

MENDIP CAVING GROUPNEWSLETTER NO. 68,SEPT/OCTOBER 1968NEWS AND INTEREST

Save Green Shield Stamps The pots and pans in the cottage need replacing. Green Shield Stamps can be exchanged for super new pots and pans, so save Green Shield Stamps!
 Joan Goddard, 24 Swan Close, Markworth, Widx. and
 Val Knight, 8 Park Street, Bath, Somerset.
 will be pleased to stick all donations in the appropriate places.

Jumble Sale This will be held early in the New Year. So start collecting your junk now!

Changes of Address

Brian and Shiela Hillman now live at:- 22 Linley Court,
 Thickett Road,
 Sutton, Surrey.

Dave and Glynis Mitchell now live at:- 11 Mafeking Terrace,
 Vunney Road,
 Frome,
 Somerset.

Also Simon and Val Knight live at :- 8 Park Street,
 Bath, Somerset.

The Cave Research Group are holding their A.G.M. on 9th Nov, at
 Batlock. Star attraction is Oliver Lloyd.

Stoke Lane Blocker, Brown's Hole, and Brown's Grotto. All cavers
 wishing to ascend any of these caves should apply at the following
 address:- Mr. P Marks,
 Stoke Bottom Farm,
 Stoke St Michael,
 Bath, Somerset.

Congratulations are warmly extended to Joan and Pete, Brian
 and Shiela, and Glynis and Dave on getting married.

The Committee have now accepted the one and only Mr. Bryn Davies
 as a full member and Stephen Dean as a probationary member
 congratulations.

An application for Probationary membership from
 Richard John Dalton,
 16 Chilton Road,
 Mastcote, Pinner,
 Widx.

which will be considered at the next committee meeting

S.W.C.C. Have asked that you should be reminded not to use osit carbide in O.F.D. There has been a considerable increase in litter and carbide deposited there recently.

Caving In The Pyrenees is the title of a talk to be given by the Westminster S.C. Go along to the Bull and Mouth Tavern, Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1 (near Holborn sta.) on Thurs. 7th Nov at 8.00 pm.

Cave Photographs Required (B&W) for a new exhibit in the Palaeontology Dept of the British Museum (South Ken) Further details from Pete Mathews. (In the first instance only contact prints needed.

Decent is the title of a new caving magazine which will be soon available at 2/6d.

Eastwater Reopening!? The digging of a new shaft has now started with the aid of an impressive array of pulleys and cables. Further details of the shoring which is to be cast on site and anchored by steel cables are given in the Shepton Journal (Ser No.5)

Another Sump----Old news by now, but before somebody crowns it should be pointed out that Sump One now involves a swim on the far side. Duck two is now deeper and must also be swum: whilst Duck II is now a 15ft sump with an air bell in the middle.

Ubley Warren Pct That is the new name for Foot and Crutch Swallet. Our Axbridge Neighbours are having a great deal of success with this dig. On September 3rd they forced a squeeze in to a new section-Nettle Series-. The squeeze which is pretty tight, is at the bottom of the entrance shaft. It opens in to a steeply descending rift and a free climbable 30ft pitch. At the bottom a drop takes one into a chamber similar to the main chamber in Pinetree. From there a side passage was found which was found to have a connection with the nearby Nettle Hole Dig. Entry can now be gained from the latter, and one can now do a through trip. Note :- a 20ft ladder is required.

BARBQUE

I arrived at the Barbque later than most, due to unforeseen difficulties with my car, and became impressed by the trail of candles (and Bodies) laid to guide the blind and incapable into a natural arena. Here numerous boys rhythmically swayed around the beer waggon, disregarding the log fire. Being the co-organiser of the event, I was dragged in front of the barrels and told to dish out beer to all and sundry. Hot dogs(ugh) and backed potatoes in their jackets (delicious) were also available

to those sporting blue badges. (A.B.S.H. idea to limit gate-crashing.)

Four or five diverent brands of ale were proudly advertised although the more sober and discerning individuals soon realised that all the varieties were out of the same barrel! But as long as the beer flowed nobody seemed to mind.

