

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 61.OCTOBER 1967.HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 30TH. MINUTES.

Held at Nordrach-on-Mendip.

Those present. Full members 18. Probationary members 2, one member's wife

The meeting started at 4.35 p.m. with Robbie Charnock in the chair. Apologies for absence were received from Mike Brace, Tony Fitzgibbon.

Minutes of the last meeting (March 4th 1967) were read and signed as correct.

Committee Reports.Secretary:- Pedro reported that membership stood at 38 full, 17 probationary, and 10 associate members, total 64. There were 7 applications awaiting consideration of the committee.

Complaints had recently been received of MCG members at (a) Nine Barrows Swallet, for which we had apologised and (b) Ebbor Gorge, which we had disclaimed any responsibility for.

A request to CCC for permission to dig Bone Hole had been agreed.

3 leaders had been nominated to serve to lead parties in Dan-yr-Ogof.

Treasurer:- The accounts, showing £94.1.11 in the Land Purchase Fund and £79 in the Group Fund were presented in the absence of the treasurer. The hon. auditors reported that after corrections dating back several years had been made, the books had been signed.Meet Sec:- reported that the Yorks. trip held recently had been too well supported and that in future we should need to book more caves to visit. Meets, poorly supported at the beginning of the year, were now being well attended. He sought suggestions for a 1968 abroad meet.Editor:- in absence, it was reported that he was hoping to buy a new duplicator shortly.

Recorder was busy recording. Library now well used.

Cottage Warden:- said that it was hoped soon to lay our own piped water from the main, from which could follow forth-coming after finance such luxuries as hot showers and w.c.Tacklemaster:- hoped to replenish stocks of ladder shortly and would be seeking volunteers ready, willing and able to help. Two dinghies had been bought, carbide (reported ordered

Cang

4/3/67.) still on order. Supplies of Nife cells temporarily ceased, Malcolm Cotter offered to supply boots at £1 per pair approx to order.

Constitution and Rules Proposed amendments were considered ;  
A proposal to fix an age limit of 15 years for members was lost

A proposal to fix a minimum age limit for guests of 15 years was also lost. But the committee was directed to investigate what facilities for families / young children could be provided in the future.

It was agreed that from 1/1/68 subscriptions should be increased as follows: Full and probationary members over 18; 30s 0d Members under 18, associate members and members' wives (rule 3(e) ) 15s 0d each.

Cottage Fees It was agreed that forthwith cottage fees for guests would be increased by sixpence per day. New rates ;  
Members 2s 0d; Guests over 18 3s 6d, guests under 18 2s 6d.

Scientific Knowledge It was agreed that MCG members knew little about everything to do with cavers. Few people bother to attend lectures etc. The committee was directed to arrange talks etc on Thursday evenings from time to time. Essential that they be announced in advance and proper facilities be offered. Start perhaps with Yugoslavia.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Brian Mee. Hon. Secretary.

#### NEWS AND INTEREST

Warmest congratulations to Simon and Val on their engagement.

Congratulations to Bob Knott and his wife on the Birth of a baby girl.

The two seemingly vicious attacks on the Hon. Sec in this addition of the N/L are by no means fostered by political aims but merely published because they appealed to the Hon. Ed's. perspicacious sense of humour. (This he might add is not an apology for printing said attacks)

The Secretary is Moving. From November 13th, 67 Pedro's address will be; - 91 Evelyn Drive, Pinner, Middx.

Tel. (Home) 01-428-1975. (Office) 01-965- 6543  
ext 327. It is regretted that for the next few weeks the Secretarial service will be below its usual high standard because the Secretary won't be able to find anything before

and after moving.

New Members. The following people were made probationary members of the Group at the last meeting of the committee.

John Bryant,

Ken Newcombe,

Philip Ingold,

and Brian Hammond. Welcome to you lads.

A special welcome to Brian Hilman who was made a full member at the same meeting.

More for the Pot? The following people will be considered for probationary membership of the Group at the next Pow Wow of the committee.

Derick Hancock, 78, Sandy Lane, Woking, Surrey.

John Miriam, "Glenville", Wheeler Lane, Whitley,  
Surrey.

James Glover 73 Lorney Drive, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire.

Leslie Taylor, 6, Middlemoor Road, Frimley, Camberly,  
Kent.

William Jones, 22, Basnett Road, Battersea, London.

Will Editors of Clubs with whom MCG exchanges publications kindly send their publications to the Group recorder Peter Mathews (Address on back page of N/L).

