

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 62,NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1967

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND AN EXCITING CAVING NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR
READERS.

Due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic all caves on Mendip are closed to cavers untill further notice. Cavers who feel that they really must visit the caving areas must keep away from farms and fields.

NEWS AND INTEREST.

Don Searl has moved to 14 Hilda Road, Farnborough, Orpington Kent. Telephone: Farnborough 52116.

Arthur Spain's address is 71 Lambs Farm Road and not 7 all members please take note.

Bill Jones has been unfortunate enough to be elected a probationary member of the Group. Never mind you'll get used to it, welcome anyway Bill.

John Hookins of 87 Princes Gardens, Acton, London, W.3. will be considered for slougher at the next meeting of the committee.

If you want free information about a new cave, crunch the explorer's car. When he rushes out to inspect the damage express great interest in his new cave, and hey presto! you are rovided with a free survey and many useful hints. More details of this method from Dave Hill.

Have you replaced an empty calor gas cylinder lately ?.

A steep Price ? The £16,000 Lord Weymouth paid for Jacobs Ladder (inc. Pavey's Cave and the Observatory Tower).

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

BEC Caving Reports.

'The Shoring of Swallet Cave Entrances' (22pp) and when you're in there's

'The Presentation of Cave Survey Data' (41pp).. In the first the author ('Alfie') quotes Rankine's formula and mentions Boussinesq's method. As he also draws a graph this must be considered an authoritative work. In the second, he ('Alfie' again) criticises the surveyor, who after carrying out much work fails to show it on the survey. A comprehensive system of symbols is described as well

as a number of special cave diagrams (e.g. severity route diagram, isomorphs and colour techniques).

'St. Cuthberts Report' This is being produced in a number of different parts over the next N years. The first part dealing with access and misc. information was a bit late coming out!

British Regional Geology - Bristol and Gloucester District (inc. Mendip). Geologically, this is one of the most varied districts in Britain, for with the exception of the ordovician and possibly the Permian, there is exposed at the surface every geological formation from the Cambrian to the Cretaceous, so there.

UBSS Procs. Only a few of those obtained are listed below.

Vol.6 No.1 August Hole(s), resistivity earth, geology of rods pot

Vol.6 No.2 Bg(s), resistivity, Rhino Rift.

Vol.7 No.2 Gough's Cave, Sun Hole.

Vol.8 No.2 Flint Jacks Cave, East Twin Swallet(s)

Vol.9 No.1 Gough's Old Cave, Origin of Mendip

Surface depressions.

Vol.9 No.3 Lamb Leer, solution of limestone.

Vol.10 No.1 Hydrology of Burrington, G.B.(s).

Vol 10 No.2 Bos Swallet, geomorphology of G.B.(s)

All, including ones not mentioned above, contain stuff on Irish caves and archaeology on Mendip.

Logarcek by I.Gams (81pp of mainly Croat) Description and survey of that fine cave some of us know so well. (surveys)

Guide Book of 1965 Congress of Speleology in Jugoslavia. (English: 200pp, surveys) Postojna-Ostoska-Magdalena-Crna-Pirka System, Taborska Jama, Predjama, Planinska Jama, Skocijanske Jama etc. etc. Hydrology diagrams and information of caves outside Slovenia are also given.

Mendip Caver. Nov.'67 contains the Mendip cave Bibliography for 1966.

Bradford PC Bulletin Autmn '67 Notes on Mine Gases, some basic theory on why your lifeline bust (stress/strain curves and all that).

Peter Mathews

SSSSSSSSSSSH!

Secret Cavers are now active on Mendip! Who are the Stealthy speleos that print a newsletter without a name? Rumour has it that they are a revival of the Severn Valley Caving Club. Let them come out in the open - all this anonymity is to be deplored.

Ogofwr Wen

DIRTY CAVERS

It is becoming increasingly obvious that only a small number of people are keeping the cottage in order. Surprising though it may seem, this small band of mugs do not drive all the way down from London just to sweep the floor or do other people's washing up. It is unfair to expect other people to do your chores!

Occasionally, the calor gas cylinders need changeing. If you do not change them you cannot do any cooking. And, should you sit there long enough the Elsan will overflow and the fire will go out - although one should not be thought to be the direct cause of the other.

Caving (and digging) are no excuses for avoiding washing up or other cottage chores. This is all worthy of especial note if you are applying for full or probationary membership.

Mike Brace, On behalf of the Committee.

