakhstan. (USSR) lately, will be interested to know that carvings 2,000 years old have been discovered there. Drawings show a pregnant cow and ritual dance of people carrying tambourines.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Speleologist (Vol.5 No3.). Contains the recent survey of the N.W. Stream Passage.

Wessex CC (Journal No 112)

America '68 the expedition is open to members of all clubs: further details from Don Thompson.

Jugoslavia '66, an article, mainly from commercial blurb, making full use of Off-set Litho which Wessex now use for their journal (Photographs and surveys).

Cave Diving Hazards by O.C.L.

Technical terms such as pulmonary oedema and acute barotrauma should be enough to put anyone off diving: three postmortems are also given, just to make sure.

Axbridge CG (Journal '66)

Stone Quarries in the Corsham-Neston-Box area. The History and geology of the mines are described together with the methods of working and details of the locations. (q.v June N.I.)

Banwell Bone Cave. Notes are given on the survey, in the course of production. An interesting and lucid account of the archaeological work carried out in Baker's Extension is also given.

Crawley CC (Quarterly Journal).

Of interest are articles on Dulcoath Adit (Cornwall), Dali's Delight (a Crawley discovery in Dan-yr-Cgof) and Igneous Rocks (Lpp).

Peter Mathews

WEATHER FORECASTING AND FLOOD DANGERS

..... is one of the topics for discussion at this year's National Conference (organised by the British Speleological Association). It is to be held in the Birmingham University Union from September 8-11. Final bookings for meals

to BSA by September 1st.

Saturday and Sundays programme includes the value of Speleology in the study of human rhythms as well as Kingsdale, Gouffre Berger, Giants/Oxlow, Crete and the Little Neath River Cave, and more.

Monday if you can stay, is planned for visits to the Nantwich Salt Mines and Dudley Stone Mines.

Full details including application forms etc. from Brian Mee.

IT'S CLEAN IT'S DRY IT SAVES YOU GOING CAVING.....IT'S UNICUM

Yes you need never leave the warmth and comfort of the stove to keep fit again if you buy Unikum, an £3.8s. keep fit machine. Can it be coincidence that the advertising leaflets were sent (unasked for) to the MCG Secretary?

Use small rug in front of the unit for exercises 1 - 3 how many times can you manage? says the pamphlet.

Ogofw-Ddu.

REVIEWS

Article : New Scientist (July 67)

"Caverns Measureless to Man" is the title of a short note in the New Scientist. The Phenomenon of 'cave breathing' is puzzling because the amount of air breathed by a cave is said to be often over 30 times what its apparent volume would indicate. Mulla-mullang Cave in the Australian Nullarbor Plain is much too small to account for a 2 metres per second wind which blows through its entrance. T.M.L. Wigley of Adelaide University has suggested that great quantities of air can be taken up by permeable rock as the atmospheric pressure rises, and be given out again when it falls. One would expect that the breathing of a cave should lag appreciably behind the pressure variations, because of the time necessary for the rock to 'soak up' and 'release' the air. The Mulla-mullang cave confirms that this lag does exist. Extensive fracturing of the limestone would lead to more air being taken up by the rock. Journal of Geophysical Research Vol. 72 p.3199 gives more details of this work.

Joan Robinson

All American Peg.

If you are buying pitons - Buy American is the effect of the advice given by Dr.L.J.Griffin, of the Government's National Engineering Laboratory.

Of 450 pitons tested, a large proportion of those made in France, Germany, Austria, Britain and Italy

were found to be "dangerously inadequate". Made of soft metal they bent or broke below the pressure claimed by the manufacturers. American made pitons, says Dr. Griffin himself a climber, may cost between 12/- and 16/- compared with European 5/6 to 8/6 but they last twice as long and are safe. It is reported that a British Company is now working to improve its safety standard. Dr. Griffin's do-it-yourself piton test is: "If you can bend it with a hammer, if it has round shoulders or an elliptical eye - throw it away."

The British Mountaineering Council is attempting to produce a British standard for pitons. Its equipment subcommittee is also looking at the requirements for helmets running belay slings and other equipment.

Ogofw Ddu

From the Library:- National Engineering Lab., East Kilbride Glasgow, pamphlet.

The History Of Mendip Caving.