### JUGOSLAVIA 1967

There will be a jolly slide show for all members of the Jugoslavian expedition on Wednesday November 8th at the house of the rising Charnocks. This evening is intended for members of the expedition only so that all slides may be shown and compared. The best slides will be selected and used to illustrate a lecture for the rest of the club in the near future. So arrive early and bring your slides and photographs.

Robbie and Pam live at 128, Cavendish Ave.,  
Ealing,  
London,  
W.13.

The accounts of the expedition have been completed and audited and they show a surplus of £14-17-1.

After subtracting £7 for the use of and damage to, club tackle. A profit of £7-17-1. emerges. By general consent (Blackmail, Ed.) of members of the expedition this has been donated to the Group Land Purchase Fund.

Accounts of the expedition can be inspected by interested persons on application to me.

Brian Hilman.

PEDRO WENT CAVING.

Time prohibits serious comment on various quotes on this subject. Suffice it to say that he did go and at least the quotes on this will prove to everyone that he not only went, but was seen to go, as well.

Brian Mee.

QUOTE. By Pedro whilst in the drainpipe in August.....  
"I'm clapped out".

HOW BADLY DO WE WANT B.B.C.2?

Would you rather the residents of the South-West could see BBC 2 well and Mendip be despoiled or the other way round? It is apparently a case of one or the other as there is a plan to erect a mast on 1,100ft High Pen Hill on Eastern Mendip - one of many to go up round the country. Protests to, one assumes, Lord Hill.

Ogofwr Ddu.

SWILDONS SIX. That intrepid band finish their story.

Sump 5 proved to be 100ft long low roofed passageway, which had to be traversed from side to side to stay in a reasonable airspace in the higher points in the roof.

Swildons 6 passageway was rather similar to Swildons 2 stream passage and ended in sump 6, which began as a deep pool, in which Allan and Brian swam. We went back to Blue Pencil chain with no trouble, and wandered along to the end of sump 3, which was a longish, low roof which gradually went down to meet the water. This we decided we would not do today!

Then back up Blue Pencil, which gave a little trouble to the Double Troubles, they required only a small amount of bailing. Brian went through first and found a whole 5 in. of air space. The second trouble was even easier. After this, lots more meandering muddy passages, with muddy ducks and a couple of false floors. We found the 'ole in the floor to the landing with no difficulty at all.

Through the 'ole is a muddy climb down a boulder choke - which took some thought at the bottom to avoid landing in the streamway prematurely. After a fall of 20 to 30ft. from the landing there is a muddy slide into the streamway, with a fixed rope. We had a quick look at Swildons II streamway, since Allan wanted "A good trip". We then started up the entrance to Black Hole series, but Tony and Brian did not see any point in seeing the hole without crossing it, which none of us considered a suitable trip without a lifeline after what we had just done. (Big heads).

Then just a plain trip out, meeting the other party on Swildons 1 side of sump 1. All in all, about 5½ enjoyable hours. Compiled by- Tony Ingold, Brian Hammond & Allan Wicks.

## CAVING IN KENYA. Lava Formed Caves.

The Cave Club of East Africa is based in Nairobi and numbers about 30 members. Trips are usually undertaken during long weekends at public holidays as the distances to the caves are usually so great. Caving is not the weekly sport it is in Britain.

Most trips are carried out on Mount Suswa, 60 miles from Nairobi, as this area has many lava tunnels and is near to Nairobi. Other areas include Mnt. Elgon, the Chulu Hills and the Coastal area; 250 miles, 100 miles and 350 miles respectively from Nairobi. Most of these areas contain lava tunnels but the coastal area has fairly large Jurassic limestone outcrops. There will be a trip soon to find more caves near the coast at Kilifi, 20 miles North of Mombasa.

The main method of transport is by Land Rover as the caves are sometimes miles off even the worst dirt road. The party carries all its food and beer. After setting up a camp, with or without tents, and cutting wood for a fire, the party having eaten its evening meal, sits around the fire to worship Bacchus until far into the night in the usual Mendip fashion. During the rainy season the whole party sometimes sleeps and cooks down the largest dry cave. Late next morning several caving trips are made if the area contains enough caves.

The caves are usually volcanic in origin and are dry. They consist mostly in the form of tunnels in the lava, often 30ft in diameter, with a deep layer of fine dust on the floor. These tunnels can extend for half a mile or more and are roughly horizontal, the roof being about six to ten feet below the surface. Several levels can sometimes be connected by short shafts. As these tunnels originally began and ended underground the only entrances occur where the roof has collapsed. The entrance can be steep and shaf like or a boulder strewn slope which can be climbed down with ease. Each cave can have two or three entrances along its length.