IT'S NEAR, IT'S CHEAP AND IT'S SOMEWHERE USEFUL TO GO WHILE YOU CAN'T CAVE..... IT'S ABOUT WATER TRACING.

A one-day symposium is being held at the University of Leicester on Saturday Febuary 3rd from 10.30 to 5.30. Cost 10s 0d. includes coffee and afternoon tea). Travel by M 1 nearly all the way. APPLICATIONS CLOSE JANUARY 25th WRITE TO PEDRO.

Programme: Tracing swallet waters using Lycopodium spores
(T.C. Atkinson)
Tracing percolation waters in Karst areas (D.P. Drew).
Chemical analysis in water tracing (D.T. Richardson)
Water tracing in St. Cuthberts (Roger Stenner)
The pulse flood technique (J.D. Wilcock)

Chairman R.G. Picknett.

Lunch can be booked at 8/6 extra or there is a "licensed coffee bar" (if you like licensed coffee!).

OPENING TIME DISEASE

The attitude of the MCG has not changed a bit over the decades as the following extract from an early MCG newsletter shows...

..... Statistical evidence shows that those on the surface catch it just as quickly as those underground, and above ground its most severe effects are, in fact, suffered more. For the Guidance of members the symptoms of the underground variety are as follows; unquenchable thirst between two and

four hours after entering cave; sudden unreasonable hatred of cold water; physical abhorrence of slimy foul mud; rapid dimming of lights. Only cure is to get lost, or for the lying leader to tell you that there is a barrel at inner end of cave. Also recommended, rapidly make way to nearest medicine shop for six pints of medicine.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor is prepared to accept advertisements for insertion in the N/L,

As the N/L has quite a large circulation amongst the caving world, any person wishing to sell any article such as caving, camping or photographic equipment etc., should find this a way of finding a buyer. The price for 20 words (max) and address will be 1s.0d. to Group members and 2s.0d. to non-members. If more than 20 words are required the Editor will notify the person concerned if there is any extra charge. Ads. for the January issue of the N/L should reach me before Thursday 25th Jan 1968. All proceeds to Group Funds.