The hours ticked by and the barrels became lighter, but as the tickets stated "asmuch beer as you can drink" the cheated drunken cads started banging the bar, uttering sweet words of violence. I luckily managed to keep my head, and being a firm believer in the philosophical "if you can't beat them join them" I sank into oblivion, mingling with the rest of the near rioting crowd, and then started shouting above the organisers. An amicable agreement was soon reached, and after a quick whip-round more barrels were produced, bringing everthing back to normal. I'm glad to say many people were horribly ill afterwards, a sure sign that they enjoyed themselves.

I think all credit is due to Brian Hillman for arranging this event (I mean the Barbeque, not people being sick!) I also wish to thank everyone else who helped, at the same time apollgiasing for my own uselessness

Greg Smith

O.F.D. III

The long awaited Dan-yr-Ogof trip yet again evading most of the members present, the planned alternative trip of O.F.D. III under the leadership of Robert Radcliffe (prospective member of S.W.C.C.) took place. Those present were:-

Robert Radcliffe and two friends.

Greg Smith	} Group I	John Mirriam	} Group 2
Wol Wallington		Friend	
Mike Brace		Friend	
Allan Wicks		Sion Hookins	

Robert lead the second group, his friends the first.

Entrance to O.F.D. III. is effected via the upper entrance of O.F.D. II. Once inside, the group split in to two parties. Greg Smith's moved off first, through Gnome Passage past the Crossways, down a 25ft pitch and on to the notorious rifts of this trip.

We found ourselves traversing along rifts on average about three feet wide with no roof in sight above us, and at least an 80ft drop beneath us. On throwing rocks down these crevices we could hear the rock bounce down non- endingly to come to a halt with a resounding 'boom' in the depths below.

Needless to say, if you kept your head you were quite safe and the rifts not such an impassable obstacle as had been expected, although there was one place where the rift was too wide to straddle and (if you were a South Wales caver you walked boldly along a foot wide ledge to more negotiable ground

15ft away) if you were a member of the M.C.G. (on the inward trip at least) you lay flat on your belly lovingly caressing the rock inch by inch to relative safety.

The rifts negotiated, further progress was made through rocky chambers, through an awkward squeeze for those with knives and eventually the roar of the stream was heard ahead and beneath us. To reach it we had to pass along some high level ledges in the main stream way, cross over an iron pole which straddled the stream to eventually meet the stream itself. Nearby was a twelve foot waterfall. We climbed up this, and continued upstream as far as we could go - which was quite some way.

To us the stream seemed deeper than O.F.D. I. and II, being mainly knee deep and it had no awkward potholes as in I or II. Soon the stream seemed to weaken considerably, and we had to crouch in one or two places to get through the rocks, then the going was easier. After a while however, we found ourselves crawling over water moulded rock. Once through this short section we found ourselves in what we were told is 'Smith's Armoury' where we found what remained of the stream emerging through a pile of rocks.

The Armoury is a large chamber, which we were surprised to find at this part of this trip. Apparently it obtained it's cognomen from the legendary fictitious S.W.C.C. 'villain-figure' Smith who, if there was any trouble in O.F.D., was said to be the cause of it. As the chamber is the furthest one can go in O.F.D. it was named in memory of him, as the place where he planned and plotted his mischievous deeds. Naturally both parties suffered mishaps on the way in with several members going back out, or staying where they were until the others returned.

We also learned that in wet weather the passageway to the Armoury over the moulded rocks is completely flooded and had the epic related to us of Terry Moon sumping his way out. Having crawled over these rocks we realised what an achievement this was.

Refreshed by sardines and squashed wet Welsh pasty Greg's party started on it's way out. We by-passed the waterfall by a very dangerous ledge traverse through a passage on the right of the waterfall and later met one of John Miriam's friends and Robert in the squeeze. They told us that John was waiting for us in the rifts and that the others had gone out. These two pushed on to the Armoury, and we worked our way out; John accompanying us when we met him.

It was a fantastic trip but a dangerous one, exemplified not only by the above account of the rifts and the ledge crossings (notably the one to by-pass the waterfall and the ledge in the wide rift), but by the fact that whilst waiting to climb up the 25ft ladder a rock slope started to landslide into us... fortunately no one was hurt. Furthermore the trip was far longer than anticipated for we had set out to do the O.F.D. III to II trip, out via Cwm Dwr.

Tojo.

H. Y. G. M.

The Half Yearly General Meeting was held at the cottage on 5th Oct at 4.30pm. There were 20 Full Members, 6 Probationary, 3 member's wives, and 7 guests present.