Peter Johnson's book fills a long vacant gap on the bookshelf - or rather partly fills. For the author in writing this book has carried out a rather limited amount of research. If this were not bad enough he continually gives many of his own even more limited ideas about caves and caverns. For someone who has never made the grade as a caver Mr. Johnson's self-opinionated ideas are quite boring although the debunking of Balch has been long overdue.

The authors ignorance on the subject of Mendip caving results in a book containing numerous mistakes and narrow views which makes extremely irritating reading, but sometimes amusing reading with the occasional classic howler. (Excellent value: from your public library)

Peter Mathews.

OLD O.F.D.

As the entrance of Cwm Quarry Cave had decided to become even less stable than usual our hopes of visiting O.F.D. II on Sunday, 25th. June were dashed. Sheila, Killingback, Peter Goddard, Brian Hilman and I therefore decided to have a quick look at trip round 'old' O.F.D. We made a small detour to see the fine formations in Column Passage, and Brian and Pete ventured further into the passage as far as the Eagle's Nest. I suspect their real reason for going there was to lure me (without a wetsuit top) into neck high water, but they didn't succeed.

We then set off at speed along the main stream passage, decided against entering O.F.D. II via the sump, and struggled up the chain to Low's passage. Sheila and I excelled ourselves at this obstacle but were finally man-

handled up by the two sherpas of the party. We passed 'The Fingers', foiled Pete's usual trick at Roundabout Chamber, Wondered at 'The Bee's Knees' and Ballet Dancer's Legs', had a race through the sandy stream passage via a short chain and set off for the entrance. Brian and Sheila made a detour towards Pluto's Bath, but had a showerbath of their own when Pete lay in wait in the high level passage and swished water onto them as they walked beneath. The rest of the trip was spent avoiding each others' onslaughts of water. A most enjoyable trip lasting about 3 hours.

Joan Robinson.

PLANINSKA JAMA: YUGOSLAVIA 1967

Rising early on Wednesday morning four of us, that is Brian Pittman, Mike Brace, Roger Wallington and myself were driven into Postojna by Brian Hilman to meet Andre, our guide and his three companions. After a small wait we set off for the cave.

The purpose of our visit was to find out if a sump at the end of the Rakov river branch of the cave had dried out. The last recorded happening of this was 90 years ago and as the river was now very low, hopes were high of this happening again. It was hoped that we could pass through and confirm the report of the passage beyond. Wet suited we were glad to get out of the sun and along the tourist cave section. At the end of this path the way on changed drastically for we had to follow a wire traverse for about 100ft with a drop of 30ft to the river below. This had to be done carrying the inflated dinghys. The way on was through a vast cavern over a floor littered with boulders and it was some time before we reached the lakes. Setting off across the lakes, it was soon apparent that the Yugoslavians were much faster in their larger dinghys. After two lakes of painfully slow paddling the Yugoslavians decided to tow our dinghys, and much faster progress was made. After crossing the longest underground lake in Yugoslavia (about 600yds.) and several small ones beyond, the sump was reached.

Much to our disappointment the water was still too high (approx. 1 metre above the lowest survey mark), but it seemed deep and wide, easy meat for divers. We noted with interest that this last lake at the sump the water flowed into the sump, whereas in all the other lakes the water flowed towards the entrance.

Returning we had more time to observe the splendid formations and the many interesting side passages. We deflated the dinghys at the last lake and reached the entrance at about 4.30 pm, 5½ hours of very interesting cave.

Mike Nightingale.

CAVERS DON'T TAKE RESCUING SERIOUSLY.

Compared with climbers, cavers don't take rescuing seriously. Recently I spent a day with the Glossop Mountain Rescue Team on one of their fortnightly practices; yes fortnightly. Every other Sunday the majority of the 36 members of the team turn out for a practice run, and if the day I spent with them was anything to go by, it's no Sunday School Walk.

From a start at 9.45 a.m. the team took their stretcher across country some four miles and after only a brief halt for lunch they carried out a stretcher lower (and very well done it was too; I was the 'patient') and then arrived back at base at about 5p.m.

They are not hard up for members because of their feverish desire to keep fit and in training. Anyone slacking loses his place in the team and there is a list of people waiting to join. The Glossop team owns some £200 plus of radio equipment and the members really are proficient first aiders. They raise money themselves by lectures and the like.