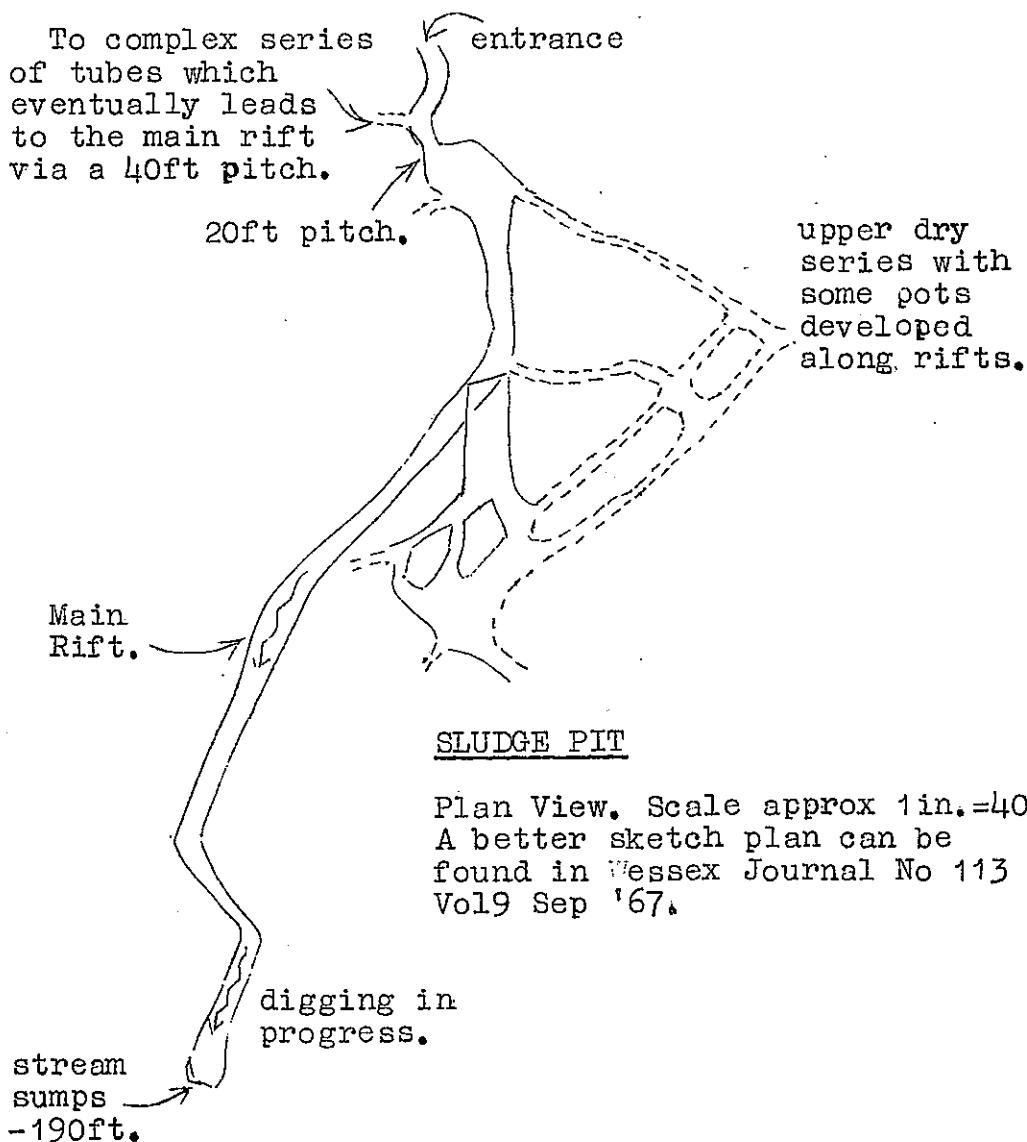
Mike Brace,

The Hon. Editor has a 1958 (200cc) Triumph Tiger Cub for sale. New Tyres, New Battery and recently overhauled, a bargain at £25 Ring Northwood 24651.

SLUDGE PIT

The entrance to Eastwater collapsed on Saturday 5th. August and the following Saturday entry was gained to a new cave nearby. It can hardly be called a fair exchange, but nevertheless the new cave is extremely interesting with possibilities of further passages to be found. Various names have been proposed for the cave but 'Sludge Pit' seems to be the one most commonly used in Mendip circles, and is certainly an apt description.

On 29th. October a party consisting of Dave Hill, Dave Bacon, Terry Walsh, Ron Margetts and Joan slithered through the nasty muddy entrance crawl to a small chamber where we waited for Dave to ladder the twenty-foot pitch, using a bar which is wedged across the top of the pitch; care should be taken to see that the bar is firm. The pitch itself is free-hanging and the chamber in which it occurs has a ledge near the top which is formed from a band of hard limestone in an otherwise shaly lithology. Throughout the whole cave shaly limestone predominates, with some lenses of harder limestone within it. Fossils are abundant and a geomorphological study of the cave would prove quite interesting.



Plan View. Scale approx 1in.=40ft.
 A better sketch plan can be found in Wessex Journal No 113 Vol9 Sep '67.

From the chamber at the bottom of the pitch we took the obvious way on along a fairly lofty passage strewn with large boulders. Where the passage branched we took the lower route which led us along the small streamway in the main rift. The rift became quite narrow towards the end and eventually the stream sumped in a small chamber. Digging is in progress at this point.

We retraced our steps to the junction mentioned previously, and then took the upper route which led into a series of dry passages which divided and joined up again in a maze-like fashion the whole series giving the initial impression of

a crude mine with residual roof supports - but its origin is of course, wholly natural. Here and there the low passages led into chambers, and vertical rift development has resulted in a number of pots. We did not, unfortunately, have sufficient time to explore the cave fully and more passages occurring behind the 20ft. pitch were not visited.

Sludge pit is certainly worthy of a visit, but care is required when in the cave as some of the boulders are held together only by mud and could be dislodged without a great effort!

Joan Robinson.

The key to the cave can be obtained from Hilgrove. Permission should be asked of Mr. and Mrs Patterson (at the renovated cottage on the right, a short way past Upper Pitts Farm) and 1/- per head paid to them. When they are not in residence, the shillings can be paid when returning the key to Hilgrove. Please follow the walls around the field to the cave to avoid making a track across the field. This also applies when visiting Nine Barrows Swallet. Always remember to shut and fasten the gates into Eastwater Drove.

SOUTH WALES Meet Nov 11th/12th.

