

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 66.MAY/JUNE 1968NEWS AND INTEREST

Westminster S.C. is looking for its own cottage in South Wales. If anyone has a cottage in South Wales that they want to sell, get in touch with Brian Mee.

The Charterhouse Country club has now been turned into a 'Holiday Inn', with pony trekking, go karting, tennis and many other attractions.

Discussions are in progress to form regional cave rescue organisations. For the South East (inc. London) it is mooted that there would be a similar call-out system to the M.R.O., no equipment will be needed as this can be provided by the Police or Firebrigade.

The following people have been allowed access: to the death dodging M.C.G. Welcome as full members:-

John Hookins
Ken Newcome
Philip Ingold.

As Bryn Davies has told me that his name was not published when we (the Committee) were at last bribed with many pints to make him a member: also the fact that every time he meets me he reminds me of the fact, everyone take heed Mr. B. Davies is now a member. Get off my back Davies!

The Editor would like to suggest that prospective members who have been around for more than six months should procure a membership form from one of the Committee, so that their name(s) can be considered for Probationary membership.

WHY WHY WHY Dave Hill is fed up telling people that the lack of finance is the reason that showers and a flush toilet are not being added to the Cottage this year.

Better than going Caving, why not creasote the cottage? The Back of the cottage above the windows and all of the Front Porch need doing, so next time you have nothing to do creasote the Cottage!

A tight entrance was gained to a new series in Gaping Gill, by Bradford Pothole Club during the Whitsun weekend. It will probably be called the whitsun series.

IHATE! DIGGING! IHATE! DIGGING! IHATE! DIGGING! IHATE! DIGGING! IHATE! DIGGING!
ALL THAT MUD UGH! I CANNOT UNDERSTAND CAVERS! THEY MUST BE-----mad! !!!!!!!

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Wessex CC Jnl. NO. 116 The Mossdale disaster by Alan Fincham (U.L.S.A.) 10 pages, a most comprehensive account. Followed by, 7pp. of notes on M.R.O. rescues during 1966. There are also notes on the reopening of Cuckoo Cleeves during 1964 (+ survey, which will soon be available from Joan as a separate sheet)

The Caver Vol 2 NO. 1 (Northern CC). Jugoslavia (11pp. all the usual sites in the Postjna region). First Aid Cave Rescue Procedure (3pp). Caving in the 30's (3pp) and Cave Diving report.

For Beginners (Chelsea CC) (8vo. 40pp.) excellent introduction dealing with caving equipment and techniques. Further copies are available to order at 1/6.

C.R.G. N/L NO. 110. Caves in Rana District of Nordland (9pp) ; comprehensive list with locations and selected bibliography. Electromagnetic position finding devices are evaluated (2pp.)

Speleo (SWETC Vol. 6 NO2) a schematic diagram of Notts Pot and tackle list sort out the headaches at 3-ways chamber (all in vain though as the entrance has just collapsed).

London University C.C. Jnl. NO. 6 Grenoble a 12 page visit. Smelt Mill Beck Cave (3pp+s) a new and wet discovery in the Northern Dales. Tathem Wife Hole 3pp of notes.

Peter Mathews

DISCOVERY OF THE CENTURY are the words used to describe the finding of a living snail of the Genus *Bythiospeum* in Pollnagollum. It is the first time that a member of this genus has been found in the British Isles - Speleological conchologists are asked to keep their eyes open for this snail, it has a pointed shell and is about 3 mm. long.

FINDON WELL DIG

For seven years, Chelsea Speleological Society have been digging out a Roman well at Eindon in Sussex. This is now a 200ft deep shaft which is descended by winch. The digging is easy and the spoil is removed in oil drums by means of a high speed winch.

The site is visited once a month on a Sunday and a small number of visiting diggers is always welcome. If any members of M.C.G. might be interested contact Brian Hilman. It is well worth a visit just to look up a 200ft shaft and realize

that its your only way out.

B.S.H.

A NEW TOOL FOR THE CAVE SURVEYOR

One of the commonest operations in cave surveying is the measurement of differences in elevation between two points. Untill now this has been carried out by taking a base line of known length and measuring the angle of elevation between the two stations.