I think I'd rather twist my ankle in the Peak District than have to be rescued after an attack of the 'D.T's' in the middle of Goatchurch.

BM.

N.B. Their organisation lacked one important respect lunch was taken on top of a mountain and a desperate cavers prayer for a pint went unanswered!

DAN-YR-OGOF

At 11a.m. on the Saturday 3 Croydon CC members Wally and myself followed Alan Coase through the Show cave and down to the lakes.

The water level was a little lower than normal which was ducky because we were carrying a large amount of tackle to be dropped off at different parts of the cave. Once across the lakes we deposited one small bag that held some survey equipment and trundled on towards the Endless Crawl.

The crawl or small passage was about 500ft long but was only difficult for the last 100ft which was reminiscent of Easy Street. In general the crawl can be negotiated on hands and knees with the occasional low section. I gather from Alan that the crawl has been made a lot easier. After the crawl came a small vertical section and a 15ft pitch. Here we dropped off a plastic rescue blanket. A short amble led down to the pool Flabbergasm Chasm. At the end of the passage you could look down the Canyon 50ft below. Departing we followed the winding stream way

into the canyon. Then on to the Green Canal and a quick diversion swimming up Hanger Passage. Here followed a few choruses of 'Down Below' and back to the Canal.

An energetic swim along the canal pushing a dinghy full of tackle into a smaller stream passage. Here we came upon a 20ft climb upwards. The first man climbed up on a knotted rope and then rigged ladder. Following through into Dan-Yr-Ogof III we eventually came to a 40ft pitch into a streamway. At this point the first party, who we had caught up disappeared down the pitch. Our party stayed at the top to drill a rawl bolt hole and take some photographs. When the other party returned we set off out. Alan leading, fell down in the bottom of a difficult traverse and cut his hand. After bandaging his hand thanks to the first aid kit carried by the Croydon lads we meandered out feeling pretty tired. The tackle making the journey out very difficult someone who will remain nameless fell down a hole in the streamway and laddy bruised his knee. This left me limping and after finding the show cave locked we negotiated a hard climb out into the open air.

Dave Hankin.

Here Greg continues the story below ~~the pitch in Dan-Yr-Ogof III.~~

Whilst Dave and wally were busy drilling rawlbolt holes and photo-modelling for Alan Coase, four of the number managed to skive off with Colin Grayham to quickly look at the large stream passage which forms DYO III.

Downstream the roof soon lowers to a sump which may be only 30ft long with possibility of some air spaces. One can therefore speculate a free dive avoiding the awkward and time-wasting traverse taken to bypass the sump.

Upstream the passage goes for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile finally ending in a confusing mass of boulders and sand. The main points of interest are numerous boulder chokes consisting of large limestone blocks which are also visible high above jammed between passage walls. At one point the passage makes a large meander around a fine rock butress and pinnacale which has to be seen to be believed.

Shortly after this an oxbow passage on the right called the 'Mostest' opens the eyes of the most blind caver, for it contains a unique petrified river of coloured mud and shimmering crystal; a fitting Climax to a superb trip.

Greg Smith.

QUOTE Hon. Ed. talking to himself..... ~~why is it that~~ no body is saying anything controversial enough to print as a quote to fill in gaps at the bottom of pages anymore?

MEET PROGRAMME.

BANK HOLIDAY

August 26th./28th. YORKSHIRE + Notts Pot, Gingleing Hole
(fountains Fell). Camping at
Newby Cotes.

September 16th./17th. MENDIP - Swildon's I -IV or Longwood/
August System.

September 30th./Oct, 1st. MENDIP - HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING.

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, Brfleet, Surrey.
Cottage Warden - Pete Goddard, 11 Lebanon Park, Twickenham Middx
Tacklemaster - Greg Smith, 131 Hagdom Lane, Watford, Herts.
Recorder - Pete Mathews, 155 Radcliffe Way, Northolt, Middx.
Editor - Mike Brace.

STOP PRESS

DON'T BREAK THE RULES

Members are reminded that the leader of every caving party must ensure that permission is properly obtained to cross any land or enter a cave.

Under part 2 of the Group's constitution, trips conducted other than under the rules do not take place in the name of the Group and do not have the protection of any insurances or agreements that exist. It is everyone's interest that good relations should be maintained with landowners and with other clubs.

Brian Mee. (Hon. Secretary).