By Saturday morning the usual large group of members had arrived at the SWCC cottages at Penwylt; and most members set off to approach O.F.D.2 via Cwm Dwr Quarry Cave. Just to be different Tony Knibbs, Pete Goddard, Joan Robinson, Les Taylor, Roger Fortey and Victor Ingram sloped off into the hill fog to find the new upper entrance at about 1500ft altitude. Arriving at the cleverly constructed entrance, the party (plus one large rucksack) set off into the unknown and were soon engaged in the difficult problem of route finding and, by which is of impressive proportions. The floor is boulder strewn and features numerous short, dumpy stal columns (Gnomes) basically of white calcite but topped with a deep red colour.

About halfway along Gnome Passage we made a detour down a descending passage of sporting character until stopped by a pitch of some 20ft. Retracing our steps we pursued Gnome Passage to a more obvious right hand turning where a convenient drinking fountain provided refreshment. Taking this branch passage we soon reached a notable descending boulder slope leading to a choice of two routes; each beginning with a knotted rope. Choosing the upper route we quickly found ourselves at the impressive stal. covered decent into Arête passage where deposits of Montellinite Clay provide some slimy amusement. This mineral is found in British caves and gives the appearance of moonmilk in texture and occurrence.

Following the stream for some long distance we arrived at the Cross Roads at, or about, which point the stream disappeared into the floor. Turning right brought us to a traverse and short descent to the brink of a 30ft pitch to a lower streamway. Audible contact was made with a party down at stream level and shouted directions told us the way to where a smooth rope hung down a rift which leads directly down a rift which leads directly into O.F.D.2 and, this having been achieved,

Following two other cavers on the outward journey we took a short cut which bypasses Arete Junction and arrives at the lower of the two knotted ropes previously mentioned. The paucity of knots and the muddy nature of the rope made the ascent very sporting; a chokstone created some fun too. Moving along Gnome Passage we were engaged in some lively conversation with a party at an upper inlet, one of whom was descending a 15ft ladder ending some 30ft above the floor. With a minimum of false starts we eventually regained the entrance after a leisurely 5½ hour trip.

The various caving parties duly assembled at the Gwyn arms where information was exchanged and duly set to music.

It is worth noting that all future bed booking at SCCC Penwyllt will be limited to 12 beds per club. Needless to say if you want a bed for next years meet in this area you'd better tender your esteemed bribe immediately to the Hon. Meet Sec. the undersigned

Tony Knibbs.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This is why it is imperative that you lot keep away from caving areas.

Q Which animals does it effect?

A. Cattle, Sheep, Goats, Pigs and to a lesser extent, Hedghogs and Rats.

Q. ~~What are the signs of foot and mouth~~ *WHY IS IT SO SERIOUS?*

A. Because it is one of the most infectious diseases known. can be fatal to young animals. Its after -e fects on adult stock include abortion, chronic lameness, sterility and mastitis.

Q. What must a farmer do if he sees a suspected case of foot-and-mouth?

A. The farmer must call in his vet. The vet if he suspects foot-and-mouth, will tell the Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Health Divisional Office, tell the police and instruct the farmer that no animals, people or things must be moved on the farm.

Q. What happens if it is confermed?.

A. Affect stock and those in contact with them or otherwise exposed to infection are valued for compensation, slaughtered and the carcasses burned or buried. An area of 10 miles round the farm is declared an infected area and all stock within two miles of the outbreake are inspected. No movement of animals out of the 10 mile area is allowed and licences are needed for neccessary movements into and within the area.

Q. When an he keep livestock again on his farm?

A. When his farm ceases to be in an infected area.

Q. Why isn't vaccination used to control the disease?

A. No one vaccine is effective against all strains of the virus, and pigs, sheep and young animals can only be partly protected by vacine. Vaccination, where it is effective, only protects for a short time and the cost of vaccinating all animals in this country several times a year would be many times greater than the cost of the sloughter policy.

COMMITTEE

Secretary - Brian Mee, 91 Evelyn Drive, Pinner, Middx.
Treasurer - Tony Fitzgibbon, 265 Eastcote Rd., Ruislip, Middx.
Meet Secretary - Tony Knibbs, 2 Rectory Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.
Cottage Warden - Pete Goddard, 11 Lebanon Park, Twickenham, Middx.
Tacklemaster - Greg Smith, Hagdon Lane, Watford, Herts.
Recorder - Peter Mathews, 155 Radcliffe Way, Northolt, Middx.
Editor - Michael Brace.

STOP PRESS

1968 Cometh and also subscriptions runeth out; so verily I say unto thee no subs no membership, worse still no Newsletter.

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