Although, it has never been used befor for cave surveying the Water Level offers many outstanding features. Briefly, it consists of a 50ft. length of transparent polyethylene tubing almost filled with water and fitted with a vertical measuring staff at each end. The water level is measured simultaneously with respect to each staff. The difference in the two readings is equal to the elevation of one above the other.

The instrument is readily adaptable to traverses that would be near impossible by old methods - try using an Abney level in a boulder ruckle.

The water level is cheaper, more robust, easier to use and far more accurate than conventional surveying methods.

Peter Mathews.

(These notes are taken from an article by David St.Pierre in Speleo Vol. 6 NO. 2.)

LECTURE - BERGER 1967.

On 23rd May Peter Mathews and I attended a lecture at Imperial College by Pete Watkinson of Pegasis CC, on the Pegasis Berger Expedition.

The aim was to explore the Balcony with the hope of bypassing the canals and possibly Sump 1. To do this took 24 men, 250ft of ladder and 3 tons of equipment. Costing £3000 a total of ten days were spent underground. The members underwent extensive training for two years including mountain climbing with 70lb. packs and many decents of Eldon Hole. They used large capacity carbide lamps and the ladders used were 12" rung spacing. Clothing consisted of Nylon boiler suits for lightness string jerseys and trousers under goon suits for warmth. The medical side was catered for by one doctor, first aid kits at both base camps including drag sheets and a collapsable stretcher.

To make smoother going a party went ahead to ladder the pitches. The balcony was explored but alas no bypass was found. However many fantastic photographs were taken of the system except in the very humid passages found beyond Hurrican Pitch. There they found that condensation inside the cameras ruined the photos despite elaborate precautions against them getting wet.

I found the lecture of very great interest and the slides of gigantic formations, boulders and pitches awe inspiring, and it was a pity that more members were not at the lecture.

Brian Pittman.

POT HOLING

Tune in to a 30 minute B.B.C. programme:-

10.30 a.m. Radio 4 7th September 68.

A part of the programme will be on the beloved Mendip Hills.

WHICH SLEEPING BAG

The June issue of 'Which?' reports on 22 sleeping bags of the tapered type costing under £10. The results showed, to all intents and purposes, that the more you pay for your bag, the warmer it will keep you.

Points to watch are: (1) Synthetic filling is bulky but can be hand washed; down and feather bags are more compact but have to be dry-cleaned. (2) 'Walled' bags (where the outer layer is not sewn directly to the inner) are warmer than quilted ones. (3) Buy a bag at least 3" longer than you are.

Best buys were:

Under £5 (Kept you warm at air temp 35 F)
Adventurer (YHA) ~~£~~3.12.6.; Pal (only 5'9") £3.19.6;
Good companion £4.12.6.

£5-£6 (down to 22 F) Wanderer (YHA) £5.5.0; Palomine £5.19.6.

£6-£10 (down to 15 F-20 F)
Viking £6.19.6; Roche Noir £7.19.9.

The report did not cover the more expensive bags necessary for pre-cottage-(no coke stove) type winters. The Palomine was the only one of the best-buys which could be bought in a double version £10.10s.

A report on how warm young ladies will keep you will be published in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Ogofwr Ddu.

SEVEN RESCUES LAST YEAR: USE A LADDER ON THE 40!

There were only seven rescues in the ten caving months of last year, a welcome improvement on 1966. Six of these were in Swildon's at the 40ft pitch, the other was in Lamb Leer.

The lessons to be learnt are:

- (1) Use a ladder on the 40ft. Few people can successfully return up a rope especially after along trip.
- (2) It takes longer to get rescued on Sunday afternoons (because there are fewer cavers around) especially if you leave no message.
- (3) In Swildon's in flood conditions it is easier to climb the 40 if laddered on the far side of the pitch using the two fixed rawbolts there.
- (4) Lifelining is no formality. Lifeliners must pay attention and never let the line slack.

A.M.D.M.

NEW SAFETY CODE

The M.R.O. has just published anew edition of the Caving Code. It brings up to date safety rules for the Mendip Sumps. All members will get a copy. Please re-read it, or would you rather be an accident statistic?.

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