The caves are often full of bats which leave guano up to several feet deep in places. (This is mined by some of the club members - see later article about Kenya Gas o Ltd). The caves sometimes show signs of habitation by a small furry animal (improbably related to the Elephant!) called the Hyrax and sometimes even contain the spoor of leopards and such leopard kills as baboons. Fortunately no leopard has ever been seen down a cave by a club member, yet.

The main impression of these lava caves is of warm and damp as compared with cold and wet of many British caves. Each cave is also relatively small compared with the larger British caves as much of the way can be walked with ease, although the passage can come down occasionally to two feet or less in height. Side passages are fairly rare in these tunnels due, probably to their method of formation. This

is thought to be due to the top layer of molten volcanic rock solidifying after a volcanic eruption; leaving the still molten lava underneath still flowing. Long lava tubes with no access to the surface are thus produced.

John Evans.

(Our correspondant in Nairobi)

QUOTE. Overheard one Thursday.....

.... "Who is the MCG Secretary?"

"He's the portly one with grey hair"

"Oh! you mean the chap who sometimes comes round selling magazines".

NOTTS POT.

A multitude of people found themselves outside the entrance shaft and started descending in groups of three. A narrow stream passage led off, leading to a 16ft pitch into Three Ways Chamber. Wig and Co. were retrieved from a left hand series and we all set about descending Centre Series via a 70ft pitch. A succession of smaller pitches terminated in a chamber containing a duck. Dave Shipham thrust his way through this, followed by the rest of the flock, to be confronted by another short pitch, but alas, no more ladder was available.

The return journey was not without incident, being as usual in the form of Allan Wicks, who despite protest, was hauled up the 70ft by enthusiastic lifeliners. A brave but futile attempt to foil the same occurrence at the entrance pitch was made by tying the lifeline round a boulder instead of himself. This resulted in Wicks, upon emerging, being dragged half way across the moor! A fitting end to a chaotic trip.

Greg Smith.

EXPOSURE.

As many will know one of the greatest hazards when an injured person has to be rescued, especially from a complicated system, is the risk of exposure before the rescue team arrives. This is due to non movement, being thoroughly soaked and exhausted, there being no violent body movements to keep the blood temperature up to normal because of the injury eventually lassitude sets in with the patient getting to the "don't care" stage which is the danger sign. Further signs being a greyness to the face which may be difficult to discern in the indifferent light underground, and increased shallow breathing, both caused by the lowering of the body temperature.

So it can be seen that the obvious way to forstall exposure is to keep the patient as warm as possible. The best

way to achieve this is of course is to put dry clothes on him and cover him with blankets. In practice it is impractical underground to carry dry clothes and keep them dry, only fully equipped rescue teams have the equipment to do this. However a dodge used in mountaineering circles to combat exposure while emergency bivouacking is to climb inside a man sized heavy duty polythene bag. This bag must not be less than 500 gauge with a few air-holes cut at about face level. It helps to maintain the body temperature at the correct level although even this is not infallible for too long a period.

It might be worth somebody's life if one of these bags are carried when along, difficult trip is envisaged especially if that trip involves getting soaked as any worthwhile trip does. Wet-suits are excellent for keeping warm while moving, but when stationary for too long one tends to get cold. With a polythene bag completely around you, your own breathing should help to maintain a more constant warmer temperature.

To my knowledge this dodge has never been used with cavers before, but it should be worth a try even though it requires a patient to use it.

Arthur Spain.

#### MEET PROGRAMME.

November 11th./12th.	SOUTH WALES ) Penwylt. Tunnel Cave, Dan-yr-Ogof 11, Lygad Llwhwr. S'CC accomodation.
December 2nd./3rd.	Mendip - G.B. Cave (Sat). Lamb Leer (Sun).

#### COMMITTEE.

Secretary - Brian Mee, 88. Seaton Gardens, Ruislip Manor, Middx.  
Treasurer - Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Road, Ruislip, Middx.  
Meet Sec. - Tony Knibbs, 2. Rectory Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.  
Cottage Warden - Pete Goddard, 11. Lebanon Park, Twickenham, Middx.  
Tacklemaster - Greg Smith, 131. Hagdon Lane, Watford, Herts.  
Recorder - Pete Mathews, 155. Radcliffe Way, Northolt, Middx.  
Editor - Mike Brace.

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Middx.