Brian Hillman the Meet Sec reported that this year's programme had been well attended. However he had received requests for permission to work certain digs that we are not at present actively engaged on, from other clubs. Resulting from this it was decided to appoint dig managers, and the committee stated that in any event no digs would be relinquished before the next A.G.M.

The retiring Cottage Warden had the question of the water heater in hand, but washing up still was not being done.

Mike Brace the retiring editor was questioned about the tone of the N/L by Malcolm Cotter, but it was reiterated that policy rested with the editor to produce a balanced newsletter. Tony Knibbs Jnl Ed said the printing of the Journal was to be delayed until the club had purchased a duplicator, which would be in the New Year. The Recorder informed the meeting that the library is being widely used. It was suggested that his search for a new venue might be centred nearer London.

Arthur Cox observed that donations to the Land P.F. were very small. It was agreed to introduce a statutory charge of 1/- for attendance on Thursday nights.

The following amendments to the C & R were approved and accepted :-

Rule 3(a) ".....who have completed a training trip (as defined by the Committee)....., and who have...." insert verified by two Full members.

Rule 9(c) "Nominations for office and proposals to change the C & R shall reach the secretary at least 14 days before the meeting" amended to "... at least 21 days before the meeting and shall be posted on the board at least 14 days before the meeting.

The Committee wish to extend their sincere gratitude to Mike Brace and Dave Hill for their effort during office. They also wish Greg Smith (Cottage Warden), Ken Newcomb (Tackle Master) and Bryan Pittman (Editor) every success in their new posts.

ONE WAY IN SWINSTO

Friday 16th August and a party of five Mendip men travelling north. Their objective, a through trip from Swinsto and out through the Kingsdale Master Cave Valley Entrance. The party was Mike Thompson, Paul Allen, Tim Renolds, Ian Jepson, and Fred Davies. Travelling on Friday was very wet, but Saturday dawned very bright, and as we slogged up the fell sweat ran down the necks of our wet suits. The trip posed several problems, one member of the party had previously resented blimps, and two had previously been into the Master Cave. This knowledge however did not cover

a) the possibility that good abseiling belays did not exist on the pitches. b) We may not succeed in locating the route from Swinsto Final Chamber into the Master Cave (This passes through the boulder choke forming the floor of the Final Chamber) c) We may not succeed in freeclimbing the 20ft pitch out of the Master Cave into the passages leading to the Valley Entrance.

To cope with these problems we were heavily laden with tackle. We had left the valley road in high spirits, but when our guide had wasted an hour with out locating the entrance to Swinsto, our morale had visibly dropped. Then Mike Thompson and I found a pot by the Tarbury Road with a pitch some 15ft inside. Paul Missappa appeared on a free abseil. "Yes this is it," he shouted from 50ft below. I followed and joined him on a ledge by another 40ft drop, we were belayed to a rusty piton and he dropped down to a boulder floor with no way on. It was not Swinsto! We now faced the problem of returning without ladders from a 100ft pot!

Held on a tight lifeline Paul soon joined me on the ledge again by free climbing. By our lamps we could see a fairly easy if loose route for 30ft, but then it became a complete overhang. A nylon rope was passed down to us and we were hauled up. It was quite exciting to suddenly angle like a pantomime fairy with 100ft of spare below! It really was "Oops I'm a fairy". Mike Thompson in the meantime had found someone on the Fells with a P.U., from which we found we had just descended Tarbury Road Pot! Swinsto was 300yds away at right angles to the road.

We started down in heavy rain and thunder. After an awkward crawl and a 20ft pitch we got a message that the water was rising. This decided us to return to the Valley Entrance, where we found the entrance water level to be very low. We dumped most of the gear and entered the Master Cave. The water was exceptionally low the pitch only V. Diff. and the trip to Swinsto was to prove very interesting. Mike, Tim, and Ian lead the way upstream and into the first passage on the left, Paul and I went into the second. After a couple of hundred feet of awkward progress in a low steam passage we were forced into crawling. The passage then bifurcated, water coming from both branches, and, more exciting, a thunder of falling water. I went left, it was an impassable boulder choke after a about 50ft. Paul took the right branch, pebbles had to be moved aside the roof scraped our backs, but then, among boulders full of falling water, we forced our way up and into the Final Chamber (or what used to be the Final) of Swinsto. As we sat contemplating a shout heralded the approach of Mike, from upstream! They had entered the Final Chamber diametrically opposite our point of entry, by a route involving nothing worse than hands and knees work! They had then found the final pitch an easy free climb and had so explored upstream, past the bottom of Elit Pot (where Simpsons joined the system) and on to the next pitch.

A happy party, confident of success on the next day drank beer in several pubs that evening, but almost drowned in the rain that fell as they were settling down to sleep.

Now with many uncertainties settled we decided to leave a large amount of equipment behind with Jeppers who appeared to have

the flu. He curled up on the floor of the van with four sleeping bags over him as we set off to the Farbury Road. Three hours later we were kicking humaside looking for our arri clothes.

At this stage - two days later - I cannot even remember howmany pitches there were in Swinsto. All I know is that we only left one sling behind. We did not hurry, we climbed up to explore a couple of possible side passages in the Master Cave on the way through. They did not go or we might have taken longer. The whole trip was infect a doodle, but it was certainly exciting to abseil down into the gloomy spray of unknown shafts.

One great point about the trip was that it was a true test of ones skill in finding natural belays, a skill which does not get well developed on this bolt ridden Mendip. So let's remove all permanent rawl bolts!

Fred Davies

Cottage Cleaning Weekend is to be held on Nov 2nd/3rd instead of the previously arranged Swildons Meet. It is hoped that many members will come to Mendip suitably armed with paint brushes, rollers and other useful tools. For some, a digging trip down Blackmoor Upper Flood Swallet will also be arranged for the Sunday.

Urgent! Would all members with club tackle in their possession please return it to the Tackle Master as soon as possible.

THE LANCASTER - BASEGILL MARATHON

Happy M.C.G. campers were awakened on the Sunday morning of the Yorkshire Bank Holiday Meet to the slow and dismal chant of

"110ft pitch" "110ft pitch" "110ft pitch" "110ft pitch"

The moment of truth had dawned for the following people:-

Bryan Pittman	Pete Mathews
Micheal Dean Brace	Ken Newcombe
Leslie Davies	Sol Wallington Basegill photo
John Miriam	Don Vosper party
His Late	L-E party
Greg Smith	
Sion ?	
Allan Wicks	
Dave Shipman	
Pete Hunt	

Colin Hall and two other M.P.C. members had condescended to lead us.

The group split into two parties - Pete Mathews' group who were going photographing in Basegill, and Pete Hunt's more

intrepid crew who were to do the 110ft pitch in Lancaster and to emerge via Easegill, they all hoped.

The pitch certainly wasn't as gruesome as some had anticipated, at the bottom of the pitch there leant two old and unstable iron ladders and these members who had successfully descended passed the time trying to entice those coming down to climb off the electron ladder through one of the rungs of the iron ladder and then back on to the electron ladder - solemnly protesting that that was the only possible way down safely. Needless to say only Pete Lunt catered to the delights of the gathered audience, to meet the retort when he'd just squeezed through the rungs.... "Ever been had".

Lancaster - Easegill is a fantastic system, with virtually everything one could expect to find in a cave. From the bottom of the ladder we crawled, crouched, and stooped through some beautifully decorated passageways for quite a distance, to emerge eventually in these typical tubular-like smooth stone water passageways of the bottom of Yorkshire pots. These had a couple of short climbs down them and after a while we met the main streamway (or the "main drain" as the Yorkshiremen would say). Some of us thought that it was perhaps the best streamway we had ever been in.

Having negotiated two boulder chokes, in the second we climbed up into an upper series of chambers and from there found our way into Easegill with the help of a ladder down a 20ft pitch.

Once in Easegill the party rejoined the streamway and eventually met up with Pete Mathews' group, who all declared that they'd had a great time too. Pete Lunt's group left for the entrance to Easegill whilst Pete Mathews and Co waited for the return of Greg and Allan who had been pushing down the low Eastgill passageway as far as they could go.

Two 20ft ladders had to be climbed to get out of Easegill. The through trip was done in the rapid time of 5½ hours. In all the trip was very smooth and if any criticism is to be made it is that the party moved far too fast, but perhaps speed was necessary in such a large cave system. Thank you F.P.C. for showing us around.

Tojo

COMMITTEE

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